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SENATORIAL SPEAKING OF LOUIS T. WIGFALL 1860-1861:

A STUDY OF AGITATIONAL RHETORIC

A Dissertation

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

in

The Department of Speech

by

Donald Travis Garnett
B.A., Harding College, 1962
M.A., Texas Tech University, 1964
December, 1975
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When I asked Professor Waldo Braden if he thought there was a dissertation in a study of Louis T. Wigfall's speaking, he answered affirmatively but cautioned that the Texan would be difficult to explain. Surely Dr. Braden nor I anticipated a project which would require as much time as this study has involved. Without Dr. Braden's continued encouragement the study might have remained unfinished. I will always be thankful for his prompt and thorough reading of each revision.

I am also grateful for the efforts of Dr. Harold Mixon whose observations helped solve a major problem in the analysis. In addition I am thankful to Drs. Owen Peterson and John Pennybacker of the Department of Speech and Dr. Perry Howard of the Department of Sociology, all of Louisiana State University, for their pertinent criticisms of the study.

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ABSTRACT

Because Louis Wigfall's actions, utterances, and behavior suggested he used speaking opportunities to achieve agitational goals, a methodology was developed to explain his conduct in the United States Senate. This is a case study of Wigfall's rhetorical acts: his parliamentary maneuvers, questions directed to other senators, responses, speeches, and general deportment from January, 1860 when he arrived in Washington as a freshman senator until he left in late March, 1861 under the cloud of his certain expulsion. Specifically, the study attempts to explicate the evolving image of a secession agitator during a time when calmer voices might have produced compromise and avoided dissolution and war. Through detailed examination of Wigfall's day by day activities the study attempts to identify agitational characteristics and strategies as they reveal themselves in his activities and speeches.

The analytical scheme involves nine strategies which Wigfall employed with varying frequency during his fifteen-month career in Washington. The strategies are: image building, similar to ethos development; vilification, an attack against individuals; objectification, placing blame on groups; mythicication, emotionalizing events or persons in history, similar to prestige appeals; legitimation, justifying the actions of the agitator's followers; calculated antagonism, deliberate stirring of resentments toward himself or the South;
polarization, driving apart the North and South; solidification, coalescing supporters; and escalation/confrontation or pushing opponents toward physical retaliation.

Wigfall's activities suggest that he came to Washington determined to help bring about secession. Besides a long-range goal of establishing a national reputation for himself, Wigfall pursued the general goals of polarizing the North and South and intensifying existing resentments toward open conflict. Using the nine strategies, Wigfall sought to accomplish at least six rhetorical objectives.

First, he established a national reputation as a states' rights secession advocate. A fierce man physically, he created an image of insolence and bad manners among northerners. In the South he was the beau ideal of the states' righters.

Secondly, he disrupted the legislative process. In 1860 he caused chaos in order to attract attention to himself and to help divide the Democratic party over Douglas' candidacy. In 1861, following Lincoln's election, he delayed progress to prevent compromise while southern states were withdrawing.

Thirdly, he attacked Douglas to prevent Democrats from uniting behind the Illinois Democrat. Although Douglas' rejection as the Democratic party's candidate meant a Republican would probably be elected, Wigfall ignored the signs and devoted himself to vilifying Douglas.

Fourthly, he urged secession. Accustomed to encouraging men of more prominence than himself to champion the secession cause, suddenly, in 1860, Wigfall was thrust into a position of national prominence in
which he could advocate disruption. He made the most of the opportunity.

Fifthly, he delayed compromise efforts in 1861 to give southern states time to withdraw and to force a confrontation between the South and the Lincoln administration.

Finally, he attempted to justify secession and the Confederacy as Constitutional rights. Through seemingly endless repetition of the compact theory of states, Wigfall tried to reassure southerners that they were right in withdrawing from the Union.
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

From 1850 until 1861, when the Civil War began, secessionists were sometimes referred to as "Fire-Eaters," so termed because of their fervent devotion to and belief in states' rights, the legality and advisability of secession. Although H. Hardy Perritt's essay on fire-eaters lists Louis Wigfall among fifteen men "prominent in politics" who were fire-eaters, Perritt treats only four as "leading" fire-eaters. Perhaps rather than label some as "leading" fire-eaters, Perritt might have more accurately defined "true fire-eaters" separately from politicians who merely believed strongly in states' right to secede. Clement Eaton makes such a distinction regarding Virginia fire-eaters:

At the extreme left wing of the radical movement in Virginia was "a small and very exclusive clique" who wished to secede regardless of all sectional adjustments. These men, the true fire-eaters, felt the South was growing weaker each year in comparison to the North. It was the soundest policy, therefore, to stir up the South and to provoke secession as early as possible. They were the gad flies to sting the torpid South to action.


The editor of the Dallas, Texas, *Herald* defined, in part, a fire-eater as follows:

He is as unselfish in deeds as he is unwavering in faith and honesty of heart. Principle with him is everything—the Alpha and Omega of his political faith. Honor he woos as the lover woos the bride of his heart. He scorns treachery, and loathes with exceeding loathing and contempt that conservatism of tone and temper which submits to every insult and bears uncomplainingly the yoke of bondage. Sniffing treason in every tainted breeze and smelling the battle far off, he warns his comrades of approaching evil, and bids them to strike the blow that will regenerate and disenthral them from the chains of the oppressor.  

Although eight of the number Perritt lists as fire-eaters were members of the United States Senate in 1860-1861, Wigfall stands out as the most active, uncompromising, and persistent of this group of secessionists in Washington prior to the War. Despite the fact that he occupied the national forum less than two years, Wigfall attracted extensive newspaper coverage, stirred up antagonism, engaged in such unusual behavior that he warrants a rhetorical study. Indeed, the term "fire-eater" may not be sufficient to describe the Texan. Because of what he said and did in Washington, it might be more meaningful to regard Wigfall as an agitator for secession in the Senate during the years 1860-1861.

A peculiar aspect of this study arose out of the fact that Wigfall stayed on in the Senate after Texas seceded. This curious action and Wigfall's motivations for it deserve investigation. Answers are sought to such questions as the following: as a southerner in the Senate among so many opponents, what did Wigfall hope to accomplish? How did he attempt to attain his goals? What part did his speaking play in his...  

4 *Dallas, Texas Herald*, January 25, 1860.
plans? Although he espoused the secession doctrine throughout his adult life, Wigfall occupied the national platform only during 1860-1861. For at least partial answers to what he attempted to accomplish and how he went about attaining his goals, Wigfall's Senate speaking needs to be interpreted.

Writing of agitation, Leo Lowenthal and Norbert Guterman observe:

Whenever the investigator scans the texts of agitation and, on the basis of his experience in studying other kinds of social movements tries to discover what is the discontent it articulates, he is constantly disappointed. The difficulty is not that agitation fails to provide him with answers, but rather that it answers a question he did not ask: whenever he asks what he is answered as if he had asked who. He finds numerous vituperative and indignant references to enemies, but nowhere can he find a clearly defined objective condition from which the agitator's audience presumably suffers. At best, agitation provides the investigator with contradictory or inconsistent references to such alleged conditions.5

For the most part, Wigfall's utterances in the United States Senate were not deliberative in nature, did not strive to weigh alternatives and recommend reasonable answers to political questions. Consequently, Wigfall simply did not fit any of the traditional modes of rhetorical criticism.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Edwin Black suggests "as long as rhetorical criticism is confined to the explication of discourses whose only use of emotionality is to bias the judgment of auditors, neo-Aristotalianism should function adequately; but once we recognize a genre of discourse that operates

differently, then we are outside the purview of Aristotle's theory."

This dissertation attempts to explain Wigfall's activities in the United States Senate during the years 1860-1861.

This is a case study of a speaker similar in some respects to other rhetorical investigations of ante-bellum southern orators. In terms of J. Jeffery Auer's description of a case study, this investigation of Louis Wigfall is an "intensive, even microscopic" look at the states' rights advocate whom Alvy King describes as a "proslavery fanatic who probably would not have been elected to the Senate had it not been for the abolitionist fanatic John Brown." Elected at a moment of hysteria in Texas, Wigfall apparently regarded his election as a mandate for advocating secession. The study examines Wigfall's rhetorical acts: that is, his parliamentary maneuvers, questions directed to other senators, responses, speeches, and general deportment from January, 1860 when he arrived in Washington as a freshman senator until he left in late March, 1861, under the cloud of his

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certain expulsion. Specifically, the study discusses the behavior of a secession agitator during a time when calmer voices might have produced compromise and avoided dissolution. Through detailed examination of Wigfall's day by day activities the study identifies agitational strategies which emerge. By studying his encounters with other senators, the analysis reveals his part in moving the country toward secession and war.

The dissertation concentrates on six rhetorical encounters. Webster's dictionary defines an encounter as a "face to face hostile meeting, often unexpected."\textsuperscript{10} In the Senate during these years the senators engaged in many verbal skirmishes which cannot be accurately called formal speeches because they were spontaneous and involved short exchanges that could hardly be termed speeches; nor in the complete context can they be thought of as debates since senators frequently attacked each other, changed subjects and issues numerous times, and engaged in parliamentary by-play during the course of the several days. In view of the discord in the nation, the term encounter seems appropriate in discussing Wigfall's speaking. The general subjects of the six encounters were the following:

First Session--36th Congress, 1860

- February 24–March 8: The Texas Mounted Volunteers
- March 22–April 4: The Homestead Bill
- May 22–23: The Davis Resolutions on Protection of Slaves as Property

Second Session--36th Congress, 1860–1861

- December 11–13: In Response to Douglas on Powell's Compromise Resolutions

Discussion of each encounter is divided into "segments" in order to permit detailed interpretation and analysis. Using the terms of Edwin Black the segments fall under three headings: situations, strategies, and effects. In Black's definition the situation "refers to the prevailing state of the audience's convictions, the reputation of the rhetor, the popularity and urgency of his subject; in sum all the extra-linguistic factors that influence an audience's reactions to a rhetorical discourse." In this study the sections on situations attempt to set the stage or recount the immediate events which triggered the Senate encounters. Gallery disruptions which Wigfall sometimes provoked deliberately; personal insults, and the introduction of controversial legislative measures often sparked confrontations. Although some are brief, even those segments produced important results. Without a background of the situations which afforded Wigfall agitational opportunities, his activities would be difficult to understand.

According to Black, "rhetorical strategies refer to characteristics of the discourse." Black further observes that "there is a limited number of ways in which a rhetor can and will respond rhetorically to any given situational type. Again, there will be accidents of a given response that will prove to be singular, but on the whole--we assume--there will only be a finite number of rhetorical strategies available to a rhetor in any given situation, and his playing his own variations on these strategies will not prevent the critic from identifying the strategies as characteristic of the situation." The "strategies"
sections give Wigfall's goals and discuss his methods. Moreover, the present writer attempts to account for the "accidents of a given response" as they help reveal the way Wigfall achieved his ends.

In Black's system effects "refer to the responses to the strategies in these situations." This investigator strives to interpret the results of Wigfall's efforts, to determine his success, and to relate the segment to the larger unfolding historical scene.

CHARACTERISTICS OF AGITATION

This study postulates that Wigfall was an agitator who through his speaking promoted sectional strife, the division of the Democratic party, and finally the dissolution of the Union.

While the definitive work on criticism of agitation remains to be formulated, several sources suggest aspects of a critical framework for the present investigation. Drawing upon the works of Henry Jephson and Charles Lomas, Arthur Smith defines agitation as "the recurring statement of grievances through any communication channel with the intent of creating a dramatic situational change by using provocative language." "Elements in an agitational campaign," continued Smith include: (1) a persistent spokesman, (2) a feeling of unrest in the

\[11\] Black, Rhetorical Criticism, pp. 132-147.

\[12\] Henry Jephson, The Platform (London, no publisher listed, 1892), Vol. II. Jephson wrote: "The agitation against the Corn Laws is the most perfect example which our history affords of the action of the Platform as an engine of political warfare." From Jephson, Smith drew the concept of singularity of aim.

community, (3) means of communication, and (4) a single purpose. From the time he arrived in the Capitol, Wigfall spoke persistently in a climate of sectional tension. His actions revealed a determination to increase the sectional unrest, using the Senate, newspapers, gallery spectators, telegraph lines to the South, and even person-to-person opportunities.

Concerning agitators' messages Lowenthal and Guterman wrote:

The unimpressed listener may wave it aside as a kind of mania or mere tissue of lies and nonsense. Yet, some people succumbed; ... were there no other evidence at hand, this fact would be sufficient to establish the conclusion that there are powerful psychological magnets within agitation that draw groups of people to the leader's orbit. ... a psychological Morse Code tapped out by the agitator and picked up by his followers. Singular in his purpose to hurry secession, Wigfall used provocative language to excite other senators, gallery spectators, and those who read his widely circulated statements in newspapers and pamphlets. Wigfall's antics in the Senate cannot be dismissed lightly as "mania" or "nonsense." Few persons have acquired a national image in such a short time. Apparently southerners responded to Wigfall's agitation for secession.

"The agitative rhetorician knows that his physical audience is not his true audience," writes Mary McEdwards,

In reality, the audience of the agitator is always the public, the members of the community or nation. He welcomes reporters to his meetings to insure that his words do go farther than just the back of the hall, and he eagerly accepts interviews. He wants to be heard by the community, the nation—the world, if


15 Lowenthal and Guterman, Prophets of Deceit, pp. 140-141.
possible. For him, ridicule and attack are a small price to pay for the achievement of that necessary "stirring up" of this, his true audience.\textsuperscript{16}

Lowenthal and Guterman indicate that "the primary function of the agitator's words is to release reactions of gratification or frustration whose total effect is to make the audience subservient to his personal leadership."\textsuperscript{17} Because the agitator's goals are not always clear to the agitator himself, Paul Brandes suggests it may be necessary for the rhetorician "to observe the cross-currents apparent in the rhetoric,"\textsuperscript{18} or other factors in addition to the speaker's words. For this reason the present writer has chosen a day by day scrutiny of Wigfall's actions and words as they reveal his characteristics, goals, and methods.

STRATEGIES OF AGITATION

Smith believes that four rhetorical strategies are likely to appear in agitation: vilification, objectification, legitimation, and mythication.\textsuperscript{19} For this study five additional strategies are considered: Charles Lomas' "calculated antagonism;"\textsuperscript{20} Bowers and Ochs' solidifica-

\textsuperscript{17}Lowenthal and Guterman, \textit{Prophets of Deceit}, p. 9.
\textsuperscript{20}Charles Lomas, \textit{The Agitator in American Society}, p. 120.
tion," "polarization," "escalation/confrontation;" and one similar to what persuasion texts term establishing ethos, "image building." These nine strategies constitute the analytical framework of this study.

**Image Building.** Regarding classical concepts of ethos, Brembeck and Howell observed that, "the conduct of the speaker, and the speech itself, can do much to communicate the 'probity' of the speaker to his audience. We might conclude that Aristotle recommends calculated action on the part of the speaker to build his prestige." Thus, the strategy of image building is a speaker's deliberate attempt to project certain impressions about himself to his listeners. Instead of relying on previous reputation, especially when the speaker is unknown or possibly suffers negative ethos with the audience, he may determine it is necessary to create an image through his actions, conduct, speaking, and general behavior.

**Vilification** is "the agitator's use of language to degrade an opponent's person, actions, or ideas." Similar to argumentum ad hominem or "poisoning the wells" fallacies, vilification stigmatizes well-known leaders of the opposition. When George Mason Murray speaks

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23 Ibid., p. 245.


of Nelson Rockefeller as "a racist dog," and when Malcom X referred to former President Lyndon Johnson as "a Southern cracker," and to Billy Graham as "a white nationalist," they engaged in vilification. According to Smith, "vilification is always concerned with using caustic and bitter language against one person. The person vilified is well-known to the audience," and "vilification is almost always directed toward a conspicuous leader of the opposition." Describing the function of the technique, Smith continued: "The immediate end of the strategy appears to be an audience reaction of contempt toward the person vilified . . . whether the agitator supports his charges with valid data at the moment of utterance is apparently irrelevant." To vilify his opponent, the agitator employs "sarcasm, low humor, re-interpretation of words or actions, and making of overt charges."

Objectification is the use of language to direct the grievances "of a particular group toward another collective body such as an institution, nation, political party, or race." That is, a strategy which places blame on a group. Lowenthal and Guterman imply a similar strategy in the anti-Semitic agitator's efforts to establish the inferiority and unreliability of his radical rivals:

He blurs the specific nature of the communist threat by identifying it with general forebodings of impending doom: For the agitator communism is merely a label to conceal sordid activities


... and... consequently anyone whom the agitator considers sordid may be called a communist*. He associates the communists with the Jews: he transforms them from a group of people who might presumably be converted to his side into a group forever irreconcilable.29

Urging his fellow Republicans on to victory in 1860, Chauncey F. Cleveland labeled southern slaveholders a "slave oligarchy," an "aristocratic party" eager to impose "a despotism more dreadful, and grasping, and audacious than that of Naples, Austria or Russia."30

Objectification is a safer strategy than vilification because the target will not be removed by an election or the death of one person. Evoking stereotypes such as "foreigners," "bootleggers," "Yankees," "liberals," "Jews," "professors," "poets," and "bankers," the agitator directs his attack toward "an ill-defined group, [of which] it is almost impossible to make an exacting examination." Through attacking vague groups, the agitator can eventually create stereotypes. Smith suggests, "agitations are often made on what people believe reality to be, ..." and, "... there seems to be a certain aura that surrounds the creator of a term for the opposition to which the masses are responsive."

Mythication may be defined as the use of language to link the agitator's cause to "supra-rational forces" to create "a spiritual dynamism for his movement."31 Somewhat different from the typical concept of myth, Smith implies a phenomenon closer to romanticizing

29 Ibid., p. 29.


31 Smith, Rhetoric of Black Revolution, pp. 31-33.
certain people, days, or concepts as they relate to the agitator's cause.

In his famous "I have A Dream" speech, Martin Luther King Jr., romanticized the civil rights cause:

It is obvious today that America has defaulted on this promissory note insofar as her citizens of color are concerned. Instead of honoring this sacred obligation, America has given the Negro people a bad check, a check which has come back marked "insufficient funds." But we refuse to believe that the bank of justice is bankrupt. We refuse to believe that there are insufficient funds in the great vaults of opportunity of this nation. So we've come to cash this check—a check that will give us upon demand the riches of freedom and the security of justice.  

According to Smith, as a result of mythicization, "the members of the group become for all practical reasons, the chosen people, the saviors, the beautiful. They recognize the peculiar challenge confronting them in terms of forefathers and posterity. Indeed, the group often feels that it must perform the planned task and it alone."  

Legitimation is "a psychological weapon" through which the agitator "seeks to explain, vindicate, and justify the activists involved in his movement." Close to rationalization, which according to Robert Oliver "puts a favorable interpretation upon what the speaker or his group does, feels, or believes," legitimation justifies the means used to accomplish the ends. Like rationalization, legitimation substitutes a satisfying explanation for the true reason or motive and can have dangerous effects in a society where reason or logic is

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33 Smith, Rhetoric of Black Revolution, p. 37.

expected. Placing blame on the unfortunate conditions, the agitator seeks to legitimate the actions of his followers.

**Calculated antagonism** is an agitative strategy through which, according to Lomas, the speaker seeks "to force his listeners to reveal their deep-seated prejudices by exposing the rationalizations they use to cover their views."  

Suggesting the tactic, Smith pointed out that "uncompromising statements and bitter denunciations are generally used to provoke the opposition into more open combat." Because his followers are sometimes apathetic, the agitator seeks to unify those among whom he discovers malaise. Moreover, Smith suggests, "agitation depends on active opposition for its success, because only with massive and intense opposition can the inactive masses see the clear outline of the situation. The agitator believes that he is more likely to bring about a dramatic situational change if he meets with opposition. Therefore, faced with lethargic followers and confidently quiet enemies, the agitator resorts to provocative language intended to force opposition to his cause. Indeed, sometimes the agitator must create the opposition."  

**Solidification** consists of tactics by which the agitator reinforces group members. As Bowers and Ochs explain "plays, songs, slogans, expressive symbols, and in-group publications" solidify groups. Bormann suggests the results of solidification upon a movement such as secession: "By taking an extreme stand, expressing its goal in unequivocal language, and making its doctrine clear by frequent reitera-

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35 Lomas, *The Agitator in American Society*, p. 120.
tion the spokesmen increase the level of commitment to the movement even though they may pay the price of restricting the movement of a relatively small group of highly dedicated people."

**Polarization** is the strategy of identifying opposing groups and driving those factions farther apart. To polarize social groups or audiences the agitator creates controversies and shifts blame. According to Bowers and Ochs, polarization "encompases tactics designed to move his listeners out of the established column [there is no neutral ground] and into the agitational rank, to force a conscious choice."**

**Escalation/Confrontation** "consists of a series of tactics, each of which is designed to escalate the tension in the establishment until finally establishment representatives resort to violent suppression in a confrontation with the agitators." According to Bowers and Ochs, agitators employ tactics of rumor, threatened disruption which prepares the establishment for deliberate disregard for law and destruction of property, non-verbal offense in which through dress, gestures, scorn of the establishment, public displays that repulse the agitators' targets; and non-negotiable demands.

**SOURCES AND CONTRIBUTORY STUDIES**

The present study would have been much more difficult without Alvy King's dissertation in 1967, published as a biography in 1970. King's *Louis T. Wigfall* covers Wigfall's life and career. However,

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40 Ibid., p. 35.
King discussed Wigfall's speaking only incidentally as part of his career.

In addition to King's dissertation, three master's theses have been completed in departments of history. An article by David Wiley presents an interesting, though brief, discussion of Wigfall's Senate speaking.

The chief sources of this study are the Senate debates as reported by the Congressional Globe. Other sources include The Texas Republican, (Marshall, Texas), 1849-1861.


CHAPTER II

ELEMENTS CONTRIBUTING TO WIGFALL'S EMERGENCE AS A SECESSION AGITATOR

From 1820 to 1840 many southerners grew to manhood unaware of the nationalism that swept the country in the wake of the War of 1812. During the nullification crisis of 1832 some South Carolinians developed negative attitudes toward federal power when President Jackson sent troops to the banks of the Savannah River across from Augusta, Georgia. Although the incident was resolved by the Compromise Tariff of 1833 the impressions remained. The event deeply impressed sixteen-year-old Louis Wigfall. More than ten years later he recalled: "Can I forget seeing those same stars and stripes floating over the Arsenal of Augusta, whilst regiments were there assembled for the purpose of invading, not the State, but our own District, to burn our houses and make desolate our homes?" Wigfall was part of a generation of southern politicians who could not remember any "good will in their federal relations." His political conditioning fits the pattern that Harold

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1 Louis T. Wigfall, in a speech, "To Many Officers of the 7th Regiment," reprinted in the Edgefield Advertiser, September 25, 1844.

2 Milledge Bonham said of the nullification crisis: "Though but a boy at the time of that disinterested struggle for the constitutional rights of a whole section, I learned my first political lesson in that school. And I believe that struggle did more to disseminate throughout the South, a clear understanding and just appreciation of the doctrine of State rights than any event which has occurred since the days of Mr. Jefferson," Congressional Globe, 36th Congress Session I, p. 7.
Schultz suggested:

South Carolina politicians in the 1850's had strikingly similar backgrounds. Most of them had spent their childhood in the same kind of homes, had gone to the same kind of schools, had studied at the same college, had prepared for the same profession, had engaged in the same occupation, had held the same offices, and had witnessed the same political events. With few exceptions they had been born in South Carolina in the era from 1800 to 1825 . . .

Wigfall grew up in Edgefield, South Carolina, a community that produced numerous politicians before the Civil War. In fact, Edgefield spawned sufficient numbers of "trouble-making sons" to prompt one historian to call it "the breeding ground of the species." An army major concluded, "the devil must have his headquarters there . . ." Along with many of his contemporaries Wigfall attended South Carolina College during a time when the school played an important role in shaping political thinking in the state. Schultz describes further the importance of the college:

During the presidency of Thomas Cooper, 1820-1834, the college became a center for the dissemination of State-Rights, free-trade, and proslavery views. Cooper was an ardent advocate of nullification and as early as 1827 declared that the time had arrived to calculate the value of the Union. Both as a teacher and a publicist he had great influence in bringing the leaders to accept what was later called the Calhoun or South Carolina doctrine.

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4 Ibid., p. 21.
6 Major David E. Twiggs, quoted in John A. Chapman, A History of Edgefield County (Newberry, South Carolina: Elbert H. Hull, Publisher and Editor, 1897), p. 195.
7 Schultz, Nationalism and Sectionalism in South Carolina 1852-1860 p. 8.
When Wigfall arrived at the college in 1835 student debates centered not on whether to secede, but how and when. Thus, Wigfall became a part of the extremist group that Charles Lomas describes as the counter-part of the abolitionist movement:

In many respects the secession agitation may be regarded as a counter-agitation to abolitionism. Although it began simultaneously with Calhoun's doctrine of nullification as a protest against the tariff, it also had from the beginning a motive to protect the "peculiar institution" of the South. So long as Calhoun lived, his profession of Unionism kept the secessionists in check, but after his death the group led by Robert Barnwell Rhett, William Yancey, and others stepped up the tempo of their agitation.

Abolitionist activities, climaxd by the raid of John Brown, caused some southern states to send radical states' rights spokesmen to Washington; thus, Louis Wigfall went from Texas to the United States Senate.

From his college days throughout careers in South Carolina and Texas and two years in the United States Senate, Wigfall consistently promoted secession. Alvy King suggests: "If most Southerners had been as fanatical as Wigfall, the Civil War would probably have started fifteen years sooner." That he was radical early in his career is evident in an editorial which appeared in Edgefield, South Carolina, in 1844: "We take leave here to say that we regret its [Wigfall's speech] appearance. It is uncalled for and ill-timed. Its temper, we think, is rather too harsh and violent. In its general

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8 Daniel Walker Hollis, South Carolina College (Columbia, South Carolina: University of South Carolina Press, 1951), pp. 70-74.


feeling and tone, the address, we hope and believe, will meet with no response in this or any other quarter of the State.”

Among the most radical secessionists in 1844 he did not alter his position on the issue over the years. In the United States Senate in 1860 he found a climate conducive to his brand of extremism.

When he rose to speak Wigfall usually excited audiences. His speaking often caused reporters to observe "storms of applause," "frequent interruptions by the warmest demonstrations of applause," or "liveliest expressions of approbation." This chapter examines some of the elements that contributed to Wigfall's emergence as an agitator for secession.

PERSONALITY

Sara Agnes Wallace said of him in exile, "wherever Wigfall went, he attracted devoted followers." The same quality of personality that drew people to him may, in part, account for the immediate success he achieved in Texas politics. Voters either believed in him totally or rejected him.

Reared in a society that praised chivalry, Wigfall learned his lessons on the subject thoroughly. In a letter to John Manning, a college friend whom he admired, he said, "(He) who fears to peril his person or his popularity in the discharge of his duty, either to his friends or country is a poor spirited creature." Citing an incident

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11 Edgefield Advertiser, September 25, 1844.


13 Wigfall to Manning, February 17, 1840.
from Wigfall's one year at the University of Virginia as an example of southern youth's "willingness to put one's life in jeopardy for the sake of honor," Clement Eaton wrote:

At a dance given by Professor Bonnycastle, a student from South Carolina, Louis Wigfall, felt insulted by the refusal of a Southern belle, a Miss Leiper, to dance with him. Believing he was "elevated by wine," to use her expression, she took the arm of another student and hastened precipitately away. Wigfall . . . accordingly sent a challenge to Miss Leiper's escort for uttering language during the altercation "that I could suffer from no one." . . . a court of honor was appointed by the students to adjudicate the question whether Wigfall had been insulted . . . It ruled that there was no point of honor involved and that Wigfall's conduct in the presence of a lady was not rude or due to alcohol but was owing to "a natural impetuosity" which Miss Leiper had wrongly attributed to intoxication. Thus the matter ended without bloodshed and with the honor of both students preserved.14

While preparing for the bar examination in Edgefield during his early career, Wigfall determined to forsake the vices that gave him a reputation for irresponsible conduct. To John Manning he wrote, "distinction is now my only purpose . . . to remove false impressions as to my character is my determination. If attention to business and honorable and straightforward course can give me respectability and increasing application distinction--I will have them."15

Wigfall hoped also to avoid political entanglements, but, as C. W. Lord points out, like other young men in Edgefield, he had difficulty keeping these resolves: "Young Wigfall was in a stimulating environment, professionally and otherwise. Edgefield was a hotbed of lawyers, displaying some of the most brilliant legal talent in the state. It was moreover, hotheadedly impulsive and had a reputation for lawless--

15Wigfall to Manning, April 1839.
ness. Its citizens were noted for drinking, fighting, and political feuds." Unfortunately, all three vices appealed to Wigfall. In 1840, he could not resist involvement in the gubernatorial campaign. Because of his clandestine efforts on behalf of a candidate in the race, Wigfall feuded with the famous Brooks family of Edgefield, participated in a gunfight and killed the son of a prominent citizen, and engaged in two duels including one with Preston Brooks. In the second episode both Wigfall and Brooks were injured. By the time they recovered the election was history, and Wigfall had lost prestige and social contacts needed to salvage his neglected law practice.

During the years 1841-1845, after partially regaining his social standing in Edgefield, Wigfall practiced law, attended county political meetings, represented the county in state gatherings, and served on at least one committee to bring a prominent political figure to Edgefield for a speech. Through these activities he further promoted his reputation as an orator. The Edgefield Advertiser for June, 1841, reported that Wigfall was appointed to a committee to consider Texas annexation at the "Great Texas Meeting" which took place in the courthouse. The editor said of Wigfall's speaking ability:

Col. L. T. Wigfall, then offered the following resolutions, which were forcibly supported by himself and Mr. [B. C.] Yancey. Both of these gentlemen availed themselves of the occasion to contrast the principles of Mr. Clay and Mr. Polk, as to all the prominent measures of the government, and particularly in reference to the Abolition of Slavery and the Annexation of Texas.17

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17 Edgefield Advertiser, June 5, 1844.
At that time Wigfall expressed basically the same sentiments on slavery that he argued in 1860 in the United States Senate, but he apparently tempered them enough to avoid criticism. A few weeks later, however, he did not fare so well when he spoke to a militia group on the Fourth of July when he proved too controversial for Edgefield. Wigfall was both denounced and praised for his stand on secession and slavery. Convinced that the speech was not reported accurately, supporters demanded publication of the entire address "to remove all doubts and prevent further misrepresentations in the future." Framed as a letter to the editor addressed to Wigfall, in part the protest read as follows:

... we listened to your speech at the Old Wells, and so far from finding that so very objectionable, we thought it a speech of intrinsic merit, and one that embodied in forcible language, those principles which for the last eighteen years, it has been the pride of South Carolina, most ardently to cherish, and for the maintenance of which, she is undoubtedly most solemnly pledged.18

A text of the speech which Wigfall revised for publication, appeared in the Advertiser on September 25, 1844. Attempting to stir a public response through editorial comment, the editor criticized Wigfall's position as out of step with the other politicians of the area. Although the newspapers did not publish further reports on his activities at that time, in his letters to Manning during 1844-1846 Wigfall indicated that he was in desperate circumstances physically (he was seriously ill), mentally (his son died), as well as financially (he suffered three sheriff's sales). Small wonder that he had little time for politics. Early in 1846 Wigfall moved his family to the new state, Texas.

18 Letter to the editor, Edgefield Advertiser, September 11, 1844.
Wigfall was never a good financial manager. At a time when his popularity in Texas was high, King found evidence of money problems:

His finances back home were in such poor shape that on January 1, [1861], some of his property in Marshall was sold to satisfy $750 of his debts. But he could vent his frustration upon his enemies, who were plentiful in Washington, and he could gain satisfaction by telling himself he was neglecting his finances to serve his section by spying on the unionists. 19

Texas voters did not seem to mind. To them he was a man of strength determined to do what was right regardless of the consequences.

Like the compulsive gambler, Wigfall was a compulsive politician. He could not resist the stump. From college days until his challenge of Jefferson Davis in the Confederate Government, as the Texas Republican editor commented, "the valiant Wigfall was in the game with his whole strength." 20 If his dedication to the southern principles meant sacrificing security, Wigfall was willing. He was in the vein of the fire-eaters described by Perritt as "singleminded in their desire to preserve the culture and traditions of the South," but who did not "take time really to enjoy the 'good life' which they so stubbornly upheld." 21 Possessed by a drive that made all other considerations secondary, he had to be in the political arena where excitement existed. Characterized primarily by extreme devotion to the cause of slavery, Wigfall's personality contributed to his election to the national office.

20 Texas Republican, October 4, 1856.
APPEARANCE

Wigfall was an impressive appearing man with black hair and a full beard (Figure 1). Historian J. W. Debose recalled "a handsome and commanding presence marked him in every assembly." Wigfall ordinarily wore dark suits cut in the fashion of the day, a stovepipe hat, and carried a cane. Although he spent his career in civilian life, Wigfall admired military dress, and he lost no time outfitting himself in a makeshift uniform when he volunteered for military service in 1861. When he met him at Fort Sumter in 1861, British correspondent William Russell described Wigfall's physical appearance:

As the boat touched the quay of the fort, a tall, powerful-looking man came through the shattered gateway, and with uneven steps strode over the rubbish towards a skiff which was waiting to receive him, and into which he jumped and rowed off. Recognizing one of my companions as he passed our boat, he suddenly stood up, and with a leap and a scramble tumbled in among us, to the imminent danger of up-setting the party. Our new friend was dressed in the blue frock coat of a civilian, round which he had surrounded with a loosely-fastened silk handkerchief; and wild masses of black hair, tinged grey, fell from under a civilian's hat over his collar; his unstrapped trousers were gathered up high on his legs, displaying ample boots, garnished with formidable brass spurs... But his face was not one to be forgotten—a straight, broad brow, from which the hair rose up like the vegetation on a riverbank, beetling black eyebrows—a mouth coarse and grim, yet full of power, a square jaw—a thick argumentative nose—a new growth of scrubby beard and moustache—these were relieved by eyes of wonderful depth and light, such as I never saw before but in the head of a wild beast. If you look some day when the sun is not too bright into the eye of a Bengal tiger, in the Regent's Park, as the keeper is coming round, you will form some notion of the expression I mean. It was flashing, fierce, yet calm—with a well of fire burning behind and sprouting through it, an eye pitiless in anger, which now and then

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sought to conceal its expression beneath half-closed lids, and then burst out with an angry glare, as if disdaining concealment. . . .  

Other sources generally agreed on Wigfall's mode of dress and physical appearance. David Wiley called him a "frock-coated, iron browed Cyrano from Texas." Sara Agnes Wallace described him as "a rough man with a dark beard and hair, . . . thick set about 5'8" high . . . a hardy man." Edward A. Pollard called Wigfall "a man of scarred face."  

Suggesting that Wigfall's arrival at Texas political meetings was enough to intimidate his opponents, the editor of the Upshur Democrat wrote:

A friend writing us from Clarksville under the date of 17th June gives an animated account of the discussion between Houston and Wigfall. The Houston men were in exstaces [sic] on the morning of the discussion under the impression that Wigfall would not be there, and bantered the Democrats to bring out their big guns. Before two o'clock Wigfall rode into town, and then came a change of faces.  

VOICE AND DELIVERY

In addition to a menacing appearance, Wigfall is reputed to have had an effective voice. Commenting on his delivery in the Senate, a Harper's Weekly article concluded: "He is a finished orator--probably

27 Texas Republican, August, 1857, reprinted from the Upshur Democrat.
the most charming in the Senate. His voice is clear, melodious, and sufficiently powerful to be heard everywhere. He speaks grammatically, elegantly, and without effort. He never bawls. He never screams.

His delivery is perfect, and his action suitable. After admitting Wigfall was "witty and smart," the Harper's writer said, "he has the misfortune of being almost always illogical, incorrect, and often absurd." A Dallas editor spoke of him as "a ready, terse, vigorous, spirited speaker, of logical and analytical power, of fluent, easy and impressive manner." 29

Wigfall evidently had a powerful, flexible, and well-modulated voice.

SPEECH PREPARATION

Wigfall occasionally boasted that he never prepared a manuscript for speaking. However, he quoted generously from public documents, newspapers, personal letters, and speeches of others. On occasion in the Senate he called for the "facts" on a subject or requested time to consult public records before answering an argument. Once in the heat of debate he offered to produce as evidence the earlier remarks of a senator whom Wigfall claimed was contradicting himself. 30 He possessed a good memory that allowed him to recall long portions of literature, law, or other materials. During the years he lived in Texas, reporters sometimes praised Wigfall's preparation. On one occasion the Texas Republican, May 18, 1861.


29 Dallas Herald, January 4, 1860.

30 Congressional Globe, pp. 676; 685-689.
Republican editor wrote about Wigfall's courtroom effort, "he had evidently prepared himself with great care."

Successful in discussing complex problems before Texas audiences, Wigfall possibly neglected his speech preparation during the years he spent in the national forum. Sometimes he complained of insufficient time to prepare and once, after speaking in the Senate for more than four hours, admitted he had made no preparation at all. His contemporary, W. L. Yancey, said that "he was indolent, or at least wanting in industry." Wigfall once confided to Manning: "I have I believe always been on the extreme in everything I ever attempted except study."

Although scattered references indicate he engaged in research and study before some speeches, Wigfall apparently never recorded his method of speech preparation. Typically, however, he approached a speaking situation with confidence. To Manning he confided, "command of countenance and a high brag" would make his enemies flee. In the United States Senate Wigfall's "high brag" occasionally proved insufficient: at least once Jefferson Davis rescued him from a bitter attack by another senator who discovered a gap in Wigfall's knowledge. Surprisingly, he rarely encountered a question which he was unable to answer. His practice of extemporaneous delivery, understandably,

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31 Texas Republican, June 26, 1857.
32 DuBose, Yancey, II, p. 676.
33 Wigfall to Manning, circa February, 1839.
34 Wigfall to Manning, February 21, 1840.
35 Congressional Globe, pp. 1048-1060.
sometimes resulted in disorganized speeches, but, as an agitator, he was not concerned about being logical or consistent.

At ease in situations that required quick verbal responses, he permitted other senators to interrupt his speeches with comments or questions, once offering to yield the floor "as often as the Senator [Pugh of Ohio] chooses to interrupt me." An opposition newspaper described him as "a dangerous man to meet in debate."

In the debate with Houston in 1849, Wigfall demonstrated his ability to adapt quickly when Houston attempted to use a biblical reference to establish a point. Immediately tracing the historical context of the reference, Wigfall reversed Houston's argument. Often Wigfall drew from a reservoir of history, literature, and law which he read extensively.

RHETORICAL PHILOSOPHY

Wigfall never set forth his philosophy of rhetoric, but through his speeches he revealed some of his speech theory. Like other southerners he read Cicero's admonitions for the orator:

. . . a knowledge of very many matters must be grasped, . . . and the distinctive style has to be formed, not only by the choice of words, but also by the arrangement of the same; and all the mental emotions, with which nature has endowed the human race, are to be intimately understood, because it is in the calming or kindling the feelings of the audience that the full power and science of oratory are to be brought into play. To this there should be added a certain humour, flashes of wit,

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the culture befitting a gentleman, and readiness and terseness alike in repelling and in delivering the attack, the whole being combined with a delicate charm and urbanity. Further, the complete history of the past and a store of precedents must be retained in the memory, nor may a knowledge of statute law and our national law in general be omitted. And why should I go on to describe the speaker's delivery? That needs to be controlled by bodily carriage, gesture, play of features and changing intonation of voice; and how important that is wholly by itself . . . What need to speak of that universal treasurehouse the memory? Unless this faculty be placed in charge of the ideas and phrases which have been thought out and well weighed, even through as conceived by the orator they were of the highest excellence, we know that they will all be wasted.38

Placing stress on memory, attempting to master every subject, and disdaining the speaker who used a manuscript, Wigfall reflected Cicero's advice. While it is impossible to link conclusively Wigfall's speaking to his study of Cicero, the possibility of a relationship is distinct.

In two letters to his friend Manning, Wigfall revealed an evolving attitude toward public speaking. In the first letter he probably exaggerated his beliefs regarding the practice of law: "... tell me not of women when I can get a jury to hang on my lips! If I possessed the wealth of a Croesus I would give it all to see a tear start in the eye of a juryman."39 Perhaps exposing his actual view of the legal profession, Wigfall wrote to Manning:

... my maiden speech at last court. The Honorable Babis John in his charge told the jury that it was "the thing." The best "thing" connected with it though was the three hundred dollars which I received for making it. My business at the last court was worth about seven hundred dollars to me in all. That you can see is at the rate of fourteen hundred a year. But I got nearly half of it for making one speech . . . 40

39Wigfall to Manning, circa February, 1839.
40Wigfall to Manning, November 11, 1839.
Wigfall did not enjoy law practice. He left it for politics at every opportunity, returning only when financial distress demanded.

Aware of logical and emotional proofs, Wigfall leaned heavily upon ethical proofs before the Texas audiences as he attempted to overcome a reputation of irresponsibility that followed him from South Carolina. As an agitator in the United States Senate he relied on emotion and he made few logical appeals. He was caught up in a revolution in which the moving force was, according to Russell, "neither reason nor justice--it is most frequently passion."  

VERBAL WAR WITH SAM HOUSTON

Wigfall arrived in Texas determined to practice law and to stay out of politics, a resolve that he could not keep. After a brief association with a Nacogdoches law firm, he and another partner opened an office in Marshall, a rapidly developing center of commerce in East Texas. By his courtroom success, Wigfall soon attracted attention. Norman Kittrell preserved an estimate of Wigfall's skill:

Indeed, in the estimation of a contemporary, William Pitt Ballinger ["The Nestor of the Texas Bar"], Wigfall was a great lawyer. One young attorney said that he heard Ballinger state to Samuel F. Miller, a Justice of the United States Supreme Court, that Miller had never had a lawyer before him who was the intellectual superior of Louis T. Wigfall, no one better prepared to present an able argument upon any question of law.  

Rapidly becoming politically active, Wigfall delivered a speech before a Galveston Democratic meeting on January 31, 1848, which

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41 Russell, Diary, p. 6.

42 Norman Goree Kittrell, Governors Who Have Been and Other Public Men of Texas (Houston: Dealy-Adey-Elgin Co., 1921), pp. 149-150.
impressed some leaders of the developing Democratic party. As a result he was chosen a delegate to a national convention in Baltimore. Thus, Wigfall moved easily into the leadership of the Texas Democratic party into which he introduced secession sentiment.

On June 25, 1849, as the newcomer, Louis Wigfall took a calculated risk with his political career: he challenged Sam Houston in debate. Revered as "The Father of Texas," the "Hero of San Jacinto," the "President of the Republic," Houston had never lost a major political contest. The scene was the town square in Marshall where Houston and Thomas J. Rusk, both United States senators, planned to speak on behalf of a gubernatorial candidate. After the senators spoke, calling for rejection of Calhoun's proposal for a southern convention, Wigfall took the platform and embarrassed Houston so that he never again permitted Wigfall to speak on the same platform with him. Newspapers picked up the story and reprinted the speeches. On June 29, 1849, in a story entitled, "The Excitement," the Texas Republican summarized the speeches of Houston and Rusk but only mentioned Wigfall's effort. On July 3, apparently the result of criticism of his earlier reporting, the editor inserted a few paragraphs from Wigfall's speech with a promise of more to come; on July 13, in a letter signed "Sydney," the editor published the debate in detail. Answering "Sydney's" reprimand for failing to report completely what Wigfall said, the editor joined numerous East Texas papers in glorifying the new Texan. Typical of editorial comment accompanying publication of Wigfall's speech is the following excerpt from the Caddo Gazette:

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When General Houston finished his speech the [word indistinguishable] rang with a call for Colonel Wigfall. The gentleman mounted the stand, armed with [word indistinguishable] weapons ready alike for defense and attack. We saw at once that the "tug of war" was coming as the bold, daring, and inimitable Colonel, with resolute mind, steady nerve and impassioned manner, brandished his rapier over the opposing Greek. He held him up to the public reproba­tion, and heaped Pelion upon him with such dexterity, that we verily thought the General's world wide fame no more than the "visual line that girt him round" . . . we cannot too highly estimate Colonel Wigfall for his prompt, energetic, and patriotic defense of Southern rights. While such a man raises his eloquent voice for the Star State, no ambitious and aspiring Senator can misrepresent her with impunity. Colonel Wigfall's powers of analytical argumentation, and extensive political knowledge, designate him as no ordinary man. He is a sound democrat, an unswerving advocate of the institutions of the South, and formidable foe on the stump. In the progress and future of Texas, it requires no divination to see, that the name of Colonel Wigfall, will be prominently inscribed upon the page that survives the wreck of nations.

The clash between Wigfall and Houston attracted such widespread attention that in February, 1850, the editor of the Texas Republican was still answering inquiries about it.

Keeping the debate alive, Wigfall followed Houston around the state during the remainder of the campaign, listening to the senator, assembling his own audiences, and answering Houston. As result of Houston's tactic of personal attack rather than dealing with the issues Wigfall saw his ethical appeal grow. Reporters covering the speeches pictured Wigfall as a brave young man persecuted by the old politician. His risk paying off, Wigfall emerged with a reputation and a seat in the lower house of the Texas legislature.

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44 Texas Republican, July 27, 1849, reprinted from the Caddo Gazette by request.
As a legislator Wigfall hoped to escape the law office which he considered a bore and continue the role of "The Stormy Petrel." Drawing upon Wigfall's correspondence to Manning, King summarized Wigfall's outlook:

... he wanted a life which would everyday give "promise of pleasure or peril of a grave." It was extremely difficult, he said, for a man of his education, notions, and habits to be content with practicing law. He could at any time without difficulty rouse himself to one great effort, suffering in order to accomplish some noble goal which would afford pleasure to a man with a soul. But sitting in an office from morning till night, being cut off from society, that "damned practical--unpoetical --utilitarian--common place ... sort of life" would be the death of him.

During the decade he spent in Texas, Wigfall devoted his energies to strengthening the concepts of states' rights and secession in the thinking of the Democratic party.

Although he was defeated in a bid for re-election, while completing his term in the Texas House Wigfall gained legislative experience and became acquainted with the state's leaders.

PUBLIC IMAGE IN TEXAS, 1850-1857

In August, 1851, the headlines of a Henderson, Texas, newspaper read: "Glorious News!!! Harrison County Erect!!! Redeemed, Regenerated, Disenthralled!!! Territorialism Trampled in the Dust!!! Nullification Nullified!!! WIGFALLISM REPUDIATED! and the EMISSARY BEASLEY REBUKED!!! OUR PREDICTIONS VERIFIED!!!!" Wigfall faced the task of

45 Mary Boykin Chesnut, A Diary From Dixie, ed. by Ben Ames Williams (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1961), pp. 35-36.

46 King, Louis T. Wigfall, p. 25.

47 Texas Republican, August 19, 1851, quoting the Aegis of Truth, of Henderson, Texas.
rebuilding a public image shaken by his defeat in the election. To
regain favor for himself, he concentrated on his law practice, partici-
pated in civic affairs, and, of course, spent more time with his family.
Utilizing his skill in public speaking, he enhanced further his reputa-
tion as a champion of the people. On one occasion R. W. Loughery, edi-
tor of the *Texas Republican* heard Wigfall oppose a steamboat combination
proposed to the citizens of Marshall. Suggesting Wigfall's popularity
the editor wrote:

... after W. P. Clark spoke and concluded, Col. Wigfall was
loudly called for and to which he responded in a speech of some
half hour's duration, which was marked with that directness to
the subject, clearness and force for which his efforts are
usually distinguished. Indeed, we may, with truth that savor
not of flattery or ambiguity affirm that the steamboat combi-
nation was most elegantly abused.  

Seeking to build a public image far removed from the days in
South Carolina when his temper and bad judgment had destroyed a prom-
ising career, Wigfall emerged an agitator of the South's right to
federal government protection of slave property. Isolating Wigfall,
the concerned citizen at public meetings, from Wigfall, the politician,
is an impossible task. In every speech, from eulogies to Fourth of
July addresses, he managed to discuss the states' rights doctrine.

In 1856 Wigfall reached a peak of popularity and influence in
Texas politics when he became known as the chief "Know-Nothing
Fighter;" he was elected to the State Senate; he was considered a
strategist for the Democratic party; and he was chosen to attend the

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48 *Texas Republican*, January 7, 1854.

49 Typewritten manuscript from a pamphlet, "Obituary Addresses on
the Occasion of the Death of General James Hamilton," University of
Texas at Austin Archives.
Texas Democratic party convention in Waco. At this convention Wigfall played his usual role. Because the impending election loomed as a struggle between the states' rights Democrats and the Houston-led Know-Nothings, in order to win the Democrats needed to maintain the momentum they had attained in the presidential election and to promote greater unity among themselves. King suggests, "Wigfall contributed in both respects. By this time he was adept at arousing concern amongst the voters, and he was able to submerge some of his most divisive radicalism."  

Francis Lubbock, also at the convention, recalled how through "conciliatory remarks" Wigfall promoted unity. Looking forward to renewing the debate with Houston, Wigfall again followed Houston about the state "speaking immediately after Houston and attacking his arguments point by point." According to King, Houston claimed that "Wigfall had swindled his law clients and had escaped South Carolina to avoid the penitentiary. Along with these libelous charges Houston resorted to what one observer termed 'bawdy-house vulgarity' which 'turned the stomachs' of some listeners." Houston even dubbed Wigfall with a pet name: "Appearing at Tyler, Houston closed his speech, for example, by telling his audience that the speaker following would be a 'murderer named Wiggletail' and warned his listeners not to stay unless they were fond of lies." Surprisingly, the "New Wigfall" did not challenge Houston to a duel as he might have done in his earlier days, but stuck to the issues, carrying on a comparatively high level

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50 King, Louis T. Wigfall, p. 62.


52 Terrell, "Recollections of General Sam Houston," pp. 118-119.
Defeating Houston, Wigfall received credit as "the only man who ever bested Houston at this kind of rough and tumble stump speaking."  

Newspaper reports of Wigfall's 1857 campaign revealed him as a power in Texas politics. The Texas Republican editor reprinted numerous articles from other Texas newspapers to show Wigfall's success in public speaking. For example, the Carthage, Texas newspaper reported that after Houston and a Judge Evans spoke, Wigfall "... made a speech of great power, completely demolishing their positions. Neither of them staid [sic] to witness the conflict. Both ingloriously fled."  

When the campaign moved to Henderson on May 6, the newspaper provided complete details. Houston spoke outdoors to a crowd of fifteen hundred people for two hours on a hot afternoon, and after a five minute recess Judge Evans was scheduled to speak. Unimpressed by Houston and less than enthusiastic at the prospect of hearing Evans, someone urged the crowd to move to the courthouse to hear J. P. Henderson answer Houston's speech. Approximately two-thirds of the group went to hear Henderson's brief talk. A reporter described the events that followed:

Colonel Wigfall was loudly called for. He came forward, and I hesitate not to say, made one of the greatest efforts of his life. I hope it may be published entire for it would be re-published all over the State, and would kill Sam Houston as dead as Benton has been killed in Missouri, and as all men who misrepresent their constituents and desert their party ...  

A similar scene transpired in Marshall in June at a public barbecue which featured Houston and Runnels, the gubernatorial opponents. Since

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53 King, Louis T. Wigfall, pp. 63-64.

54 Texas Republican, June 13, 1857.
Runnels was known as a poor speaker the crowd demanded Wigfall. When the moderator explained that only Runnels would be allowed to reply to Houston's speech, the listeners cried, "to the courthouse, to the courthouse." "And thither the audience repaired," Loughery reported:

In a short time, the large and spacious courthouse was filled to overflowing. When Colonel Wigfall mounted the stand, a burst of applause rung from one end of the room to the other, and as he proceeded to pile fact upon fact, demonstration upon demonstration, and to appeal to the patriotism of those present, he carried the audience with him. . . . In point of courtesy it was unexceptionable, and was in striking contrast with General Houston's speech.55

Loughery, the Texas Republican editor, chose July 4, 1857, to suggest Wigfall for the vacant United States Senate seat. He published a letter which read in part as follows:

. . . I beg permission, through your columns, to present another name to the consideration of the people of Texas, which cannot fail of eliciting attention—a name which has no mere county reputation—a name which is known, and favorably known, as far as the limits of the State extend; and I may add, a name which has never been darkened by the stain of treachery or the stigma of disservice. I refer to Col. Louis T. Wigfall, of Harrison county, a man who is in every fibre of his heart a Democrat—firm, unflinching, and as immovable as a mountain of granite. Colonel Wigfall needs no laudations [sic] from me; his fame speaks his praise. Acknowledged to be an unswerving patriot, devoted to the interests of the nation, and particularly the periled interests of the South, his position before the people of the State is a proud one. He is one of those who have done much service to the Democracy, and received little reward. The party, I believe, cannot fail "to give honor to whom honor is due"—to recognize the claims of her warmest and strongest adherents. Col. Wigfall would make a noble Senator.56

Thus Wigfall's "new" image became widely publicized.

After Wigfall followed Houston through Dallas the editor of the Dallas Herald contributed to Wigfall's emerging image:

55Texas Republican, June 20, 1857.

56Texas Republican, July 4, 1857.
... high as was our estimate of his [Wigfall's] distinguished talents, his powers as a political debater, and his nobleness of nature, that estimate was surpassed by his speech, in reply to Gen. Houston on Tuesday last. We have never heard a more clear logical, eloquent and effective defense and exposition of political principles than that made by Col. Wigfall. We have never heard a more skillful and powerful; but at the same time temperate and respectful, dissection of the political record and principles of any public man, than that which Col. Wigfall presented of Gen. Houston ... it was throughout, the ablest political argument to which we have ever listened, interspersed with bursts of eloquence and enlivened with flashes of wit that delighted, warmed and entrusted the audience. He was frequently interrupted by the warmest demonstrations of applause.

Through contrasts such as the one which follows between the conduct of Houston and Wigfall, the editor of the Dallas Herald enhanced Wigfall's ethos:

General Houston, here, as at every other place which he has spoken, since Col. W. has been following him; denounced him in the grossest terms of abuse--called him a fugitive from justice, a man of infamous character--a felon--hireling--hired slanderer, and many other choice epithets of similar import. In reply Col. Wigfall declined to go into a war of vulgar and abusive epithets, but on the other hand, proposed to discuss the political principles and antecedents of General Houston and those of the Democratic party.57

The Texas Republican editor noted Wigfall's ability to entertain an audience already weary from much rhetoric: "Yesterday, the 14th several of the candidates for the Legislature spoke at Elysian Fields ... Col. Wigfall then addressed the meeting and although Mr. Murray had so thoroughly discussed all as to leave but little for the Col. to do, still he entertained the audience for nearly two hours, which elicited the most rapturous applause." 58

57 Texas Republican, July 4, 1857, article reprinted from Dallas Herald.

58 Texas Republican, July 25, 1857.
Joining the move to have Wigfall named to the U. S. Senate, the
Galveston News editor wrote:

Who shall be our next Governor? is not the question: that is
settled. Who shall be our next U. S. Senator? that's the ques­tion.
Why not let us have an efficient man while we are at it; let us learn to recognize talent. Why can we not, and why should
we not, have Col. Louis T. Wigfall, of Harrison county? He is
one of the state's brightest ornaments, and one of Democracy's
bravest and most gallant soldiers. Highly intellectual, honest,
and bold, he knows our rights, and knows how to maintain them.59

ELECTION TO THE UNITED STATES SENATE

Even when J. P. Henderson was elected to the United States Senate,
Wigfall did not relax his efforts to enhance his own position and his
fame as a speaker. Using every opportunity to speak, Wigfall strength­
ened the states' rights element in the Democratic party in Texas. Of
the party in 1857, King noted "... they had elected their governor,
won most of the lesser offices, helped elect a successor for the Senate
--two years before the General's [Houston] term expired--and they had
sent one of their most radical members, J. P. Henderson, to the Senate
... it had been a good year for Wigfall and the rest of the Demo­
crats."60 Since he had nominated Henderson, Wigfall was heir apparent
when Henderson died shortly after taking office. However, although
the Dallas Herald recommended him, he was not elected immediately
because of his stand on certain issues. He chose the wrong time in
the Texas Senate to advocate the revival of foreign slave trade and
to filibuster for more slave territory in Latin America. Because
some of his most loyal supporters, including Loughery of the Texas

59 Texas Republican, July 4, 1857, article reprinted from the
Galveston News.

60 King, Louis T. Wigfall, p. 111.
Republican, endorsed the moderate John H. Regan, Wigfall almost lost the opportunity to become a United States Senator. Seeing the strategic blunder, Wigfall tried to divert attention from his mistake by introducing a bill to establish a state university. However, the slave trade debates which followed helped split the Democratic party and elect Houston governor. King views this period as a low ebb for Wigfall, possibly the end of the extremists' control of Texas politics, a force that would have been short lived. But the raid of John Brown reversed the trend toward moderate conservatism throughout the state. After much maneuvering by his supporters in Austin, Wigfall won election to the United States Senate.

THE INFLUENCE OF NEWSPAPERS

When he secretly controlled the editorial policy of the Edgefield Advertiser for a short time in 1840, Wigfall discovered the power of the press. For the remainder of his political career, he sought the support of influential newspapers. During his Texas career, he sent the editor of the Texas Republican materials about his activities. As a result, the newspaperman supported him with praise such as follows:

We have given as full a synopsis of Col. Wigfall's speech as our limits allow. We have no room for commentary, further than to say, that in our opinion no unprejudiced man is likely to read it, and vote for General Houston.

We learn that Col. Wigfall replied to General Houston at Clarksville and Paris with the most happy effect. The

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61 Texas Republican, April 22, 29; May 6; October 1, 1859.

62 King, Louis T. Wigfall, pp. 70-78, for details on Wigfall's election to the U. S. Senate.
Democratic party are thoroughly aroused.\textsuperscript{63}

Col. L. T. Wigfall, who has been traveling with Gen. Houston since he left this place reached home on Thursday. He made a tour of the Northern counties of East Texas, and brings home the most encouraging accounts of the unity and sentiment and enthusiasm of the Democracy.\textsuperscript{64}

In December, 1859, Loughery summarized the \textit{Texas Republican} role in encouraging the political career of the newly elected United States Senator Wigfall:

As early as 1848, he denounced the doctrine of squatter sovereignty, and from that day to this has steadily contended that the only way to preserve this government from destruction, was to insist upon a strict construction of the Federal Constitution and a rigid maintenance of the rights of states. He has opposed all concessions and compromise of right, justice, and state equality as but the first steps to disunion. On the stump and through the press he has denounced those who favored such a policy. In 1849 he arraigned Gen. Houston, in the zenith of his popularity and power, as recreant to the South and to the country. Then he was regarded as an adventurer and the doctrines he proclaimed were denounced as heretical. Ours was the only Democratic press at that time in Texas, that advocated like opinions. Today they embody the principles of the Democratic party of the Union, and he finds himself a Senator of the Congress.\textsuperscript{65}

\textbf{SUMMARY}

Wigfall grew to manhood in an area of South Carolina that respected oratory. His education at South Carolina College included indoctrination in the precepts of secession and practice debating \textit{how} and \textit{when} the South should secede. Wigfall was an individualist considered too radical for Edgefield, South Carolina in 1844. Through poor business management and unwise political activities, he became socially,}

\textsuperscript{63}\textit{Texas Republican}, June 27, 1857.

\textsuperscript{64}\textit{Texas Republican}, July 4, 1857.

\textsuperscript{65}\textit{Texas Republican}, December 24, 1859.
politically, and financially bankrupt; consequently, he sought a new life in Texas in 1846.

Using his abilities as a debater and political speaker, Wigfall assumed leadership in the Texas Democratic party and helped to create a radical states' rights wing that won control of the party within ten years and sent him to the United States Senate in 1859. Exploiting the newspapers as an "available means of persuasion," he developed a public image that inspired the voters to see him as the self-sacrificing servant of the Democratic party.
CHAPTER III

THE ATMOSPHERE FOR THE ENCOUNTERS

During the late 1840's slavery became increasingly the focus of attention for the North and South as territorial expansion demanded guidelines concerning slavery. Perhaps anticipating the shrinking political power of his section, John C. Calhoun tried unsuccessfully to provide safeguards for the South. In 1850 the threat of secession was averted by compromise but slavery remained the central subject of discussion. "The conflict between North and South in 1850," Avery O. Craven stated, "had grown out of certain very basic developments which would increase rather than decline in the years ahead. The tendency of the slavery issue to 'elbow' all other business aside and become tangled with almost every measure presented."¹ During the next ten years the country faced problems that moved it toward increased division; Uncle Tom's Cabin, the Kansas-Nebraska Act, popular sovereignty, the Republican party, the Lincoln-Douglas debates, the Dred Scott decision, and John Brown's raid all contributed to the "firey fifties." By 1859, the nation had settled down to a relative peace. Moderate voices were heard above the smaller number of radicals. Of Texas, for example, Allan Nevins concluded: "Before Harper's Ferry, the Texans

had seemed securely under the control of such unionists as Sam Houston and John Reagan."2 The moderate trend prevailed in other southern states as well. "For almost ten months in 1859," according to Harold Schultz,

... the politicians in South Carolina directed most of their thinking and their talking to the subject of the next presidential election. Then, suddenly, in the last half of October, the complexion of politics in South Carolina changed. A single event precipitated a somersault from speculation about president-making to the immediate safety of South Carolina and the South.3

John Brown became the center of attention in North and South. Aided by a hurried trial and execution at the hands of Governor Henry A. Wise of Virginia, abolitionists made of Brown a martyr. To the southerner Brown fulfilled predictions concerning abolitionism. As Craven indicated:

Stripped of all sentimental associations, the John Brown Raid was nothing more or less than the efforts of a band of irresponsible armed outlaws ... Southern reaction was quick and violent. It moved on an accumulation of distrust and fear that had been forming for a generation. Harper's Ferry fitted on to a whole chain of acts and attitudes that had been mounting toward just such a climax ... Talk of secession became general.4

With the country still shaken by the Brown incident, the Thirty-Sixth Congress assembled early in December, 1859. The mood of the country was tense. The anxiety bred uncertainty in the Congress which was, according to Roy Nichols:

... in reality as much a presidential nominating convention as it was a legislative body. The Democratic party was in a diffi-


cult position and was desperately hoping that some advantage might be snatched from the deliberations to make the prospects in 1860 a little brighter... The uncertainty and confusion in the party situation had been increased by the John Brown Raid.5

The fact that the House took two months to elect a Speaker suggested the division of the nation. During those troubled days Virginia Governor Wise offered troops to attack Washington if fighting broke out and Governor William A. Gist, of South Carolina, promised armed support to the congressmen of his state if they offered forcible resistance to the seating of Sherman as Speaker.

Moreover, trouble was not limited to the House, as Senator James H. Hammond, of South Carolina recorded: "Supporters of both parties in the galleries bore lethal weapons and were ready to use them. A single shot or blow might have brought on a melee which would have shocked the civilized world and perhaps dissolved the government." 6

"As a result of his stand on Brown's raid," Lyman Trumbull's biographer wrote: "Trumbull's relations with his colleagues from the South were rapidly deteriorating. The Southerners began to realize that in Trumbull they had a determined foe. Trumbull, on the other hand, with a great deal of insight and wisdom, foresaw the probability of an armed clash with the South." 7 Charles Sumner, returning to the Senate after almost four years absence resulting from the Preston Brooks caning, likewise noted the change in the atmosphere in Washington. In January, 1860, he wrote: "Society is dislocated:


6 Nevins, The Emergence of Lincoln, p. 121.

the diplomats cannot give a dinner without studying their lists as a protocol."

Elected in Texas on the day the Congress assembled, Wigfall arrived in Washington before the Senate transacted any business.

**PHYSICAL SETTING**

Congress moved into the unfinished capitol building January 4, 1859. Margaret Leech called it "the splendid Senate Chamber and the ornate red and gold Hall of Representatives." The size and shape of the new chamber placed demands on speakers' vocal projection not true of the old Senate room where many greats had spoken. Perhaps the most complete description of the Chamber was recorded by a *New York Times* reporter on a day when Senator Douglas addressed the Senate:

> The Senate chamber is an immense oblong apartment, with sloping galleries on its four sides, capable of holding about several hundred spectators: and with gilded partitions dropping down from the front of the galleries aforesaid to the floor. The light comes in from above, through windows richly colored with the armorial bearings of the various States; while the remainder of the ceiling is a mass of fresco and gilding, carved cornices, and marble ornaments, of a style some little more gaudy and less artistic than could be wished.

> On the floor beneath us--which somewhat resembles a richly carpeted cock-pit--there are as many leather arm chairs as there are Senators, and opposite to each chair a little rose wood desk supported on their legs. There seats are arranged in semi-circular rows, four deep, facing the elevated platform on which the Vice-President sits as presiding officer. To the Chairman's right the Democratic sheep are gathered; while to the left sit

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the Republican goats, chewing the cud of "irrespressible conflict" with sweet and bitter feelings.  

According to Robert and Leona Rienow, the senators were not well pleased with their new forum:

The new Senate was ill-lit, depressing, "a chamber without sunlight, a room closed in upon itself, away from the revealing sunlight of Heaven, chilly in winter, intolerably stuffy in summer." . . . here every vital physical and mental energy is impaired if not paralyzed. While we remain here we must live in a dungeon. This chamber is an architectural failure." . . . The acoustics have a hollow echo that only the full galleries can muffle. A Daniel Webster or a John Calhoun would have been enraged. The flattish ceiling seemed to close in on the occupants below. . . . the gray glass panels of the artificial skylight with its listless coppergold symbols, colorless mid-Victorian decorations representing "War," "Peace," and "Progress," strike no spark of exaltation in the observer's eye. No sooner had they moved from the marble halls than the Senators choked the hopper with bills to change the Senate room. If destructive speeches could have torn it down, the new chamber would have been a shambles. Half a million dollars were allocated to alter it, and plans by the sheaf were drawn up.  

Since the chamber was physically uncomfortable, at least some of the confusion characteristic of the 36th Congress may be traced to the physical setting (Figure 2). The dark, cold room probably promoted the already pessimistic attitudes of some senators who saw little hope for compromise. On a few occasions speakers were interrupted by requests to speak louder. No doubt the larger hall, with its vast galleries, contributed to bad manners on the part of some senators during the debates. Edward L. Pierce suggests the atmosphere in the Senate when Charles Sumner returned in 1860:

. . . there appeared to be an understanding on the part of Democratic senators to treat Sumner's speech with contempt or offensive indifference. Some kept away from their seats; others


rose to leave as he began; coming in later, they talked audibly with one another, gathering in groups; they were noisy in the space outside the desks, or in adjacent rooms, and indulged in derisive laughter. Once Sumner stopped, signifying that he was disturbed; and Fitzpatrick, still in the chair, called for order, but in a tone and manner that showed his sympathy with the disorderly senators.  

Patrick Marsh suggests "architects and orators alike have long recognized that the physical premises contribute much to the attitudes of the listeners and the speaker." Clearly the Senate chamber in 1860 affected the receptivity of the gallery audiences as well as the attitudes of speakers.

_**AUDIENCES**_

In the 36th Congress, thirty-eight senators were Democrats, twenty-five Republican, and two of the American party. Two seats were vacant. With fifty-seven percent Democrats, the party also controlled the Presidency, Vice-Presidency, and chaired every Senate committee.  

Wigfall occupied an outside aisle of the back row of the Democratic side next to Senator Joseph Lane from the new state of Oregon (Fig. 3, 4). Besides Lane, Wigfall depended on support from A. G. Brown of Mississippi; James Chesnut and James H. Hammond of South Carolina; Alfred Iverson and James M. Mason of Virginia; Stephen R. Mallory and David L. Yulee of Florida; William K. Sebastian and R. W. Johnson of Arkansas, and his Texas colleague, John Hemphill. During some debates

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12 Pierce, _Memoirs of Charles Sumner_, p. 610.
Wigfall received direct help from Jefferson Davis. However, Wigfall soon learned, as did A. G. Brown, that there were measures on which no one could be counted. In addition to the Republicans who almost filled the other side of the semi-circular chamber, Wigfall faced Democratic senators divided into three groups: southern Democrats, who were deeply concerned over slavery and, therefore, adamantly opposed to Stephen Douglas; the northwest branch of the party who were tired of the "doughface" label and the Republican charge that they were "only vassals of the South;" and the eastern Democrats, the "midway traders," who might make the difference between party unity or disunity. Northern Democrats such as John P. Hale of New Hampshire, Douglas of Illinois, and George Pugh of Ohio, opposed Wigfall.

The Democrats spoke more often in the first session than did the Republicans who seemed content to observe the efforts of Democrats preoccupied with the presidential nominating convention scheduled for Charleston in April, 1860. The presence of at least ten presidential hopefuls among the Democrats increased the tension. As Nichols concluded, "the Democrats were no match for the Republicans at sitting."

15 Congressional Globe, 36th Congress, p. 2271.
16 On May 25, 1860, Brown offered an amendment to the Davis resolutions before the Senate for which he could obtain the votes of only two other senators, Johnson, of Arkansas and Mallory, of Florida. Brown uttered in defiance, "We are three. We are a small band. That is as many as was required to save Sodom. I think the Republic is safe." In James B. Rauch, Albert Gallatin Brown Radical Southern Nationalist (New York: D. Appleton Century Co., Inc., 1937), pp. 202-203.
18 Ibid., p. 282.
19 Ibid., p. 276.
Of the discordant situation, James Hammond said: "there are no relations not absolutely indispensible in the conduct of joint business between the North and South in either House. No two nations on earth are or ever were more distinctly separate and hostile than we are here."\(^{20}\)

**GALLERY AUDIENCES**

Although the hall was often thinly populated, when Douglas, Sumner, or someone of similar stature spoke, the large audiences that assembled sometimes produced unusual results. The struggle of the House for six weeks to select a speaker attracted curiosity-seekers. In an article entitled, "Crazy Visitors," the Washington *Evening Star* depicted the problem:

Since the beginning of the session of Congress, the police of the Capitol have had considerable trouble with disorderly persons. America Burnham, the would-be speaker, bothered them for a season, and a powerful man, who sports a big club has lately been about the Capitol, "trying to induce members to organize." But he says "Congress is stubborn and self-willed, they are perverse, joined to their idols; and the Lord and himself have determined to let them alone, and turn them over to the devil." Another fellow walked from New York to Washington "to organize the House;" but was instead arrested, and after promising to suspend his patriotic efforts, was let go. Yesterday, a German, who came from California and claimed to be a Senator elect, was taken from the House for attempting to take part in the proceedings. He had presented his credentials at the Senate door, but upon their examination by the Doorkeeper, they proved to be nothing but old express bills by the Wells, Fargo and Co. Line. Tuesday, an employee in the House introduced a person of doubtful character, a female, into the ladies gallery by conducting her through the committee rooms. The fact of her presence there was reported and she was forthwith invited to leave. The employee was dismissed instanter. Yesterday some half dozen disorderly applauders were taken from the gallery for indulging in their pot-house expressions of approbations, and taken before Capt.  

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\(^{20}\)Ibid., p. 287.
Dunnington, who, after lecturing them upon the impropriety of their conduct, allowed them to depart.\textsuperscript{21}

Observers in the gallery, noisy and militant, caused Senator James W. Grimes of Iowa to complain, "The members on both sides are armed in the galleries."\textsuperscript{22} On more than one occasion the galleries had to be cleared.

Spectators and senators alike consumed hard liquor, a factor which may have made some of the all-night sessions more bearable and, no doubt, contributed to the disruptions and disorder. The Rienows report:

Alcoholism had, by the 1850's, also become a Senate tradition. Some senators tippled on the floor as nonchalantly as others took their snuff. The observation by Lord Elgin, governor-general of Canada, that the reciprocity treaty of 1854 "floated through on waves of champagne" was accompanied by many references to the "whiskey-soaked brains" of the golden Senate. One gentleman remarked that "whiskey is taken into the committee-rooms in demijohns and comes out in demagogues.\textsuperscript{23}

THE LARGER AUDIENCE

Because of his radical statements and possibly because he deliberately attempted to attract attention, Wigfall's activities were frequently reported. In Washington he sought newspaper coverage and he supplied the \textit{Texas Republican} with information about his activities and views. He apparently also directed statements toward northern reporters in the press section. Eager for attention, he did not alter his speech practices even after unflattering editorials appeared in the \textit{New York Times}. Nevertheless, the number of complimentary stories

\textsuperscript{21}Washington \textit{Evening Star}, January 21, 1860.


\textsuperscript{23}Rienow and Rienow, \textit{Of Snuff, Sin and the Senate}, p. 18.
featured in southern newspapers suggest that he probably accomplished his goals.

WIGFALL AS A FRESHMAN SENATOR

Shortly before his election in 1859, a Texas newspaper editor predicted: "Wigfall will present himself in the United States Senate a worthy representative of the gallant state, which is destined to fill so high and important a part in the future of our section of the Union." Wigfall thought of himself as chivalrous and possibly viewed the Senate as a national field of honor where duels were fought with words instead of pistols. If he saw the article, he must have enjoyed what a South Carolina editor wrote: "Col. Louis T. Wigfall, well remembered by Edgefield is proud of her distant sons." A Texas editor penned: "We do not believe Col. Wigfall belongs to any party, or any man or set of men. He is from the chivalrous land of South Carolina, and his blood flows independently through his veins. He is emphatically a Southern man." As a "Southern man" Wigfall faced difficulties in the 36th Congress. "The 'Southern' problem was then, for these men a condition of paralysis brought on by conflicting loyalties--" began William Taylor, "the improvident, generous-hearted gentleman planter for them became increasingly a symbol of a Lost Cause--an insurgent, a dueler, a fighter against overwhelming odds--in short, a figment of a utopian social world which was doomed to be submerged under a tide of

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24Dallas Herald, January 4, 1860.
25Edgefield Advertiser, December 21, 1859.
26Dallas Herald, January 4, 1860.
middle-class materialism." In Washington, Wigfall lost no time in trying to establish himself as "a fighter against overwhelming odds."

According to Alvy King,

Wigfall ignored the tradition that freshman senators should say little, and despite his relegation to two of the less important committees . . . he seized numerous occasions to demonstrate his southernism. Soon he had earned a reputation for his ready, natural eloquence; his exceeding ability as a quick, bitter debater; the acerbity of his taunts; and his readiness for personal encounter; as well as his consistent attendance at Senate settings. His session attendance record is the more notable considering that his debates did not end in the Senate. He also frequented bars and gaming rooms, seeking out adversaries even there.

Allan Nevins described Wigfall as "an alarming newcomer." Wigfall confidently faced all opponents.

Hoping to impress other senators and the Texas voters, Wigfall spoke eagerly and often. Rather than adjust his ideas to his opposition, he sought to overpower his opponents. Not fearing separation, he welcomed secession as a solution to the growing sectional differences. To comprehend Wigfall's frustrations, it is helpful to know how other senators and possibly the gallery spectators viewed him. Many read about the Texan in the New York Tribune which published a distorted account of the feud between Wigfall and the Brooks family in South Carolina twenty years earlier. The editor wrote:

Immediately afterward [following a supposed duel with Whitfield Brooks] Mr. Wigfall received a second challenge from Preston Brooks, known subsequently for his assault on Senator Sumner.

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29 Nevins, Emergence of Lincoln, p. 113.
This challenge Mr. Wigfall declined to accept. The quarrel, however, was not allowed to subside and to avoid further bloodshed Mr. Wigfall soon afterward withdrew from the State to Texas, where he has resided since—from his seclusion thence he has now emerged into the Senate of the United States.30

The article made Wigfall appear to be a coward. No doubt some of his Senate auditors came to hear him out of curiosity.

By introducing legislation soon after his arrival, Wigfall seemed to some senators a rash upstart. His senatorial opponents likely agreed with Charles Sumner, who recorded in his memoirs: "The most offensive of all was Wigfall of Texas, ill-favored by nature and not improved by art, who kept walking about, and doing his best to disconcert the speaker by looks and attitudes."31 However, in his rash behavior, Wigfall followed Lowenthal and Guterman's pattern of the agitator as "the least restrained of all figures in political life," to whose followers even "his bad manners become a quaranty of his sincerity."32

To establish a reputation that would assure newspaper coverage of his speeches, support from his southern colleagues, and the praise of Texans, Wigfall spoke often, used provocative language, and conducted himself in peculiar ways.

WIGFALL'S RHETORICAL OBJECTIVES

As early as 1848 in Texas as the chairman of a resolutions committee for the Democratic party in Texas, Wigfall read the following reso-

31Pierce, Memoirs of Charles Sumner, p. 610.
tions before a convention in Galveston.

1. The United States is a "federal" government and not a national one.
2. The Constitution was created—not by the people of the United States but by the States as a compact between the States.
3. The Federal Government was not a party to the compact but was created by the compact.
4. The Federal Government was created with certain powers for specific purposes—not including the authority to abolish slavery.
5. The Wilmot Proviso was unconstitutional.
6. All territories belong to all the States for their common use. Therefore, squatter sovereignty was unconstitutional.
7. When a territory became a State, it could, if it chose, prohibit slavery.
8. Southerners could not trust any northerner, not even northern Democrats who accepted squatter sovereignty. Wigfall doubted that southerners could trust any northerner on any issue.33

Although the resolutions had little effect at the time they were presented because of Texans' apathy toward the sectional issues implied, during the mid-eighteen fifties the Galveston resolutions and Wigfall's speeches were reprinted and circulated in Texas. Alvy King reports that around 1855 in Texas Wigfall was regarded by some as "simply the most rabid states' rights man in the Lone Star State. But to others he was gaining a reputation as the clearest exponent of the doctrines of John Calhoun."34 Indeed, Wigfall proposed to Calhoun that South Carolina boycott the 1848 election and take the lead in organizing a "Southern Party" to insist upon slavery in the territories. If they could not get it, Wigfall recommended secession.

Soon after the 1848 election Wigfall sent Calhoun a copy of a set of resolutions adopted at a public meeting in Marshall. Exaggerating

33Galveston, Texas, News, October 30, 1855; Texas Republican, December 24, 1859.

34King, Louis T. Wigfall, p. 52.
the extent to which the statements reflected the thinking of Texans, Wigfall sought to influence South Carolina. Among other declarations, the resolutions:

1. Called public attention to southern rights under the Constitution and attacked Senator Sam Houston and President James K. Polk for not defending those rights.
2. The last hope for southern states was to stand upon the Constitution and declare that while they were willing to preserve the Constitution of 1787, they would not allow its perversion.35

Reflecting Wigfall's influence over the young Democratic party in Texas, in 1855 twenty-two of ninety-nine counties in Texas adopted resolutions endorsing states' rights and slavery and censuring Houston's stand on the Kansas-Nebraska Act. As King suggests, by 1857 Wigfall was "generally recognized in Texas as a leader of the radical states' rights Democrats."36 In the Texas Senate Wigfall used every opportunity to affirm states' rights.

Upon his election as a United States Senator in 1859, he made a speech to the Texas Congress which included the following resolves:

1. He vowed to uphold the Constitution.
2. He vowed to uphold the Cincinnati platform.
3. He pledged to support Buchanan as long as Buchanan upheld the Constitution and the Cincinnati platform.
4. He pledged to aid the Democratic party to successfully oppose the Republicans who were marching down upon the [South].
5. He believed the laws making slave trade piracy to be unconstitutional but determined not to vote against repeal because he saw it as an impractical issue designed to divide the Democratic party.
6. He opposed a slave code for the territories. He determined that no distinction should be made in regard to property but let it all stand upon an equal footing.37

35 Ibid., p. 53.
36 Ibid., p. 63.
37 Matt Dale's account of Wigfall's election, Texas Republican, December 24, 1859.
Indicative of what some Texans expected of Wigfall are the following statements from state newspapers. In McKinney, Texas, the Democrats regarded "his election and approval by Texas Democrats as evidence of their unswerving devotion to democratic principles and of their determination to uphold the same." The Kaufman Democratic convention endorsed "his election as a wise choice of talent and capacity, to meet the present emergencies." Sequin citizens applauded him as a "valorous champion," while the Upshur residents recognized his "eminent talents, his thorough knowledge of history and of the issues before the country, his undeviating devotion to principle, and his distinguished services." Finally, the Dallas Herald editor stated: "Wigfall may have his faults, but among them will not be found idleness or indifference to the interests of the State, nor want of nerve, ability and eloquence to demand her rights."

Believing his election constituted a mandate for states' rights advocacy in Washington, Wigfall seemed to pursue six rhetorical objectives:

1. To establish a national reputation for himself as a spokesman for the South. Convinced that the time was right for secession the Texan began immediately to speak out in defense of Texas, tangle with northerners in debate, attract newspaper coverage by every conceivable means, and to cultivate the friendship of southerners such as Jefferson Davis.

2. To disrupt the legislative process. Asking questions, violating senatorial customs, attacking absurd implications to such bills as the homestead act, and forcing northerners to spend time defending themselves, Wigfall helped limit progress among the lawmakers.

38Dallas Herald, February 22, 1860.

39Ibid., February 29, 1860.

40Ibid., January 4, 1860.
3. To defeat Douglas' candidacy even if it wrecked the Democratic party. Fascinated by the southern cabal to discredit the Illinois Democrat, as he had done in 1840 in Edgefield, Wigfall joined the effort with all his energy. Eventually Davis and other southerners left the attack against Douglas almost exclusively to Wigfall.

4. To urge southern states to withdraw. Since his college days Wigfall had believed in and urged secession. In 1860 he was abruptly promoted to a position of national prominence from which he could influence the country toward disruption. He made the most of his opportunities.

5. To delay compromise efforts. In 1861 most Republicans and Democrats returned to Washington expecting peace-makers to work out a solution as they had done in past crises. However, Wigfall determined to thwart conciliation, encouraged South Carolinians and other southern states to withdraw, and force a confrontation in Charleston harbor.

6. To present a rationale for establishing a confederacy. One of the problems secessionists faced was border states reluctance to secede. Through seemingly endless repetition of the compact theory of arrangement of states, Wigfall attempted to justify dissolving the Union.

It is hoped that analysis of the encounters will reveal the extent to which Wigfall achieved his objectives.

SUMMARY

John Brown's raid on Harper's Ferry re-kindled a climate for states' rights and secession that sent Wigfall to the Senate.

In Washington the Texan joined other senators who were armed, suspicious, and unhappy in the dreary atmosphere of their new Chamber. While the Democrats quarreled among themselves the Republicans calmly sat back and waited.

Among the noisy, often drunken gallery spectators and the newspaper reporters who covered the proceedings, Wigfall labored to accomplish rhetorical objectives that reflected states' rights beliefs that he had advocated for more than a decade in Texas. Thrust into a position of national prominence, Wigfall carried the endorsement of Texas radical states' righters.
CHAPTER IV

ENCOUNTER ONE: FEDERAL FUNDS FOR TEXAS VOLUNTEERS

In Washington in 1860 northern and southern senators reacted to John Brown's Raid. "On the opening day of the Senate," noted Allan Nevins, James Mason of Virginia offered a resolution "that a committee be appointed to inquire into the facts attending the late invasion and seizure of the armory and arsenal at Harper's Ferry, in Virginia, by a band of armed men."¹ Of the times Avery Craven concluded, "men were in no mood for looking after the business of the nation. Instead they threatened and talked of things sectional."² For southerners, Craven observed, "only one conclusion could be reached. Brown and his deeds were the legitimate offspring of the forces that had created the Republican party, had encouraged the fugitive slaves, and had denied to the South its equal constitutional rights in the Union. . . . the Harper's Ferry outbreak was 'the natural fruit of this treasonable irrepressible conflict doctrine.'"³ Few northerners realized the psychological impact of Brown's Raid on southern thinking. Nevins

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³Ibid., p. 309.
states, "nobody, in fact, as 1860 opened, could predict how far the South would go in the fateful months ahead. The men most uneasy were those who realized that, in a time of revolutionary crisis, the extremists always gain ground at the expense of the moderates." Even before Harper's Ferry, some moderates in the South perceived the dangers. Sam Houston, for instance, believed "the very existence of the country was threatened by the three dogmas of Nullification, Secession, and Disunion, 'which are in vogue with many men who claim to be friends of the South, but are in reality demagogues, who live on agitation, hoping to be elevated by the confusion of the times.'"

When he arrived in Washington Wigfall apparently determined to pursue objectives set in motion during the ten years he had devoted to the Democratic party in Texas: to establish a national reputation for himself as a states' rights defender and to bring about secession. Alvy King indicated, "Wigfall attracted attention quickly when he spoke in defense of Texas in reply to Henry Wilson who attacked the state and Sam Houston." Wigfall drew northern senators' laughter, scorn from the northern press, but the praise from Texas newspapers. A Dallas editor wrote:

Mr. Wigfall replied, and protested against the Senator's [Wilson] desire to arraign Texas as a criminal in the long list of grievances he brought against the South, and, in a few eloquent remarks, defended his State from the charge of having received $10,000,000 for territory to which she was not entitled. He successfully controverted the position of Mr. Wilson, and read

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5Ibid., p. 39.

extracts from Sam Houston's speeches in which he laid claim to the entire territory East of the Rio Grande up to the 42nd parallel of North latitude. His remarks were wholly to the point, and covered the case, to the entire discomfiture of Mr. Wilson.

Reprinting favorable comments from other Texas publications, the editor continued: "We are proud to see that our distinguished Senator has made his mark so early in the session, and so soon after his appearance in the Senate Chamber." States' rights Texans wanted a man of action and Wigfall seemed to be the appropriate choice. The same newspaperman foretold Wigfall's future:

Nor will he [Wigfall] be contented with one or two elaborate speeches during the session, but will be the active defender of our rights, and a warm and uncompromising advocate of sound principles. Senator Wigfall will never quietly or silently submit to any unjust importations upon his honor, or that of his State; and Texas may well feel proud that she has a giant of his intellect and an iron will to back her cause in the Senate.7

Upon learning that his Texas colleague John Hemphill had introduced a bill to raise funds for a regiment of volunteers to help protect Texas borders against Indians and Mexicans and that Hemphill's bill had been referred to committee, in a move to attract attention, Wigfall introduced a bill similar to that of Hemphill. Resolved to prove that he was a man of action who could accomplish his goals, Wigfall concentrated on no other question during the two weeks the senators debated the proposal. Need for the appropriation was questionable. In the first place, more than twenty-five hundred troops already patrolled the area and while he was a senator, Houston unsuccessfully requested funds frequently over a ten year period.

7Dallas Herald, February 28, 1860.
Because Houston had failed, Wigfall seemed even more determined to succeed. Some Texans looked upon the federal appropriation as a means for reducing the state's military commitment. The Dallas Herald editor admitted, "should this large appropriation pass the State will be relieved of a heavy expense, and the $300,000 appropriated by our legislature for frontier protection, becomes unnecessary for the purpose it was designed." Since the measure called for a large federal expenditure, Wigfall probably hoped for wide newspaper coverage. Moreover, he possibly wanted Texas troops trained and ready in the event of civil war. At any rate, he insisted that the soldiers be Texans.

SEGMENT ONE: FEBRUARY 24, 1860

Situation. On February 24 the Senate considered petitions, committee reports, messages from the House, and new bills which were usually read and referred to committee. Perhaps choosing deliberately a day of routine business, Wigfall introduced the bill insisting that it need not be debated. If it passed he would gain stature as a legislator who succeeded where other Texans had failed; if it did not pass, he could blame northerners for discriminating against a southern state, thereby providing evidence that southerners could not trust the North. Either way, Wigfall would gain favorable attention in the South and advance his national reputation.

Wigfall based his appropriations request on 1858 legislation which permitted the President to establish three new regiments in the event of war in Utah. One regiment was to be organized in Texas. However,

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8 Ibid., March 10, 1860.
because the war did not materialize and because Congress neglected to appropriate funds, President Buchanan made no attempt to organize the military groups. Requesting funds from Congress, Wigfall proposed to quell renegade Mexicans and Indians who raided border settlements. Either assuming the other senators were familiar with the details of the Indian troubles or hoping to shortcut the legislative process, Wigfall limited his February 24th discussion to the Mexican difficulties.

Strategies. During this brief segment Wigfall used primarily two strategies:

1. Solidification of senators to support his appropriation requests.
2. Objectification of senators who resisted the proposal.

In addition, he subtly inserted statements by which he hoped to impress other senators or the voters back in Texas with his knowledge of the problem and his ability to bring about an immediate solution, the appropriation.

Solidification. Perhaps naive in his approach, the Texan sought to establish a climate or mood in the Chamber that would make opposition to his request difficult. Through descriptions of the "present disordered condition" in Texas along an "unprotected frontier," Wigfall appealed to emotions such as fear and anger to hurry Senate approval. For example, he presented a detailed account of the activities of a Mexican named "Cortinas," the head of a "banditti," who broke open the jail and liberated the prisoners." Through the words "Mexican," "Cortinas," and "banditti," Wigfall attempted to stir hatred against foreigners who attacked citizens of a state and to arouse sympathy for Texans who suffered from the raids. Wigfall likely selected the foreign sounding names and the Mexican pronunciation of
"banditti" for their emotional power. Moreover, he probably thought the newspapers were likely to print a graphic account of terrors committed on the border of "foreigners." To shame reluctant senators who slept safely in Washington Wigfall claimed that "from that time to this, that man has been ravaging the entire frontier." To secure approval of the appropriation, Wigfall evidently hoped the senators would react emotionally to the horrors of destruction and death without deliberating at length as to the propriety of the Texan's procedure.

Exaggerating the destruction, Wigfall claimed "they have destroyed every fence; they have burnt every house; they have robbed every man." Then, stressing the need for immediate action, he prophesied, "if something is not done, the people of that entire valley will be left to starve." Placing the burden on his fellow senators, the Texan added, "unless there is some action, in passing through that country you will find at least no white men, no woman, no little child, no four-footed beasts. One dead, uniform silence will reign through the whole region." The phrase, "unless there is some action" provides insight into Wigfall's strategy. He wanted the Senate to act and he wanted to be in a position to take credit for having stirred them to accomplish his predetermined goal. Choosing loaded terms such as "white men," "no woman," "no little child," and "dead silence," Wigfall attempted to create a chimate that would hasten approval of his bill.

Aware that some senators might suggest relocating federal troops, Wigfall tried to thwart a move to that end. Possibly anticipating the need for additional trained Texans in civil war, Wigfall asserted, "you may take the entire American Army there and it would not produce peace and quiet." Although he did not elaborate, the Texan argued that only
Texans could protect Texas borders. By not developing his arguments thoroughly, Wigfall revealed that he over-estimated his persuasive abilities to cause the Senate to rally behind an emotional plea to provide a million dollars for Texas border relief.

Objectification. Eager to have his constituents praise his efforts whether the appropriation passed or failed, Wigfall objectified or placed blame on groups in at least three instances. Through details of his own efforts to obtain the appropriation—supposedly through normal channels—Wigfall indicted House members who said they did not see the necessity for the funds, senators who contended that money bills had to originate in the House, and the Executive Department which claimed they were unwilling to do anything until Congress passed an appropriation. One detailed example will demonstrate how Wigfall shifted the blame. After providing graphic descriptions of atrocities committed by Mexicans against white settlers on the Texas border, Wigfall said:

Now, under these circumstances, I appeal to members of the other House to pass the appropriation bill, and they say they do not see the need of passing an appropriation for a regiment that is not in the field. I ask the Senate to pass an appropriation bill, and they answer—I speak of individual Senators—that money bills must originate in the other House. I go to the Executive Department, and I am told that they are unwilling to do anything until Congress has passed an appropriation. I come to Congress, and they say that they are not willing to do anything until the Executive Department has asked it; and thus, between the different departments of this Government, that entire section of Texas, the entire valley of the Rio Grande, from the mouth to one thousand miles up the river, is in the condition that was described by Burke, when he spoke of the devastations of Hyder Ali, who dealing with a people who would enter into no convention, or who could be bound by no treaty stipulations, determined to put desolation as a barrier between him and those with whom he had to deal.9

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9Congressional Globe, pp. 874-875.
To other senators, the Texan appealed for the bill's approval on the basis of the lives the regiment would save. For his supporters in Texas, Wigfall apparently hoped to create the impression that he had been working hard and that he had exhausted every possible avenue to obtain the border relief. He continued to imply, as he had throughout his Texas career, that northerners could not be trusted or would not listen to reasonable pleas for help from the South.

Revealing his motive to circumvent the legislative process, Wigfall emphasized at least four times that there was no need to debate the bill. When John Crittenden of Kentucky insisted on discussion, Wigfall withdrew the bill.

**Effects.** Wigfall seems to have been testing whether he might gain a favorable hearing and sudden approval of his bill. Aware that some senators already viewed him as an upstart, he risked committee referral. Therefore, by offering the measure cautiously, he hoped to avoid opposition and, possibly, to attain a surprise victory. When his strategy failed, he shrewdly retreated. Except to convince some that he was rash and violated Senate traditions, Wigfall had little effect on the Senate. Nevertheless, he avoided having the bill assigned to committee, undermined good relations that might have existed between northern and southern senators who needed to act in concert to pass the bill, and projected the impression that Texans had correctly chosen a states' rights advocate to accomplish their goals in Washington. At any rate, he vocalized the needs and desires of the section of the country he represented.
SEGMENT TWO: MARCH 1, 1860

Situation. When William Seward spoke in the Senate on February 28, he aggravated sectional tensions. A New York Times reporter described the situation:

The report that Senator Seward would speak today, crowded the immense galleries, and by noon it was impossible to procure standing room within hearing of the chamber, although the proceedings did not commence till 1 o'clock. The great leader of the Republican party was in fine condition, and exhibited unmistakable consciousness of his own power to meet the expectations of his party and his country. With all the calmness of a May morning he approached the subject, and for more than an hour riveted the attention of all. The Democratic side of the Chamber bore the excoriation administered to secession and disunion, though it was restless under the expose' of Southern fanaticism.10

In that climate Wigfall became more bold and determined to insist on secession as a southern right. As Nevins concludes: "Yet all the while the sectional quarrel, like a cancer gnawing at the viscera of some outwardly healthy man, furnished constant spasms of pain and fever. When Congress was in session the inflammation was at its worst."11 An exchange between Mississippi's Jefferson Davis and New Hampshire's John Hale suggests the tension. In his speech on the sale of federal arms Davis recalled a speech in which Hale derided Military Academy graduates. Although Hale had spoken in jest, Davis could not accept the remarks as humorous. After several exchanges Hale apologized: "If there was not great wit in it, it certainly was harmless, and hardly deserved to be designated a demagogical fling."12

11 Nevins, The Emergence of Lincoln, p. 309.
12 Congressional Globe, p. 948.
In a surprise move less than a week after his first unsuccessful effort to secure funds for a Texas regiment, Wigfall amended William Gwin's Military Academy bill, tagging on a request for a million dollars for Texas troops. As one would expect, Gwin immediately objected. Anticipating a dispute over the legality of his action, Wigfall read from the Senate rules to justify his amendment. Subsequently the chair ruled the amendment in order.

**Strategies.** Revealing for the first time an overall goal to polarize the North and South, Wigfall merely used the appropriations measure as a vehicle to accomplish his long-range purpose. In fact, considering his intentions, he might have preferred defeat to passage of the bill. In the context of driving apart the sections three specific strategies emerge:

1. Continued efforts to solidify the Senate to approve the appropriation without the usual extended debate.
2. Objectification of northerners as enemies of the South who denied the need because they did not like Wigfall.
3. Vilification of William Fessenden as a representative of northern senators who did not know nor sympathize with the problems of the South.

**Solidification.** Compared to the initial hurried attempt to force a favorable vote, Wigfall appeared to provide a logical argument for accepting the bill. For example, instead of relying solely on detailed descriptions of the atrocities in Texas, he supported the claim with facts:

Upon a line of frontier a thousand miles, there is now one company of cavalry, numbering forty-seven men. This is from the Department of War. At another post, some four or five hundred miles distant, there is a company of cavalry numbering fifty-three; and another of forty-nine. Three companies of cavalry are upon that line of defense, numbering in all, one hundred
and forty-nine men. There two hundred and ninety-two other troops--infantry and artillery. We need troops there.\textsuperscript{13}

In spite of his failure to identify specifically the date of the documents, Wigfall at least cited some evidence and summarized his appeal. However, in his exchanges with other senators, Wigfall pressed the need for action through emotional appeals such as fear and terror. Depicting murder, rape, and degradation of Americans by Mexicans and Indians, the Texan suggested that "the frontier is pleading" for the appropriation. Providing graphic detail, he continued: "The day before yesterday I received news that four habitations had then, and just then, been destroyed. All of these four families were killed, saving and excepting two women who had been carried off, and, after being outraged in a manner that it is impossible here to explain, were stripped and allowed to come back without a vestige of clothing upon them."

Toward the end of the day he added, "there is an actual war now raging on the frontier of Texas, both on the north and on the west." His emphasis upon the harsh acts of murder, rape, and mistreatment of families seemed calculated to arouse anger and hatred, thus taking advantage of long held deep-seated prejudice toward Mexicans and Indians. Through a strategy of terror Wigfall may have wanted the other senators to disregard costs and vote the appropriation.

In response to the suggestion that the regular army troops could be relocated, Wigfall argued for Texas recruits. To support his premise he reasoned: "This is no proposition to increase the Army. It is a proposition simply to pass an appropriation for a volunteer regiment

\textsuperscript{13}Ibid., p. 936.
that can be mustered out of service at any moment that it ceases to be useful."\textsuperscript{14} Hinting that the need might be temporary and that once the Mexicans and Indians were under control the regiment could be eliminated, Wigfall sought to rally support of senators concerned about the cost of new troops. He still hoped that the senators would provide approval of the appropriation that day. Expanding the idea of saving money through the temporary regiment of troops, Wigfall employed what Brembeck and Howell term argument by condition or an "if-then" argument.\textsuperscript{15} However, close scrutiny suggests that Wigfall probably was more concerned about the emotionalism of his language than logic. At any rate, he seemed oblivious to the risks of failure as he pleaded: "If Senators believe there is no border war; if they believe there is no necessity for doing this, let them vote 'no.' All I ask is, that a vote may be taken and the question disposed of."\textsuperscript{16} Hinting by a fear appeal of a "foreign war with an entire nation that may lead to consequences most disastrous," he implied that Texas Rangers, not under federal jurisdiction, might recklessly invade Mexico. Therefore, Wigfall claimed that refusing to spend a million dollars then might prove to be more expensive in the long run.

\textbf{Objectification.} Conclusions concerning his motives are at best speculative, but Wigfall seemed to believe that the amendment would pass if he could force a vote. Accordingly, he chose again not to

\textsuperscript{14}Ibid., pp. 937, 938, 943.


\textsuperscript{16}Congressional Globe, p. 943.
develop his arguments completely. For example, he stated of his preference for a volunteer regiment: "My reasons I have stated already. I do not intend to weary the patience of the Senate by recapitulating them." At another point he concluded: "I will not debate it any more." Later, in seeming anger, he challenged: "If there is justice in our request, grant it, if not, object to it; do not speak until the hour is out, and so prevent action." Like the salesman striving for a quick close, Wigfall intensified his pressure for decision. Declaring that he wanted to end debate, Wigfall evidently thought his insistence would gain approval from the other senators. He seemed confident that a vote would go in his favor. Nevertheless, he possibly would have been just as happy to have the northerners defeat the bill. Not really worried that he might "weary the patience of the Senate," Wigfall was determined to rush the legislative process or accomplish defeat so that he might blame Republicans or northern Democrats for discriminating against Texas.

Wigfall contended that Texas had exhausted her own resources in border relief. Describing the situation, he contended: "During the last two years we have kept from two to three companies in the field." Acknowledging Hemphill's help, Wigfall continued, "I am told by colleague, more." When Wigfall asserted that Texas had never been paid back "one dollar" from the federal government, Hemphill corrected him stating that Texas had received partial payment. Disregarding the correction Wigfall continued to stress the state's involvement: "We have

17 Ibid., p. 938.
eight companies in the field now, and paid for by the State." In exaggerating Texas' sacrifices in border relief Wigfall approximated the "big lie" technique sometimes used in persuasion. At any rate, he was striving for acceptance without much inquiry as to the reasons. As he often did, Wigfall attempted to blame a scapegoat for his failure --Republicans, northerners--persons far from Texas. Of course, he was also stirring hatred toward the North--a factor needed to prepare for secession.

Probably thinking of Texas readers Wigfall summarized: "I feel at a loss what course to pursue. I know individually the necessity of passing this appropriation immediately; but Senators on the other side not doubting these facts, do not like the manner in which they are proved." Perhaps aware that the bill might fail at that point, Wigfall blamed opposing senators. Hinting that "senators on the other side" refused to vote for the measure because they did not like Wigfall personally, the Texan could appear to southerners as a dedicated legislator who wanted to save Texans' lives but was defeated by Republicans and northern Democrats. For Texans who likely would never see a live "Republican" or "northerner" Wigfall pictured them as devilish creatures without concern for the South.

Unable to resist pointed jabs at Republicans, Wigfall expressed his dislike for the North. Early in the debate he said: "If it [border outrage] had occurred upon the border of any other State in

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18 Ibid., p. 939.
20 Congressional Globe, p. 943.
this Union, the indignation which would have been felt in every section would have borne down upon any man who opposed any measure of protection." In other words, he accused northern senators of lack of concern for Texas because they held the state in low regard. The argument stirred resentment in Texas where the citizens felt that they were unfairly treated and resentment among northerners who disliked being accused of being unfair and less than honest. Of course, this was an effort to polarize the two sides. Using what Paul Brandes labels the "pity-poor-me" theme which attempts to gain sympathy, Wigfall continued with ridicule, "but I suppose they think we are accustomed to being murdered." Thus Wigfall sought to gain approval of the appropriation by insinuating that to defeat it would be to discriminate against Texans. Wigfall hoped to gain supporters who sympathized with the underdog.

Vilification. The lone instance of vilification occurred when Lyman Trumbull, the Illinois Republican, moved to refer the amendment to committee. Although William Fessenden of Maine pointed out that an appropriation could not become effective before July, Wigfall still pressed for a vote. Employing analogy, Wigfall leveled a personal attack on Fessenden:

The Senator knows that there is such a city as New Orleans, though he probably was never there. He has seen that in newspapers. He knows that a man by the name of Cortinas has crossed the border, and is continuing to cross it. The Senator from Maine knows that the Administration, with these facts before it, has declined to send in a message, and will not.22

21 Ibid., p. 937.

22 Ibid., p. 943.
Suggesting that Fessenden was ignorant, dishonest, and probably had never been to New Orleans, Wigfall strove to diminish the Maine senator's character and influence. Through a question as trivial as whether or not Fessenden had been to New Orleans Wigfall created questions of credibility in the readers' minds. After all, Wigfall might claim, if Fessenden had never been South, he could not know the problems.

Effects. Other than rallying some southern supporters and a favorable statement from Douglas, Wigfall caused little change among the senators. To be sure, he did not receive the appropriation because the Senate adjourned without voting on the bill. However, he probably stirred negative reactions among his opponents whom he accused of disregard for lives and property. And, as usual, he undergirded his argument with the sectional charge that northerners discriminated against the South. Although reaction to his rash accusations delayed the vote he demanded, Wigfall accomplished his goal of attracting attention to himself as the author of a bill. In Texas, especially, he was regarded as a champion of states' rights. He provoked for his constituents an image of himself as fearless and determined in the face of "northern" enemies of the South. Moreover, he helped polarize the two sections: among northerners he promoted the impression that southerners were arrogant, offensive, and demanding; among southerners he intensified the message that he had preached for years in Texas, northerners do not have genuine concern for the suffering of the South.
SEGMENT THREE: MARCH 6, 1860

Situation. Late in the afternoon of March 6 William Gwin moved to consider the Military Academy bill to which Wigfall's amendment was attached. Although Gwin had hoped to get the bill on the floor merely to make it unfinished business for the following day, Wigfall urged senators to vote immediately. Because of the late hour Fessenden objected to consideration. As tempers flared, R. W. Johnson of Arkansas supported Wigfall. Benjamin Wade of Ohio reminded senators that he was scheduled the next day to discuss another matter. Davis, Gwin, and Mason spoke in favor of considering the bill which, according to Gwin, "is so pressing, on account of affairs in Texas." Fessenden questioned Wigfall's motives for waiting so late in the day to call for the bill. As senators argued, the chamber became discordant. Wigfall seemed to choose deliberately procedures that created controversy in the Senate. Hungry for attention, he must have gloried in the dispute over his actions and subsequent newspaper coverage.

Illustrating the confusion, James Bayard, the Delaware Democrat attempted to introduce a new measure. When the presiding officer ruled him out of order, Bayard responded, "with what I see of the tone and temper of the Senate, I am not desirous, though that is a practical question, to press it upon them now."

Rising to "make a word of explanation," Wigfall said that he presented his measure as an amendment "because I knew that if I introduced an original bill it would be referred to committee." Admitting his strategy, Wigfall probably surprised some senators. Indicating he lacked legislative experience, he continued:
Last Wednesday or Thursday that question came up. We took a test vote on it. . . . There were at least three Senators on that side [Republican side] who declared that they would vote for it. We took a test vote upon that motion. There were 31 votes in favor and 25 on the other side. Just at that time, however, by some parliamentary legerdemain which I do not understand, whilst I was filibustering about, and electioneering for my bill, the Senator from Delaware [Saulsbury] had the bill referred to committee; and "Presto change!" Before I could turn around and see what was done, the Senate had it again from the committee, and upon the table. [Laughter]

Strategies. Intensifying his goal to polarize the North and South, Wigfall employed only one specific strategy: objectification of opposing senators as insensitive men who would rather adjourn the Senate in time for dinner than to provide relief for suffering Texans.

Attempting to justify his efforts to circumvent the usual legislative process, Wigfall explained that "the state of things in Texas" motivated him to act as he did. Trusting to "luck and the sense of justice and patriotism of the two Houses to make the appropriation," Wigfall expressed confidence that the bill would pass. In his strategy Wigfall would either secure the appropriation or claim that his opponents lacked "justice and patriotism." He benefitted either way.

To answer complaints that the bill was introduced late in the day Wigfall "turned the tables." That is, seizing the offensive, he rebuked his opponents for watching the clock. Eager to place blame among his enemies, he said: "I have heard that in England, not during the better days of the Republic, prisoners were sometimes hanged that judges might dine." Again he lectured his opposition and attributed to them less than honorable motives. Not only did he intensify hatred toward himself, but he helped polarize northerners against southerners. As was frequently true, Wigfall presented negative appeals of blame or rebuke. Perhaps knowing that a freshman senator had little hope of succeeding
with an appropriation bill, the Texan apparently decided his best chance was to point out the failings of his opponents. He did not call individual senators' names but referred to an "American Senate."

Determined to cause his larger audience—the gallery spectators and newspaper readers—to regard him favorably, Wigfall continued: "I trust God that in this country an American Senate will not adjourn for dinner whilst the people in one of the States of the Union are suffering from the tomahawk and the scalping knife." For the benefit of his readers, particularly, Wigfall chose emotional phrases such as "suffering the tomahawk and the scalping-knife." He wanted the readers or listeners to conclude that in view of the extreme danger in Texas he was justified in bending a few Senate rules. Since the border difficulties had persisted for ten years or more, Wigfall could not prove that a real emergency existed. Consequently he resorted to fear appeals to prompt action. Moreover, he blamed the opposition for refusing to provide the money to solve the problem.

Claiming superior insight Wigfall said, "there is but one way that these people can be reached, and that is in summer." Since he was speaking in March, Wigfall emphasized the importance of immediate action. To strengthen his claim that attacking the Indians during the summer was the only way to solve the problem, Wigfall cited General David Twiggs and a Major Van Dorn who, in 1848, "went into that country and attacked them near the Wichita [sic] or Canadian and defeated them," and he quoted the Secretary of War, who "is disposed to send all the troops he can down to Texas, but there are no troops to send."[23] In

[23] Ibid., p. 1009.
the statement above Wigfall revealed a new line of argument. Instead of contending that Texans were the only reasonable choices to train for the border relief, he suddenly claimed that the Secretary of War had no federal troops to send.

Perhaps attempting to attract reporters' attention, Wigfall shouted: "A State that has a war going on comes here and asks that an appropriation of a few hundred thousand dollars shall be made to give protection to their women and children; and I am told it is dinner-time." Wigfall created the impression that his opponents cared more about their own hunger than in providing—not a million dollars—but "a few hundred thousand" to protect "women and children." Wigfall continued: "This is a matter of such urgent necessity that I cannot consent to its being postponed. I have foreborne until patience has ceased to be a virtue." Thus he continued his efforts to force action by ridiculing his opponents.

When Fessenden wanted to know where the troops would be raised, Wigfall replied: "The bill itself provides for raising them in Texas." Baiting Wigfall, Fessenden asked if the people of Texas were content to suffer outrages until such a time that they could be organized and paid by the federal government. Wigfall responded in anger: "I thank him for his suggestion. The people of Texas, of course, are avaricious; of course they are timid; in their veins there run not those warm currents that course through the veins of the people represented in Maine, who so gallantly defied the British lion on an occasion of which I have not been informed."* 24  

*Implying that southerners were superior in

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24 Ibid., p. 1010.
military matters and, apparently, in honor as well, the Texan was particularly incensed that a Yankee would question Texans' motives. Using ridicule Wigfall strengthened southerners' stereotypes of northerners as trouble-makers and enemies of the South. Furthermore, he insinuated that the people of Maine had not performed their military duties against the British.

**Effects.** As Wigfall apparently had hoped, the newspapers stressed the emotional tone of his presentation. Suggesting the speech was "listened to with profound interest," the *New York Times* editor wrote: "He gave a graphic description of the outrages constantly committed upon helpless women and children, and appealed to the Senate to forego their dinner until some relief could be afforded a sister State suffering from the tomahawk and scalping knife."  

By his amendment to the Military Academy bill, Wigfall created chaos in the Senate. Instead of debating issues, Wigfall caused the senators to spend time disputing procedure. In the process he widened the gap between the North and the South and helped set the stage for secession. Seeing the disturbed condition Bayard and perhaps other senators refused to pursue legislation.

**SEGMENT FOUR: MARCH 7, 1860**

**Situation.** For those who might have wanted to get on with the business of the nation, early March was particularly frustrating. Senators consumed time trying to decide how to proceed or what bill to consider. Concerning postponing bills, Jefferson Davis thought that

"the Senate should abandon the calendar entirely and rely on special orders, or pay some respect to it." In a similar vein, R. M. T. Hunter, the Virginia Democrat, complained: "We spend half our time debating what we are to consider." 26

March 7 began as a routine day when committee reports, petitions, and House bill referrals filled the calendar. It was also the day Wigfall decided to press for passage of his border relief bill. To complicate the situation, Davis chose the same day to present his committee's recommendation to pass Hemphill's bill. Confused, some senators asked which bill was to be considered, Wigfall's or Hemphill's. After a series of exchanges including a long speech by Benjamin Wade, the Ohio Republican, William Gwin called for consideration of his own Military Academy bill to which Wigfall's amendment was attached.

Although the measure had been postponed, referred to committee, and carried over as unfinished business, Wigfall probably hoped for success on March 7. He must have been shocked to have Davis report on Hemphill's bill.

Despite its brevity, this segment, a vital link, reflects the attitudes toward Wigfall and reveals how he adjusted to his opposition.

**Strategies.** In his few minutes on the floor, Wigfall persisted in polarizing the sections through two strategies:

1. Calculated antagonism of northerners who would resent the bitterness of his comments.
2. Objectification of northerners whom Wigfall claimed were deliberately delaying a vote on the question.

**Calculated Antagonism.** Reacting to Fessenden's recommendation that the bill be postponed until additional documents could be dis-

26 _Congressional Globe_, p. 1047.
tributed to senators, Wigfall declared that the necessary information was already published. As tensions increased Fessenden retorted: "Not a third part of it; not a quarter. We have had simply one or two reports read; but the information is quite voluminous and quite important." Denying Fessenden's claim, Wigfall persisted sarcastically contending that all the important papers had been published. Through the confrontation with Fessenden the Texan intensified northerners' determination not to rush the vote to satisfy Wigfall.

**Objectification.** In a two-pronged effort to stir resentment among his opponents and to blame northerners for the delays, Wigfall complained that northerners had turned the Senate into a debating club, "to discuss abstract questions of morals, politics, or religion." Sarcastically pretending that the practice did not bother him personally, the Texan rebuked "gentlemen" with the following words: "It is doubtless very amusing to them, as it was to the boy, we are told in Aesop; but the frogs did not see the point of the joke; and I am satisfied the people in Texas, who are suffering, will not understand why it is that time should be delayed and wasted here in discussing these matters, and this bill postponed." Calling for a "dry vote" on the question, Wigfall confidently added: "I am satisfied that justice will be done." Determined to blame others for the bill's failure, Wigfall still sought to push the legislation through the Senate. However, without acting on the measure, senators agreed to adjourn.

**Effects.** Reflecting his contempt for Wigfall, Fessenden responded, "if he had more experience in the business of the Senate, he would have been aware that it is not customary to be entirely bound by the mere opinions of the Government." Later indicating suspicion of Wigfall's
motives, Fessenden noted: "Now it is strange to me, that under these circumstances, important as that information is, the Senate should be called upon to vote nearly a million dollars to raise a regiment with that information unread, unpublished, and in no such shape as will enable the Senate to possess itself of it." Implying that Wigfall simply did not understand how the legislative process worked, the Maine Senator said:

The Senator must know that, after his bill passes, it must go to the House of Representatives; and it will not go there under very favorable auspices if it is forced through this body without our having an opportunity to know before we can act upon it what is the information on which we are called to predicate that action; it will not advance this bill, if his object is speedily to get it through the two Houses of Congress.  

Fessenden revealed that he and other senators were aware of Wigfall's determination to force quick passage of the bill. Aware of legislative procedures, Wigfall wanted to gain the Senate's approval whether the House favored the appropriation or not. If the Senate voted for the million-dollar expenditure, the Texan could expect the approval of his constituents. In other words, he sought the publicity more than the reality of the appropriation.

Faced with the late hour and little preparation to respond to Fessenden, Wigfall requested that the Secretary read a letter from the Secretary of War supposedly supporting the need for troops. Shortly thereafter the presiding officer postponed the subject to the next day.

In enduring Fessenden's attacks, Wigfall resembled the agitator who suffers indignities in order to gain sympathy. In reality, Wigfall probably enjoyed or even welcomed the northern Democrats' and

\(^{27}\)Ibid., p. 1022.
Republicans' abuse. Eager for attention and notoriety, Wigfall could hope that southerners would interpret charges against him as motivated by sectional animosity.

SEGMENT FIVE: MARCH 8, 1860

Situation. The spring of 1860 in Washington was warm and, when the Senate was crowded, "the heat excessive." Under these conditions Wigfall discovered that tempers flared easily. Late in the afternoon of March 8, at the end of a long speech by Judah P. Benjamin of Louisiana, Wigfall called for his amendment as unfinished business. Reflecting the irritation Wigfall stirred by calling up the bill late in the evening, James F. Simmons, Rhode Island Democrat unmasked Wigfall's strategy: "Every time it is brought up it is on the heel of a long debate, when everybody is exhausted." Indeed, the Senate had been in session well over six hours before the Texan urged that the bill come up for consideration. Nevertheless, determined to gain attention and, if possible, a favorable vote, Wigfall persisted in his efforts to get senators to consider his amendment as unfinished business.

Strategies. Fortunately for Wigfall, Mason of Virginia occupied the Chair on March 8. Otherwise the Texan's opponents might have successfully challenged the "unfinished business" status of the amendment. Despite protests, Mason stood firm. Perhaps admitting that he was primarily interested in the publicity he had already received from his efforts to secure passage of legislation, Wigfall readily agreed to


29 Congressional Globe, p. 1063.
substitute Hemphill's committee-approved bill for his own amendment to the Military Academy bill. Although the move reduced his request by more than $350,000, Wigfall did not complain.

During this segment Wigfall utilized three strategies:

2. Calculated antagonism of Jacob Collamer the Vermont Republican.
3. Building his own image as one who would face opponents and the late hour to secure legislation to help suffering Texans.

Vilification. Despite Wigfall's repeated efforts to obtain the floor over several hours time, Fessenden still managed to obtain recognition, proceeded to refute the need, and continued to attack the lack of information available to the senators. Anticipating Wigfall's reaction, Fessenden said: "I really am sorry to be obliged to say it, because I am interfering with the patience and long-suffering of the honorable Senator from Texas who sits before me, that the perusal of these documents has not by any means satisfied me that this regiment ought to be put into service." Sarcastically Fessenden referred to Wigfall's "patience and long-suffering." In reality Wigfall made it clear through his actions and words that he was neither patient with the system nor long-suffering toward those who insisted on debating the question.

When Fessenden finished Wigfall was on his feet. Since Fessenden based much of his argument against the existence of a Mexican problem on a letter written by General David Twiggs, Wigfall centered his attack on Twiggs and, therefore, indirectly undermined Fessenden's credibility. Indicating that Fessenden had not considered all the

30 Ibid., pp. 1060-1061.
implications of the Twiggs letter, Wigfall declared: "General Twiggs shall answer for himself, as he has chosen to slander the people I represent. He says, after he has removed the troops: 'There is not, nor has there ever been, any danger of Mexicans crossing on our side of the river to plunder and disturb the inhabitants.'" Suggesting Twiggs was ignorant, jealous, prejudiced, and brought on war, Wigfall contended that Twiggs had destroyed the military security which Jefferson Davis had built for Texas as Secretary of War. To weaken Twiggs' credibility, Wigfall employed the following analogy: "There was, in ancient times, a building erected; and there was one who felt he could not do likewise, but he could destroy that which had been done; and the temple of the Ephesian Diana was burned to the ground." Comparing the Texas forts to the temple of Diana, Wigfall approximated the strategy of mythicication, that is, aligning the speaker's cause with a revered person or place in history. He pictured Davis, a southerner, as a builder whose structure had been destroyed by Twiggs, probably a northerner. Even in attacking individuals, Wigfall began to drive the North away from the South.

Suggesting that Fessenden misunderstood the Secretary of War's communication, Wigfall refuted the Maine senator's contention that the Secretary had not recommended the bill. Following a series of sharp exchanges between Fessenden and Wigfall on what the Secretary's communication meant, Fessenden termed the message a "dodge." Wigfall replied: "That is a matter which the Senator and the Secretary of War can

31 Ibid., p. 1061.
Implying that Secretary Floyd, a Virginian, might respond with a challenge for Fessenden to duel as result of the Maine senator's misrepresentation, Wigfall maintained an attitude of southern superiority over northerners.

**Calculated Antagonism.** Providing a clue as to how he planned the tactics of agitation which he might employ at any point in a debate, Wigfall interrupted Collamer during a discussion of property in the territories. During a period of fifteen or twenty minutes Wigfall continued to interrupt with questions until Collamer complained: "The gentleman is making a speech of his own; he has not asked me a question. He is making up his own logic, stating his premises, and drawing his conclusions in his own way." The incident angered Collamer to the extent that at 4:00 p.m. he refused to yield the floor to the Texan.

Fearful that the bill might pass, John Hale, the New Hampshire Republican, attempted to amend it to the point of ineffectiveness. In response Davis spoke on behalf of the bill. Although he offered few insights, Davis defended the Secretary of War and confirmed Wigfall's interpretation of the Twiggs-Davis affair. Noting the reduction in cost, Davis also called for approval. James Simmons of Rhode Island complained that he had not read all the documents and that he had not understood portions of the debate. His request for additional time to study the papers brought a sarcastic comment from Davis, to which Simmons replied: "I do not mean to vote any money, if I can help it,

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32 Ibid., p. 1062.
33 Ibid., p. 1052.
without knowing what it is for; I do not think it is quite right to force people to read documents when gentlemen are addressing the Senate whom they want to hear." Unable to restrain himself longer, Wigfall threatened: "You will not get any tariff, if you reject this." Apparently immune to bully tactics, Simmons retorted: "I do not vote money out of the Treasury here in order to get a tariff. I think we had better look to it, and see that we have not to hire any more money." Wigfall remained silent for the rest of the day. Seeing the situation was critical, Gwin, Davis, and Hemphill spoke in favor of the appropriation until the presiding officer called for a vote on Hale's amendments. When the vote revealed that a quorum no longer remained in the chamber, the Senate adjourned. Accomplishing his goal to stir up antagonism toward himself among northerners, Wigfall evidently did not care whether the appropriation passed or failed.

Image Building. Even in the face of defeat Wigfall expected his image to improve among his supporters who would tend to disregard unfavorable northern press as biased and view Wigfall's antics as the efforts of a dedicated statesman. In this segment the Texan implied that he possessed information superior to Fessenden's, aligned himself with Davis, and contended: "I never say what I do not mean." Two examples clarify the manner in which Wigfall attempted to improve his image. In answer to Fessenden, the Texan replied:

It is said by the Senator from Maine that the Secretary of War has expressed no opinion upon this subject. Now, sir, I intend to read what the Secretary of War has said, and I will put it to the Senator from Maine himself. I do not choose to indulge in any language which is without import. I do not charge him

34Ibid., p. 1063.
with any indirection or unfairness, because I never say what I do not mean. I say that he has misunderstood or misapprehended what the Secretary of War has said.

Referring directly to Fessenden and expressing his willingness to "put it to the Senator from Maine himself," Wigfall suggested that he was interested in Texas' concerns and willing to face her enemies.

In concluding his remarks, Wigfall sought to reveal himself as a dedicated legislator who had done his best:

Now, sir, on this subject I have nothing more to say. I have answered the two points which the Senator [Fessenden] made, and I beg the Senate to take a direct vote on the question, so that we shall understand whether they intend to grant this appropriation or not. I do not intend to urge it further. If there was more time I would go further. I am anxious for a vote.35

No doubt he was not as interested in securing the bill's passage after Hemphill's bill was substituted for his, but Wigfall still pressed for a vote on the measure. Likely, he believed he had accomplished his own goals of obtaining attention for himself and establishing his reputation in the Senate.

Effects. Revealing his temper, Wigfall threatened Simmons and almost destroyed the chances for the bill to pass. The frustrating day ended because the number of senators dwindled until a quorum no longer remained. Perhaps wisely, Wigfall declined to engage in further debate.

The New York Times supported Fessenden:

Senator Wigfall asked for $1,200,000 to protect Texas from Mexican incursion. Texas needs something to protect her frontiers against the Indians, but not one cent as against Mexico. Senator Fessenden was right when he said he "believed the Texas frontier was purposely neglected to produce a war

with Mexico, in order that certain ulterior purposes might be accomplished. He feared the difficulties had been purposely fomented by the people of Texas.\textsuperscript{36}

Illustrating the extent to which Wigfall irritated some senators, James Simmons stated: "I am willing to vote the money, if I can be satisfied in my own mind that it is wanted; but if you are determined to push it through, after six o'clock, when we are all exhausted and cannot read the papers, it is a singular kind of legislation."\textsuperscript{37}

**SUMMARY**

Determined to live up to states' rights Texans expectations of him, Wigfall initially tried to rally senators to vote in favor of the appropriation without debating it. As he had done early in his career in the debate against Sam Houston, in this instance Wigfall took a calculated risk that through emotionalized descriptions of alleged sufferings of Texas border residents he could avoid the usual delays and secure the appropriation immediately. Had the Senate approved the measure on such short notice Wigfall would have emerged as a clever man of action who succeeded where Houston and other Texans failed for fifteen years. Moreover, by obtaining a million dollar appropriation, he would have proved to his Texas opponents that he was the right man to represent the State in the United States Senate. When the ploy failed and committee referral or debate seemed inevitable, the Texan shrewdly withdrew the proposal. To protect himself from the stigma of failure Wigfall shifted blame for the bill's possible defeat to

\textsuperscript{36}New York Times, March 3, 1860.

\textsuperscript{37}Congressional Globe, p. 1063.
northern opponents insensitive to Texans' sufferings. In the process he won the admiration or sympathy of his constituents for whose benefit he described the frustrations attending his efforts to work through Washington bureaucracy.

During the five-day interval between segments one and two, Wigfall apparently decided that he would attempt once more to obtain the appropriation by tagging on an amendment to the usually routine annual Military Academy Appropriations bill. Although he had researched the legality of his move in advance, the Texan seemed somewhat pleased at the hostility his move engendered. Subsequently he changed his strategy from attempting to solidify Senate support for the legislation to that of using the bill as a fulcrum of polarization. As long as he could draw attention to himself and create dissention among senators for his unorthodox tactics, Wigfall did not care if the legislation passed or not. In fact, once committed to the overall goal to polarize the North and South the Texan likely preferred defeat or active delay of the measure to passage. As long as senators quarreled over the propriety of Wigfall's approach, the need for the legislation, or some other technicality, the Texan could accuse northerners of prejudice or indifference toward the South and attack individuals as representative of northerners who could not be trusted.

Possibly sensing the divisive impact of his blame shifting, Wigfall intensified his language to create the impression that Republicans and other northerners refused to appropriate the funds because they disliked Texans. Clearly Wigfall wanted his constituents to resent the delays which he attributed to northern hatred. Conversely, the Texan
goaded northerners to resent the implication that they were unconcerned or insensitive to any state's needs. The result: Wigfall began the polarization of the sections.

Five days later Wigfall pursued the amendment again pressing for a vote despite the fact that the discussion arose late in the afternoon. When some senators objected to the late hour, the Texan seized the opportunity to place blame on them for complaining of hunger while Texans suffered the ravages of Mexicans and Indians. Turning even simple questions to his advantage, the Texan drove the sections further apart through suggestions that southerners were superior to northerners. Although the segment occupied only a short time, Wigfall used the minutes to continue stirring up hatred for himself, keeping the issue alive among the senators, and attracting the attention of reporters.

The following day Wigfall saw chances for the bill diminish as Jefferson Davis brought Hemphill's bill back from committee. Illustrating that he no longer cared about the bill except as a vehicle for polarizing the sections, Wigfall permitted without complaint the substitution of Hemphill's bill for his own. Instead, he chose calculated antagonism and objectification of northerners as twin means for thwarting the legislative process and creating chaos among senators.

On March 8, the final segment in this encounter, Wigfall deliberately called for a vote on his amendment again late in the day to irritate northerners. Through efforts to impugn the authorities cited by the opposition and threats that "if you reject this [border relief appropriation], you will not get any tariff," Wigfall thoroughly aroused northerners who were tired of being subservient to the South.
Possibly realizing that March 8 might be the last discussion of the proposal, Wigfall inserted some comments designed to enhance his image among his supporters.

Throughout the five segments of the first encounter Wigfall evolved from an inexperienced legislator cautiously trying the waters with a bill designed to establish his national reputation to that of an agitator bent on using the proposal as a means for his long-standing claim that northerners could not be trusted. As he no doubt hoped, Wigfall secured his name among senators as an adversary whom northerners would face often. Among states' rights Texans he emerged as the activist they hoped for.
CHAPTER V

ENCOUNTER TWO: THE HOMESTEAD BILL

In reply to a London Times editor who said of Parliament that, "every reasonable and deliberative assembly ought to have object in its talk," the editor of the New York Times countered with the following humorous observation concerning the United States Congress:

"Have the editors of the Times any acquaintance with the Pickwick Papers, or with the Congressional Globe? If they have not, how dare they pronounce this decided way upon the proprieties of parliamentary parlaver? If they have, how can they fly so directly into the face of the facts? The least familiarity with the oratorical effusions of Alfred Jingle, or the Hon. Mr. Wigfall, ought to have made an assertion of this hazardous and preposterous character impossible."^1

Indeed, in 1860 Congress often lacked "object in its talk." Perhaps worse was the low nature of some of its talk. For example, the editor described the following incident:

Another interchange of Congressional courtesies took place at Washington on Saturday and the country is furnished with a fresh illustration of the refined manners and gentlemanly instincts of his representatives in the National Councils. Mr. Van Wyck, whose graphic delineation of the burning of negroes in the South has commended him to the especial sympathy and affection of the Southern delegation, was, it seems, indiscreet enough to extend his hand to Mr. Hindman of Arkansas, in the anticipation of a cordial squeeze, and to greet him with the customary salutations. Southern blood was at once aroused, and Southern chivalry was in arms. "You scoundrel," is the polite rejoinder; while the left hand of the gentleman from Arkansas gave emphasis to this expression of feeling in an insulting movement towards the face of Mr.

Van Wyck. A truly delightful state of society they must have at the Capital—and what a strong inducement is held out to the aspirants to Congressional honors, in the prospect of broken heads, tweaked noses, and perforated bodies, to say nothing of the vulgar abuse and bullying to which they may be subjected, if they should presume to say anything in debate to which one of the fiery spirits in Congress may see fit to take exception.  

Amidst the confusion, congressmen waited for the Democratic convention to open in April. Roy Nichols wrote:

The imps of Satan must have chuckled with devilish glee to learn that the Democratic party was to meet that year in the South, and in Charleston of all places. A bitter struggle for control was imminent, and the life of the party hung in the balance. Men of desperate political fortunes were to meet other men exalted by fanatic zeal to defend all they held dear. In numbers they were almost equally matched.

In a time of urgent need Congress accomplished little. As Kenneth Stampp suggested, "only with difficulty could they enact even routine bills."  

Senator Andrew Johnson of Tennessee once complained that every question resulted in slavery agitation. "It really seems to me that if some member of this body was to introduce the ten commandments for consideration," he began, "somebody would find a negro in them somewhere; the slavery agitation would come up. If some Senator from the South was to introduce the Lord's prayer, somebody would see a negro in it somewhere."

Southern senators often combined the threat of secession with a discussion of slavery. Of the tendency David Potter wrote:

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2Ibid., April 2, 1860.


5Congressional Globe, p. 1299.
Whether or not Southerners distinguished between the threat of secession as a campaign device and the actual use of secession as a minority safeguard, they invoked it again in 1860, perhaps more freely than ever before. Long use had by now made the doctrine orthodox throughout the South; constant reiteration had enabled every politician to master the theory of secession; and continued practice at sectional debate had made Southern advocates "quick on the draw" with this weapon.\(^6\)

However, continued use had dulled the edge of the weapon. According to Potter, "the Republicans remained incredulous of all threats of disunion. They based their skepticism primarily upon a belief that secession was a mere rhetorical weapon, devised to frighten the electorate, but not for a moment seriously intended to be used except by the most ultra of the fire-eaters."\(^7\) In the Senate in 1860, Louis Wigfall was one of the most ultra of the fire-eaters.\(^8\)

"To the South Carolinian," wrote Ralph Eubanks, "the relationship between eloquence and honor was equally intimate. He used both bullets and words to vindicate his honor. No question: the code of the duel was consummated not always by 'pistols at ten paces,' but sometimes by deadly utterance."\(^9\) Moreover, the threat of duels influenced the nature of the words, intimidating many of the moderate voices.

Wigfall, a South Carolinian turned Texan, made known his presence in Washington. Describing a fire-eater, Bruce Catton penned: "There were strong men in the North who wanted revenge. There was something


\(^{7}\)Ibid., p. 16.


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to be said on their side. They could remember Bully Brooks and his murderer assault on Sumner, and the taunts and jibes of men like Texas's Wigfall, who would have turned the Senate into a place where only an expert duelist could speak freely. The atmosphere in the Senate in 1860 was an environment of growing discord, suspicion, anger, and physical violence. The sectional alienation extended from the social circles to the taverns as men stiffened for the "impending crisis."

SEGMENT ONE: MARCH 22, 1860

Situation. Following a pointless debate over a Washington city issue, Benjamin Wade introduced the homestead bill. An aristocrat in his thinking, Wigfall seized upon the fifteen-year-old controversy as a means for further driving apart the two sections. By calculated design, Wigfall redefined the homestead bill as an unwise effort to give away public lands to paupers and shiftless dregs of society much in contrast to the usual interpretation as the noble pioneer.

King dismissed Wigfall's March 22 speech as "the most disorganized speech of his senatorial career, a four-hour extemporaneous filibuster." Although the speech was rambling and long, Wigfall had more in mind than merely attempting to delay Senate business. That week the agenda in the Senate had been routine and Wigfall had been absent for three days. It is possible that the Texan had been "on a bender,"


11King, Louis T. Wigfall, p. 88.

12New York Times, March 12, 1861, discussed a "bender" of Wigfall. Although no record of a March spree remains, the possibility exists.
and that he was drunk on March 22. Of the speech, a New York Times reporter wrote: "During the delivery of it the Senator had placed upon the desk a glass of liquor, which, however, I did not see him drink. From this fact and his peculiar manners and language, nearly every spectator very naturally supposed the honorable gentleman had been 'indiscreet to excessive foolishness.','"\(^{13}\) Perhaps his motive was to irritate northerners who favored the homestead proposal. Stimulated by spirits he used the opportunity to "sting, goad, and disturb the audience."\(^{14}\) Although he may have been intoxicated, Wigfall seemed to know what he was doing on the occasion, for when he later proofread the speech he not only approved of its content but insisted that it be printed as delivered.

**Strategies.** Wigfall displayed an overall strategy of polarizing northerners and southerners. To accomplish his goal, he employed the following specific strategies:

1. Calculated antagonism of northerners and Republicans, particularly, to whom the homestead was especially revered.
2. Objectifying northerners as trouble-makers who forced the South to consider withdrawal.
3. Solidifying beliefs of southerners that the Union was a compact which could be dissolved.
4. Image building of himself as a spokesman for states' rights.

**Calculated Antagonism.** In his audience in the Senate Wigfall detected at least three groups: the southern senators on his side of the chamber; northern senators; and the gallery spectators, some of whom supported him. However, the Texan seemed to envision his listen-

\(^{13}\)Ibid., March 28, 1860.

ers in only two categories—North and South. Although at times he directed his comments to specific senators and occasionally addressed the galleries, always he viewed the general audience in terms of the two sections.

Those senators who wanted to get on with the business of the nation were probably incensed by Wigfall's initial statement upon gaining the floor. He warned that he might "wander from the subject." Drunk, angry, or merely calculating, he agitated sectionalism.

Interrupted by procedural questions, Wigfall attempted to begin again only to be stopped by Lyman Trumbull, the Illinois Republican, who called for a vote on Chapman's amendment to the homestead bill. Amid cries from the gallery of "go on," Wigfall stated: "I do not precisely understand how, but understanding that I have the liberty of going on, I shall."15 Probably happy to be interrupted Wigfall attempted to give the impression that he was being persecuted. By the time he was allowed to continue, he expressed his apparent anger: "I presume, if Senators will be patient, and not call me to order, the Chair will not interrupt me; and as other Senators have not been interrupted, I trust I may be allowed, as I am in the humor of speaking, to say a few words on this subject." After that introduction with the words, "in the humor of speaking" to suggest that he might have been drunk, Wigfall lectured the Senate on the compact theory of states. Adding injury to insult, Wigfall, a freshman senator, pontificated on the compact theory to senators, many of whom were more capable and experienced than Wigfall to consider the subject and who had been contem-

poraries of Calhoun, Webster, Clay, Benton, and others. Presuming to explain the matter to the other senators, Wigfall was either oblivious to the tense mood in the chamber, supremely confident in his own ability to persuade, or aware that he would thereby aggravate existing ill-feelings among senators. More likely he determined to anger the senators across the aisle.

Negating Andrew Johnson's plea that the homestead bill not be made a party question, Wigfall contended that it would only be a party question. In the minds of some senators Wigfall might have as well attacked the American dream itself as to attack the homestead proposal. All the qualities of manliness, courage, strength of character, honesty, and others favored the westward movement of the landless. As an iconoclast, Wigfall sarcastically reversed the myths and redefined the homestead concept as a scheme hatched among dishonest men to defraud the worthy citizens by giving land to worthless paupers. Evoking nervous laughter, Wigfall railed: "Here is a bill providing land for the landless, homes for the homeless, and leaving out the important matter, in my opinion, of niggers for the niggerless." Determined to aggravate, Wigfall introduced a repulsive subject, the reopening of slave trade:

If this Government is an eleemosynary establishment; if those who cannot support themselves have to be supported by the Government, then, when you give them land, I think you ought at least to furnish those who are to work the land. . . . and I was almost going to say, reopen the African slave trade; but that would involve another idea; for it would convert this Government not only into an eleemosynary establishment, but a missionary concern also, that we should undertake, by reopening the slave trade, to Christianize Africa by catching Africa and bringing Africa here, where Africa can be preached to without endangering the cloth; for it is my deliberate opinion that about three preachers are
Choosing terms like "eleemosynary establishment," Wigfall taunted and belittled homestead supporters. The very idea that this benevolent proposal could somehow stimulate Wigfall to see in the homestead a need to reopen slave trade or to think of slave trade as a "missionary" endeavor must have disgusted some northerners. Furthermore, illustrating a kind of fun-loving mood of complete irreverence for existing institutions, Wigfall sarcastically spoke of "catching Africa and bringing Africa here, where Africa can be preached to without endangering the cloth." Not content to stir anger and disgust, Wigfall possibly aroused the northern missionary societies as well. Wigfall seemed to conform to Lowenthal and Guterman's conclusion that the agitator "engages in an essentially ambiguous activity. His suggestions manage to slip through the nets of rational meaning. To know what he is and what he says, we have to follow him into the underground of meaning—the unexpressed or half-expressed content of his hints, allusions, doubletalk," Wigfall implied that viewing the government as an "eleemosynary establishment"—a fearful image—homestead supporters were trying to give away public lands to foreigners and paupers thus creating inferior states. Moreover, he intensified suspicions which one section had of the other further to limit cooperative efforts. Although his gallery audiences and many of his readers might not have known what an "eleemosynary establishment" was, Wigfall, through his seers, made it sound unacceptable. His very appearance

frightening to some of his listeners, Wigfall, a huge man dressed in black, wearing a thick black beard and long unruly hair, standing on the back row of the Senate Chamber with his pistols in view, repeatedly bellowed the word "eleemosynary" as though it meant leprosy. Insinuating that to favor the homestead was to oppose slavery, Wigfall lumped together homestead advocates, northerners, and abolitionists to depict a vague awesome group which southerners could oppose. Suggesting the land grants should also include the donation of slaves to work the land, Wigfall reduced the argument to the absurd. While his partisans enjoyed his caustic humor and the ridiculousness of the proposal to include slaves to work the land, Wigfall compounded his opponents' hatred for him.

Probably enjoying the negative reactions, Wigfall sneered at the whole pioneer movement. Since he was anything but progressive, the Texan likely aroused contempt as he continued:

I shall, before we get through with this question, propose to give, not land, but money. I shall improve somewhat, for I am rather progressive, upon my friend from North Carolina, by substituting, not one hundred and sixty acres of land for every man, woman, and child in the United States, but give $160.00, in money, to every one of them, and we will hold the land; for being the friend of the people, I think the people ought to have something that would be of some use to them. Give them the money; they have as much right to the money as they have to the land. Give them the money; and then I think they ought to have their mileage, because it would be a monstrous wrong upon the sovereign people of this country if they should be required to pay their own expenses here to the seat of Government to get only $160! Sir, it would be aristocratic in every feature; [laughter] it would be establishing a monopoly in favor of wealth; it would be enabling those who could travel upon steamboats and railroads to come here to Washington and get the $160, and the poor, hard-working man who lives by the sweat of his face would be unable to get the bounty of the Government. Therefore, I shall not only propose to exchange land for money, but to add mileage also; and, if that shall be voted down, then I give fair notice that I intend to propose that, if we are to give land, we shall furnish those who work it; and I think about
three negroes would be enough—one woman, with a child, and her husband, with the prospect of a large increase. [Laughter]
Then we shall be doing the clean thing. 18

The whole passage reeks with sarcasm and insult to the proponents of the homestead act. Through the idea of substituting money for the land. Wigfall hinted that the proposal was underhanded and dishonest. To the plantation owner who objected to any sort of handout, Wigfall made sense. To the northern legislator eager to settle the frontier and promote new states, Wigfall, probably evoked anger and disgust. Thus, he seemingly utilized calculated antagonism to polarize the sections.

Stressing southern superiority Wigfall boasted that the North "dare not dissolve the Union." Then, in graphic details, again perhaps calculated to stir anger, the Texan described the hypothetical consequences of secession:

It is all twaddle and nonsense to talk about fighting and bloodshed in the event of the dissolution of the Union. What would be the effect of a dissolution of the Union? Their [New England's] spindles would cease to turn; their looms would cease to move. Their ships would be laid up to rot in the wharves when the navigation laws were repealed. Their operatives and their sailors, turned out to starve, to steal, or to burn, would turn upon them. They dare not dissolve this Union. Their people would starve if they did. They know it. I tell you the day is past when farces are played. The players have reached that point when it has got to be farce or tragedy. 19

Wigfall's statement divided the North into two segments, represented by working people on the one hand and those in control on the other. Although never identified except as "New England" or "they," Wigfall seems to have meant all northern senators. Picturing the results of secession which would prove northern dependence on the South, Wigfall

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18 Congressional Globe, p. 1299.
19 Ibid., p. 1301.
insulted northerners. David Potter believes that because southerners had been successful using secession threats to obtain northern concessions, fire-eaters like Wigfall often employed the strategy. Reviewing the history of compromise, Potter observed: "Each such concession, of course, confirmed the Southern fire-eaters in their habit of demanding further concessions and it strengthened their position with their constituents in the South by enabling them to come back home at periodic intervals with new tribute that they had extorted from the Yankees." However, throughout his adult life Wigfall called for secession and apparently was serious in his threats. Shifting the responsibility for dissolution to the North, Wigfall claimed, "they dare not dissolve this Union."21

Still asserting southern superiority, Wigfall discussed economics: "You are going to conquer us, are you? Where are you going to get the money?" Using fear appeals to predict the results of dissolution, Wigfall quizzed, "if you cannot sell to us how are you going to make money?" In the same sarcastic superior attitude, he continued: "Cotton is King. We can ship our cotton; there is no trouble about it." Then, putting words into northerners mouths, he said: "Perhaps you will say you will blockade us. In the first place, naval officers like to have a little pay now and then, if only to buy grog with." Since they could not pay the navy without taxing the people, the Texan spelled out the disasters: "Your operatives will have nothing to do;  

21 Congressional Globe, p. 1301.
your capitalists will be broken; and whom are you going to tax?"
Through his superior attitude and offensive language Wigfall widened the gap between the sections. He scoffed at northern naval officers suggesting that their main concern was in buying "grog." He chose the term "Cotton is King" to emphasize southern superiority. Declaring that the North could not survive economically without the South, the Texan established a dilemma for northerners: if they allowed the southern states to withdraw they could prove him wrong; if they insisted on keeping the Union together they proved he was right. Either way, the Texas newspapers could boast of Wigfall as their champion.

Despite an earlier claim that he was a Union man, Wigfall predicted a southern alliance with England. Claiming that without cotton "Queen Victoria's crown would not stand on her head a week," he possibly intended to anger northerners. Mockingly, he continued: "I am talking about a confederation with England, am I? Well, before God, I would just as soon confederate with them as I would with you."22 At every opportunity Wigfall emphasized the division between the sections. He held northerners in such contempt that he would rather return to an alliance with England than to continue the union.

The expression of the belief that southerners possessed military superiority probably antagonized northerners and Wigfall made the most of it. He boasted: "I should like to know how you are going to conquer the South. Why, sir, I look around me and I see only one man on the other side of the Chamber who has ever seen the flashing of a gun."

22Ibid., p. 1302.
Wigfall pictured northerners as cowardly, weak, unaccustomed to hardship, unfamiliar with weapons, and unwilling to suffer. Although it was no doubt false that only one had seen the "flashing of a gun," Wigfall likely exaggerated to polarize the sections. By contrast he complimented southerners as men with superior military insight, training, and tradition.

Further attacking northerners, Wigfall challenged them to "cut your leashes; turn loose your terriers," not huge hunting dogs which might roam the vast plantation of the southerner but "rat-killers" and pets which northerners might keep in the house. Ridiculing the cowardice which he believed characteristic of northerners, Wigfall issued taunts that he would have been willing to back with the revolvers he displayed: "If we do not get into Boston, into winter quarters, before you ever get into Texas, you may shoot me." 23 Although some northerners probably considered shooting him on the spot, the net effect was to sharpen the sectional divisions among senators. Perhaps to shock his opponents Wigfall was willing to risk retaliation— even physical harm— which might result from his threats. To use Mary McEdwards description of agitative language, Wigfall's words were "jolting, combative, and passionate— in the fullest sense of the term."

Objectification. Typifying an agitator who entertains his followers at the expense of those present in his audience, Wigfall shifted

23 Ibid., p. 1301.

blame for possible secession to New England and Black Republicans. He counseled: "If we could get them to read or comprehend the history of the country; there would be no difficulty in administering the Government so as to make it a blessing to everybody; but the ox knoweth its owner, and the ass his master's crib; but that people do not understand, and New England will not consider." This analogy, suggesting the South was the owner and master while the North was the ox or the ass, must have been odious to northerners.

To anger further his opponents and perhaps to attract the press, Wigfall phrased the following illustration:

The fact is, that New England has been rather a nuisance. [Laughter] We have formed a partnership, and we have found a very uncomfortable partner. The snakes led a porcupine once into their place—not meaning that we are snakes, or New England the porcupine—but when the porcupine got in she told the snakes to leave if they wanted to do so; for she was very comfortable. [Laughter] This Government, as far as New England has been concerned, has been a cow, as someone has said, in homey phrase, with its mouth to the South. We have been feeding the beast and New England has been milking it; and that is our political history since the Union was formed. I would not have complained about that, because I am charitable, and I like to feed those who are hungry. Providence did not provide well for these people; but they are waxed fat, and are kicking at their feeder; that is the difficulty. [Laughter]

Despite the disclaimer, Wigfall probably wanted to give the impression that New Englanders were the "porcupine," or villains in the sectional drama. Seeing themselves referred to as porcupines and hearing the government designated as a cow with its mouth to the South, northerners must have resented the implications. In this comparison Wigfall widened the gap between the sections. He mentioned "New England" when referring to northerners in contrast to "we," or "I," when speaking of

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southerners or himself, thereby "blurring the distinctions between all enemy groups." He did not need to be explicit; his followers could oppose a thing as vague as "New England," especially when identified as a "beast" or "these people." Promoting the growing sectional crisis, Wigfall indicated that the "charitable" relationship between North and South "is our political history since the Union was formed." Again insulting the North, Wigfall claimed that the unfair situation had existed since the country began. According to Wigfall, only the generous nature of the southerners prevented secession long before. The difficulty—the slavery question—as Wigfall articulated it, was that the North, "these people," are "waxed fat, and are kicking at their feeder." Throughout the section quoted above, Wigfall combined the "we've been duped" theme with the idea that patience is not always a virtue. That is, he attempted to cause southerners to believe that the cotton industry had been supporting the North for so long that northerners had forgotten that slaves were required to grow cotton. Moreover, he argued that northerners simply were not grateful for all that the South had done for them. Northerners, on the other hand, probably recoiled at the idea that they were dependent on the South and disgusted that some Texas upstart would accuse them of ingratitude.

Expressing a superior attitude Wigfall said: "The New England men know as well as I do that they could not live out of this Union. They cannot live without our States; and they are not content to live with

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us, but must be interfering impertinently with everybody else's concerns. It is the character of the people." Seeming to sneer at New England's history, he continued to hammer away at the differences between the two sections: "To persecute was the only happiness they knew. They came to New England, and there they ran poor old Roger Williams and all the Baptists into the Seekong river, and he and somebody else baptized each other; and you persecuted the rest of the preachers, and from that time you have been propagandizing and persecuting." To his supporters' delight Wigfall asserted that the North's entire history had been that of persecution. In this section Wigfall made northerners or New Englanders scapegoats to blame for the nation's troubles and set himself up as a target for those who opposed secession. Determined to secure attention, Wigfall almost dared northerners to attack him.

Condemning northerners he added: "We have confederated for certain purposes, and you have broken the bargain; and then you came in here and tell us that this Union is of Divine origin. You falsify history, and you pretend this Union is cemented with the blood of your ancestors. What drop of blood was ever shed for the Union?" To identify clearly the "enemy" Wigfall directed attention to the other side of the chamber and began to address them in terms they could not misunderstand. Hinting at coercion, he spoke of "broken bargain," "falsify history," "pretend" and "you come in here and impiously bring in the word of God and his authority to oppress us." To southerners already suffering the slavery malaise, Wigfall boldly articulated their fears. As if to prepare his followers for war, Wigfall
talked increasingly of "blood" and the "shedding of blood," reminding his listeners that "it was for liberty" that "our fathers fought." Yankees who were driven away from the South by Wigfall's taunts no doubt strengthened their wills to resist efforts to compromise with the South. Through his offensive manner and language Wigfall probably polarized the sections making compromise more difficult.

To insinuate that the homestead bill was questionable at best, Wigfall exaggerated the consequences. He claimed: "History has been ignored. Men who ought to have understood it, have laid it aside. Theories have been substituted and men have predicated theories upon facts which never existed, except in their own imaginations." Among those who read the speech, especially, Wigfall sought to establish suspicion of the homestead supporters and hatred for himself among the homestead proponents. Although from what Wigfall said they could not be certain of the exact nature of the problem, nevertheless Wigfall endeavored to cause southerners to believe that it was serious and that he was aware of the perils. He hoped his followers in Texas would approve of his stand for states' rights.

Encouraged by shouts from the galleries Wigfall continued: "These people of the North have been misled, and those who have misled them do not believe we are in earnest. I do not believe that a Black Republican can ever be inaugurated President of these United States." Hinting at abolitionists conspiracies, Wigfall referred to northerners as "those who have been misled." Indicating that northerners failed to take southerners seriously, Wigfall appealed to southern pride. Effectively he helped erect barriers between the North and South and com-
mitted some to positions from which retreat was difficult if not impossible when a Republican was actually elected.

Solidification. Perhaps to divide the South from the North, Wigfall needed to make certain that southerners united in the concept of the Union as a compact which could be dissolved. To accomplish his goal, the Texan contended that:

The Union is not of Divine origin, Texas became party to the compact of states, those men who talk about revolutionary rights are simply guilty of not knowing under what form of government we are living, you can find no delegation of power to provide homes for the homeless, the lands belong to the States, the money in the federal Treasury belongs to the States, the South is united, this country is a Republican form of government, you think your form of government is best, we think ours is, and where I live every white man is the peer of every other white man.

The phrases reveal Wigfall's efforts to solidify the South.

Among the beliefs that existed in the South in 1860 was that the great statesmen were southern Democrats. Perhaps to impress his newspaper readers Wigfall attempted to link secession to the Democratic party and some of the revered men of the past. Moreover, by contrast Wigfall identified his opposition with men whom he regarded as disreputable. For example, polarizing North and South, he said: "The Whigs adopted the doctrines of General Hamilton, Mr. Story, Mr. Clay, and Mr. Webster. The Democrats adopted the doctrines of Mr. Jefferson and Mr. Calhoun." The latter two Wigfall dubbed "the only two great expounders." Evidently Wigfall hoped to obtain support for his own claims regarding secession because he associated his ideas with Jefferson and Calhoun. In doing so, he hoped to draw his followers together and to help unite the South.

To win sympathy Wigfall used comparison--contrasts to picture southern virtues: "You think your form of government is best; we think
ours is," he began. Through rhetorical questions he censured the North: "Do we publish pamphlets among you? Do we go up into New England to make speeches to your strikers? Do we attempt to interfere with your institutions?" Engaging a definite sectional appeal proving "ours is better than yours," he boasted: "No, sir. We live in the free white States where every white man, thank God! feels that he is the peer of any other white man." He observed: "Where you live every free negro feels that he is the equal of every white man; and the white man, who has not money, feels that he is not the equal of the man who has it. That is the difference." Using such phrases as "thank God!" and "the history of the country," Wigfall hoped to associate secession with justice and fair play. Implying that the South was more honorable and proud than the North, Wigfall contended that the South might call herself the free white states and the North the free Negro states.

Throughout the section Wigfall sought to create a vague impression of the North as a hopeless enemy and secession as the only course open to the South. Wigfall made certain that his references to northern actions maligned them sufficiently for rejection. With the North clearly identified as the enemy, Wigfall hoped to rally the South.

When Andrew Johnson attempted to justify the homestead bill on the basis of historical precedents, Wigfall suggested that there were precedents that "no Democrat would touch with a forty foot pole."

Reassuring his followers who might reject the homestead bill, Wigfall declared: "Why, sir, we have reached a queer point of progress if this Democratic party is to be held down to precedents. I take it that we have reached a point in which it is necessary to have a new understanding of the bargain." With repeated references to the compact
arrangement of states which secured states' rights to secede and allusions to the necessity of secession, Wigfall solidified southerners.

**Image Building.** Setting himself forth as representative of the virtuous South, Wigfall included the following claims:

I am in the habit of looking at things plainly and dealing with them practically, I am not in the habit of talking about myself often, I abhor demagogism, I never run into a port and claim neutrality, I am ready to show my flag, I call things by their right names, I owe my allegiance to the State of Texas, I am one of the straitest of the sect, I am a Union man, I am charitable, I am an Englishman, I am no disunionist.

Through an accumulating catalog of his attributes, Wigfall apparently hoped to strengthen his reputation in Texas as a staunch states' rights defender.

Boasting that he was a union man, Wigfall explained: "When I say that I am a Union man, I do not mean that I am a consolidationist; I do not mean that my happiness depends on our being united with New England."

Depicting himself as a self-appointed leader who had not been duped, Wigfall inferred that southerners had been deceived. To establish his contention Wigfall entertained his listeners with two analogies at the expense of New England. His message was subtle, permitting him to introduce gradually the idea that in a compact arrangement of states there is always the option to dissolve the Union.

Wigfall apparently wanted his listeners or readers to remember him as a military figure. To enhance his own ethos he continued: "There is the Senator from Texas, [Mr. Hemphill] he and I ate hard bread and salt pork in Florida; we were together fighting Seminoles the day the battle of independence was fought in Texas." Clearly for the benefit of Texans who would read his speech, Wigfall recalled that he had sacrificed—"ate hard bread and salt pork"—and had fought against
Indians. Because he was still relatively new to Texas, Wigfall's followers were probably impressed by his reference to his own army life. Possibly to infuriate his opponents, Wigfall persisted: "I look on this side, and I see everywhere men who have seen service, and who understand it; on the other side I see none."\(^{27}\) Wigfall reflected what Rollin Osterweis called "the cult of the military that characterized South Carolina."\(^{28}\) Consistent with Lowenthal and Guterman's suggestion that an agitator sees his enemy as weak and inferior, Wigfall pictured northerners as cowardly and stressed southern military prowess. Referring to his own military experiences, Wigfall sought to identify himself among revered war heroes. He likely wanted Texans to believe that they had sent the right man to Washington to guard their states' rights. "Part of the secret of his charisma as a leader," wrote Lowenthal and Guterman of the agitator, "is that he presents the image of a self-sufficient personality to his followers. If they are deprived of such blessing, then at least they can enjoy it at second remove in their leader."\(^{29}\) For Texans and other southerners, Wigfall probably displayed his military experiences, however limited, to enhance his status as a leader.

Through the four specific strategies of calculated antagonism, objectification, solidification, and image building, Wigfall endeavored to polarize northerners and southerners.

\(^{27}\) *Congressional Globe*, pp. 1299-1302.


\(^{29}\) Lowenthal and Guterman, *Prophets of Deceit*, p. 119.
Effects. Wigfall agitated secession. He goaded northern senators with insulting, abusive, and provocative language. He called northerners Red Republicans, suggested New England had always been a "nuisance" to the South, and complained that northerners were "bargain breakers." He likely enraged northern senators, some of whom he called by name; he infuriated the New York reporter to the extent that the man devoted almost two columns of the front page to an editorial discussing the speech—few other senators attracted as much attention; and he provided sensational copy for the secession presses across the South. The New York Times editor wrote: "If Chaos wore a black satin waistcoat, and were a member of Congress, Chaos would talk exactly like Wigfall; and we put it to our readers whether we ought to be expected to treat Wigfall any more seriously than we should treat Chaos itself in that happily hypothetical case." Referring to Wigfall's mention of his own limited military adventures, the New York reporter mocked: "After such experience, Wigfall may indeed be supposed capable of enduring any imaginable trial." Then, concerning the Texan's discussion of classical history, the editor complained:

We ought to be mortified, sorry, vexed, discontented, at the "murder, grim and great," which then and there took place, of the people's America, of classical history, and of common sense. But we are simply delighted with the enormity and the intensity of the outrages perpetrated by both of these Senators [Hale and Wigfall] and especially by the Senator from Texas, upon the popular notion of the Senatorial character; of its dignified tone in argument; of its ready scholarship in allusion; of its lofty statesmanship in policy; of its manly devotion to the general welfare of the nation.


Almost a week later, the editor wrote again concerning the speech:

There was much curiosity last week to see if Senator Wigfall would publish in the Globe, and place upon the official record of Congress, his speech of Thursday last just as it was delivered. It was in exceeding bad taste, delivered in an uncouth, displeasing manner, full of gross personal allusions, degrading epithets and the Senate listened patiently, hoping that he would at least set it right in the official record. But it appeared just as he delivered it. He even went to the Globe office and gave orders for it to be published "word for word" as delivered.  

Possibly hoping for space in Texas newspapers, Wigfall sent copies of the speech to Texas. He was not disappointed. In reporting the speech, some Texas editors defended Wigfall. For example, the editor of the Dallas Herald refuted another newspaper's account:

The Weatherford News gives an important item of news. It says, speaking of Wigfall, "We have frequently stated he was a Disunionist, and others contended we were mistaken, it is now evident that he is, and that most, if not all those who voted for him for U. S. Senator in the Legislature, knew it, and are of the same stripe. They it is to be hoped will get their eyes opened after a while."

The author of the above paragraph must have had his own eyes hermetically sealed for many a day; otherwise he could never have penned such an effusion. Wigfall says, in his great speech, that "he is no Disunionist." Which should know the better--he, or the News man? If the editor will take the trouble to read what Wigfall did say, he will get the beam out of his own eye, and be a little better enabled to judge of what he writes about.

Suggesting that perhaps Wigfall's supporters filled the gaps in his logic, the Edgefield Advertiser's editor predicted the speech would have wide circulation: "Senator Wigfall has delivered a long speech which will be read throughout the South. It is somewhat discursive; but his digressions are all cogent and suggestive, while now and then he 'returns to his mutton' with good effect. Our readers

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33 Dallas Herald, May 2, 1860.
will have an opportunity of enjoying portions of this speech next week." 34

Typical of the favorable reaction Wigfall hoped to arouse is the following portion of an editorial which appeared in the Dallas Herald:

Our readers should not fail to peruse the sharp, telling and sarcastic speech of Senator Wigfall on the Homestead Bill. We have predicted for the new Senator from Texas a commanding position as a debater. This speech exhibits a capacity of putting the questions in such a plain, practical light as to appeal directly to the public mind. The absurdities of Black Republicanism are shown up capitally, and Senator Hale, of New Hampshire will lose his reputation for wit and humor before the keenly cutting oratorical powers of Mr. Wigfall. His clear presentation of the equality of white men, and the natural inferiority of negroes, and his well timed definition of "free negro States," and "free white States," eclipses Seward's idea of "capital States," and "labor States." We have always denied the applicability of the terms "slave States," and "free States," and do not know of any better phrases to express the general social features of the two sections in a small compass than the one Senator Wigfall suggests. 35

Wigfall was a fire-eater who helped divide the nation. Through this encounter he contributed to his reputation as a secession agitator. Showing disinterest in compromise he used agitational language to contribute to the growing sectional distrust in the Senate and in the country.

"The South did not close its eyes to the nineteenth century," concluded Charles Sellers:

It did not display "a proud reluctance to being pushed into the modern world." It was already so much a part of that world, already so fearful that it was "degraded and unworthy because of the institution of servitude," that it became stridently aggressive, multiplying the threatening forces of outside criticism until the tension became intolerable and finally allowed itself

34 Edgefield Advertiser, April 4, 1860.
35 Dallas Herald, April 25, 1860.
Louis T. Wigfall was a radical leader who believed in slavery, agitated secession, and welcomed war.

SEGMENT TWO: APRIL 4, 1860

During the twelve days between segments one and two Democratic party members grew increasingly anxious about the convention scheduled in Charleston. As Nichols observes: "While the Senate Democrats were writing platforms, the House Republicans went happily fishing for scandal, with which to manufacture campaign ammunition." While many Democrats planned to attend the Charleston gathering, Wigfall evidently decided to remain in Washington, possibly waiting opportunity to pursue his efforts to divide the nation and the party.

The proceedings in the Senate on April 4 began routinely. However, several senators soon became involved in a debate over federal relief of a Colonel Medill. In a sharp exchange with James Green of Missouri, Judah P. Benjamin shouted: "I do not permit any gentleman to tell me that I shall not do a thing on this floor." In that charged atmosphere the homestead bill came up for consideration.

Setting the stage for the debate on March 22, Andrew Johnson forced Wigfall into the dilemma of opposing the homestead bill while offering his own railroad proposal. Aware of Wigfall's predicament,

36 Charles G. Sellers, Jr., Comment by Craven, "Why the Southern States Seceded," in The Crisis of the Union, p. 89.


38 Congressional Globe, p. 1526.
George Pugh, the Ohio Democrat attacked the Texan. Since his opposition to the homestead bill appeared contradictory, Wigfall attempted to explain the differences. In addition, he used the time to agitate for secession.

**Strategies.** In the nearly four hours which this segment consumed, Wigfall continued to polarize the two sections through the following strategies:

1. Vilification of Pugh as a representative of northern homestead conspirators.
2. Objectification of homestead supporters as a group who planned to cheat the American people.
3. Calculated antagonism of northerners who resented his attack against the homestead proposal.
4. Solidifying southerners to recognize the homestead bill as a plot to destroy slavery.
5. Image building of himself as a selfless legislator who would vote against his own bill if he could be shown that he was wrong.

**Vilification.** In response to Pugh's attack accusing him of inconsistency in opposing the homestead bill while proposing a railroad bill, Wigfall explained that he did not intend to vote for certain parts of his own bill and braced for a confrontation with Pugh. Possibly to avoid the dilemma, Wigfall lured Pugh into an exchange that shifted attention to the Ohio senator. Baiting Wigfall, Pugh, who was known for his wit, jokingly suggested that the non-slaveholders might accept the homestead and "invest the small surplus of their funds in the purchase of negroes." Exaggerating, Wigfall retorted, "ninety-nine out of a hundred of them own land already." Pugh responded: "Well, they can sell that land if they receive our farm for nothing; and they can invest the proceeds in the negro business, as far as the act is concerned. If there be any particular advantages in a man's owning negroes, I should think it rather advanced his case; but it will have
no effect on that slavery question." Relishing the exchange, Wigfall extended the argument claiming "one hundred and sixty acres is not enough to work a negro." Exasperated, Pugh answered, "very well, then he can buy adjacent sections." Pressing the absurd to make Pugh appear foolish, Wigfall wondered: "Will the Senator add one hundred and sixty acres for every negro he owns?" When Pugh responded that a person who owns a negro ought to be able to buy additional land, Wigfall attempted to force Pugh to admit that "it is providing for those who cannot buy." As he did often, Wigfall managed to distract his opponent from the main issues to the slavery question. Wigfall was skilled at quick answers or quips that either demeaned his opponent or elicited laughter to divert the listeners' attention from the issue. Perhaps sensing that the argument was working in Wigfall's favor, Pugh dismissed the slavery aspect and indicted Wigfall for opposing homesteads while supporting railroads. After permitting debate between Pugh and Mason of Virginia, Wigfall continued. Referring to Pugh's inconsistency charge, Wigfall chided, "those who live in glass houses ought not to throw stones." Comparing two of Pugh's statements, Wigfall reversed the charge. When Pugh countered that Wigfall had misunderstood, the Texan shifted to another issue. Interrupted twice as he attempted to show similarities in his and Pugh's beliefs, Wigfall retorted: "Now, sir, it is possible that the Senator, before we get through with this debate, may persuade me that I cannot vote for any donations to railroads. I hope that I shall be able to persuade him that he cannot vote for the homestead bill. We shall then reverse the story of the two Yankees who were locked up in a room together, and made twenty-five dollars out of each other by swapping coats." [Laughter] While the humourous effect
remained, Wigfall castigated Pugh and other homestead supporters for proposing to give land to paupers. As perhaps he expected, Wigfall evoked immediate protest from Pugh who resented the term "pauper."

Typical of the "unpleasant connotation" which McEdwards describes in agitative rhetoric, Wigfall probably chose the term "pauper" deliberately to arouse discussion.

Indicting Pugh as the "enemy" and the homestead bill as part of a plot to rob states, Wigfall asked a series of questions about the lands which would be offered to settlers. Gradually intensifying his language, he hinted at conspiracy:

This land is then to be surveyed and this expense to be continued and kept up, and these parties are to settle upon it, and yet it is not donation! Oh no! Of course not! A man goes and settles on the public domain, gets possession of it, keeps possession of it, the fee passes from the Government to him; but it is no donation, because he can only settle on every alternate section! Who is going to settle on the other alternate section and pay for it? I ask the Senator not to deceive himself, or suppose that others are to be deceived.

Through negative suggestion Wigfall sneered: "I know that the Senator would not attempt to palm off sophisms on a body of the respectibility and that has the amount of brains that this body has." In this personal affront Wigfall vilified Pugh. Perhaps with sarcasm, the Texan's booming voice mocked, "yet it is not a donation! Oh, no! Of course not!"

Through insinuation Wigfall questioned Pugh's credibility. Although he dropped the term "pauper" temporarily, Wigfall became increasingly caustic as the dialogue continued. During the argument over whether or not land sales would stop if the homestead act passed, Wigfall chided:

"That is all very clear--that a man who can go and settle on one hundred and sixty acres of land--a man who is going to be a bona fide settler--would rather pay $1.25 [per acre] than have it for nothing. I am
entirely satisfied with the argument." Implying that the homestead supporters might not be seeing all the ramifications, Wigfall forced Pugh into a defensive position. As Pugh tried to explain, Wigfall, perhaps pacing back and forth flashing his dark eyes, snapped: "I so understand," and sneered, "I am entirely satisfied."

Later in the day Wigfall reminded his listeners that Pugh, "has quoted John C. Calhoun on me." Believing he had Pugh cornered, the Texan boasted: "I long suspected that he [Pugh] was in the habit of consulting that oracle of wisdom; and if he will introduce the bill that John C. Calhoun introduced I will join him in voting for it." Wigfall's followers probably enjoyed the suggestion that a northern Democrat studied Calhoun before making a decision. Following Pugh's attempt to answer, Wigfall shifted the attack again to ridicule the homestead: "The bill proposes not only that we shall get nothing, but that we shall pay for the expense of getting nothing." [Laughter]
Pugh could not pin Wigfall down. Refusing to face any issue seriously, the Texan discussed them just long enough to make his appear the better cause or until he managed to embarrass his opponent. Without warning he often switched to another subject or attacked some individual. Couched in "unserious" language, Wigfall warned of dangers in adopting the homestead proposal. As a strategy, he seemed to want to get his opponent on the defensive through personal attacks and then to transfer rejection of the person to rejection of the bill. Thus, by vilifying Pugh, Wigfall endeavored to cast suspicion upon the homestead bill, to polarize North and South, and to reduce the likelihood that the Democratic party would unite in the nominating convention.
Objectification. Closely akin to vilification except the agitator broadens the attack to blame a group rather than an individual, Wigfall utilized objectification five times in this segment. Primarily, the Texan blamed northerners, Republicans and Democrats, for favoring a homestead act designed to destroy public land sales, to import large numbers of foreigners, and to eliminate slavery.

Early in the debate Wigfall appealed to fears of economic loss as he predicted, "by this homestead bill you stop at once the sale of public lands." Choosing phrases such as "that class of population," Wigfall produced "a blurred image of the enemy," an indefinite group which would accept charity because they were unwilling to work. Presumably, in Wigfall's view, the presence of this undesirable element on the frontier would deter decent people from buying adjacent sections and settling in the same areas. Refusing to face the issue that indolent persons probably would not accept a homestead, Wigfall attacked the bill's proponents on the bases that individuals might be cheated or that the bill would have disastrous consequences for American citizens. Seizing the provision in the bill that permitted transfer of the homestead bill without the wife's consent, Wigfall declared: "We may call this a bill to provide homes for the homeless, subject to sale under an execution and transfer without the wife's consent, instead of a homestead bill." Thereby he sought to heighten distrust of the bill's supporters. Moreover, Wigfall wanted Texans and other southerners to believe that he was one of the few, if not the only senator who detected the devious scheme of the homestead proponents. Thus he fulfilled his role as a states' rights defender.
Exploring a comment which Pugh made concerning non-slaveholders in the South, Wigfall turned a point to his own advantage and cast dispersion upon homestead supporters. To contend that he did not speak disparagingly, Pugh said: "On the contrary, I have strong sympathies with those people, because the greatest body of my constituents are non-slaveholders. I do not believe I have a slaveholder among them." To which Wigfall answered: "I am sorry for it, for a few of them would add considerably, [laughter] --'a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.'" [Laughter] Again ready with a clever rejoinder, Wigfall entertained his immediate audience, provided headlines for the country's newspapers, and managed to imply in the aristocratic attitude that the slave-holding society was superior to the North. As he almost always did, Wigfall introduced the slavery issue into the debate.

Through an appeal to fear of economic loss to widows whom the government had helped in the past, Wigfall suggested that homestead advocates were guilty of "mockery of the living," "fraud on the dead," and "outrage on the widows." In emotional terms, Wigfall pleaded:

You give a widow a land warrant because her husband died in battle; she does not intend to move there, and she cannot move there, and then you say to her, "Go and settle on the land." Will anybody buy her warrant? It is mockery of the living; it is a fraud on the dead. It is an outrage on the widows and orphans with whom this Government has made, whether rightfully or not, a contract; and it has no right to violate it. We have given them these warrants for services, and we have no right now to come in and say this donation shall be utterly valueless, by the declaration that anybody can go and settle on the land for nothing.

For his southern followers, Wigfall pictured the homestead supporters as a sinister group of promise-breakers and frauds who should be watched closely.
Explaining that the homestead proposal was an "electioneering trick," Wigfall continued:

Mr. President, these foreigners are to be brought in here, and to be settled upon these lands. I understand all that. This is not a party question, of course not! The Republicans do not intend to appeal to the German population; they do not intend to appeal to the Irish; they do not intend to appeal to the men that they have been persecuting and making war on, and say, "we were your friends, and would have given you one hundred and sixty acres, but these Democrats would not vote for it!" Oh, no; no party purpose in this, no electioneering! I understand that very well. Why, sir, it is an electioneering trick; and I am sorry that any gentleman on this side of the Senate should have been drawn into it, or been caught by it.

Wigfall objectified Republicans as desperate politicians who would stoop to promising Germans and Irish people land in exchange for votes and then blame Democrats when the promises were not fulfilled.

As his final attack against the vague assemblage whom he labeled homestead supporters Wigfall shifted blame for "the smoldering" excitement over abolition which had suddenly "burst out" and was "burning fiercely." Referring to the homestead bill, the Texan continued:

And yet a policy is introduced here by which, with the aid of emigrant aid societies from Massachusetts—and they are ready to incorporate them at any time—an immense influx of European immigrants can be drawn into the northwestern Territories, and new States admitted; and then comes the proposition to alter the Constitution—to abolish slavery in the States. I have spoken of that already, in reply to what was said by the Senator from Tennessee, and I have stated that I am not disposed, at least, to hasten that thing. Southern men take this view; they look upon it in this way; but it seems that there is a determination to take just exactly such means as will fill up, with a free-soil population, these Territories, and make new States so rapidly that, under the forms of law, we can be destroyed.

Clearly aristocratic in his view, the Texan appealed to southern fears that slavery would be destroyed. Moreover, he depicted the otherwise innocent homestead bill as a sinister plot by northerners to foster John Brownism. Employing such terms as "immense influx of European immigrants," "abolish slavery," and "we can be destroyed," Wigfall
appealed to southern fears that slavery was in danger from the growth of non-slaveholding states. In all, the instances of objectification produced a cumulative impression that northern Democrats and Republicans had formulated the homestead bill to defraud the American people, to build the Republican party, and to eliminate slavery.

**Calculated Antagonism.** Wigfall chose phrases to irritate homestead supporters. He referred to homesteads as "donations to paupers," spoke of poverty as a crime, the bill as a pauper bill "pandering to a false sentiment," and potential homesteaders as "under the curse of God." Determined to incur opposition, Wigfall returned to a favorite technique, reducing the charity idea to the absurd. "Instead of a source of revenue, the public lands will become a constant source of expense to the Government," he began. With sarcasm, he continued: "Hence it is better to give each man $200 at once and be done with it, provided you can get that class of population to give a receipt in full against the Government, and bind themselves never to come here and ask for further donations." In the attack Wigfall assumed the stance of an aristocratic planter. In the attitude of arrogance he looked with disdain on "that class of population," which would accept a homestead. Although he did not use the term, Wigfall kept the pauper idea alive with references to "that class" and the doubtful prospect of getting them to "give a receipt in full."³⁹

According to Smith: "Agitation depends on active opposition for its success. Sometimes the creation of opposition becomes the task of

³⁹Ibid., pp. 1533-1538.
the agitator." When Wigfall labeled poverty a "crime," he possibly stirred opponents. Having hinted at the idea several times, he stated: "I know it is popular to talk about poor men, but I tell you poverty is a crime. A man who is poor has sinned, [laughter] there is a screw loose in his head somewhere." To attack the homestead bill was to attack a cherished bill of the Republicans and northern Democrats and particularly voters in the western states such as Iowa, Nebraska, and Kansas. As if surprised by the laughter, Wigfall added: "The Senator from Ohio laughs. I will prove it." Assuming Wigfall was joking, Pugh replied: "My observation of late years is, that those who have sinned most generally get rich the fastest in this country." [Laughter] In a serious mood, Wigfall responded: "I think not. I think virtue is not always its own reward; but it is very frequently rewarded." Possibly hoping to shift attention away from Wigfall's remarks, James Green of Missouri proposed an amendment. "I will not be diverted from the train of my remarks," Wigfall rebuffed: "I say, Mr. President, that poverty is a crime; and I shall move to amend the bill by calling it a bill to encourage crime, and to provide for criminals, to rob widows and orphans, to violate the Constitution of the United States and bankrupt the Treasury." Wigfall's whole demeanor was likely repugnant to his opponents; he refused to permit interruptions and he chose words to sting or goad. Again, instead of accepting Green's amendment, he quick-wittedly indicated that he might present his own amendment to call the homestead a bill to encourage crime, to rob widows and orphans, and to bankrupt the United States. His language must

40Smith, Rhetoric of Black Revolution, p. 28.
have galled the homestead proponents.

With his descriptions of the people who would occupy homesteads, Wigfall probably sent reporters rushing from the chamber to get the story in the next issue. Including "that class of society who are the fruges consumere nati--those men who are born to eat, to sleep, and to die," Wigfall added the term "pauper" to the homestead bill: "It intends to provide for a set of men who either cannot or will not make a living, and who are unwilling to take the hazards of the law to steal, and would rather starve, beg or go into the poorhouses. It is a pauper bill--that is what it is and nothing else." Clearly an aristocratic stance, Wigfall contradicted the pioneer spirit which characterized the frontier. When Pugh pointed out that few, if any, of Wigfall's feared "paupers" would ever benefit from the bill, the Texan responded in extreme emotional language. Oversimplifying and using stereotypes, he charged: "No, sir, this bill is to provide for those who inhabit the purlieus of London and the Five Points of New York; 'tattered prodigals,' as 'ragged as Lazarus in the pointed cloth;' 'crankers of a calm world and a long peace;' 'revolted tapsters and hostlers trade-fallen.'" In the passage Wigfall approximated Lowenthal and Guterman's observation that "the agitator endows with characteristics that make them seem distasteful creatures, untouchables whom one avoids as if it were a social commandment to shun them." Creating fearful images of what might happen if "tattered prodigals," or those "ragged as Lazarus" occupied homesteads, Wigfall encouraged his disciples to "follow the path of least resistance intellectually," to reject the homestead bill. He also aggravated the opposition to himself among those who favored homesteads.
Maintaining a superior attitude, Wigfall described an imaginary state settled by paupers: "What kind of State would it be?" he asked: "A pel of paupers; the outpourings of the jails and lazarette houses, with such a population as that, I should like to look at the two Senators; I should like really to see the men who wore the ermine elected by such a set, Great God! it would be a sight to behold!"

[Laughter] Probably aware that many Republicans were German immigrants or other "foreigners," Wigfall likely roused their ire by suggesting that homesteaders would be a "pel of paupers," or the outpourings of jails." The results of Wigfall's language are difficult to estimate. While he evoked laughter, perhaps of a nervous sort, he also treated carelessly delicate subjects which eventually helped produce the grave consequences of secession and war. Of course, with secession his long-range goal, he did not mind incurring enemies.

Since he had promised to prove that poverty was a crime, Wigfall quoted the Bible to justify his opposition to the homestead bill:

"Why, sir, the curse of God is upon the class who are intended to be provided by this bill. It is the declaration of Divine justice and wisdom that 'he who will not provide for his own family is worse than an infidel;' and I said before that poverty is a crime, and I say that God declares so." Again utilizing slavocracy appeals, Wigfall implied that good men would turn to crime before they would accept a homestead:

A man who has intellect, and who has energy, and, who has character, may become poor; but you see that man struggling against adversities; he sits not in the corner of the street with a hat, and asks alms. If he is wanting in one of the elements of manhood, moral character, he may put on a mask and meet you on the road and say "stand and deliver;" and before God I would have more respect for him that turns foot-pad than for the beggar. He at least has the boldness of manhood, if he has not honesty of character. If he is too worthless to work, he is at least ashamed
to beg. The miserable mendicant has lost even the sense of shame. He has "sounded the base string of humility," and there is no hope for him or of him.  

Wigfall's language posed serious implications. The homestead was regarded as promising hope to thousands of honest, hard-working, often poor people who would continue a westward movement to settle the country. To defeat the proposal, Wigfall suggested that potential homesteaders lacked "the elements of manhood, moral character." The man who would accept a homestead, according to Wigfall, was a "miserable mendicant" who had "lost even the sense of shame." No wonder newspaper editors, politicians, religious leaders, and other northerners hated the Texan. Consistent with Lowenthal and Guterman's agitator who "attacks values not in open, explicit terms but surreptitiously, under the guise of a defense of existing ideals, proposes to view the world as split between two irreconcilable camps," Wigfall presented a choice between slavery—the southern good—and the homestead bill—the northern evil.

In an exchange with Pugh on Calhoun doctrines, Wigfall disregarded interruptions as he persisted: "I wish the Senator had read also another paragraph, from the same [Calhoun] speech. It was that one main object he had in introducing the bill was to cut the throat of demagogism." Without bothering to explain how Calhoun attempted to fight "demagogism," Wigfall simply inserted the term to hint that Pugh was a demagogue. No matter how tenuous the relationship, Wigfall quickly linked his opposition to the homestead bill with the revered Calhoun.

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41 Congressional Globe, pp. 1533-1538.

42 Lowenthal and Guterman, Prophets of Deceit, pp. 38, 92-93.
Although Pugh tried to explain that what Calhoun proposed was demagogism, Wigfall once more turned to Wilkinson's questions about Texas' practice of giving land to "foreigners." After exclaiming, "she had a right to do it," Wigfall explained his position:

I have a right to do with my own as I please; I have a right to gamble it off in hell, if I choose; I have a right to squander it; I have a right to give it to missionary societies, or for publishing the Bible, or do whatever I please with that which is my own. But the Senator from Minnesota seems not to be able to draw the distinction between the State of Texas, a political community that conquered the land she is giving away, who can deal with her own as she sees fit--he seems not to draw the distinction between a State government in which the sovereignty vests, and a miserable one-horse concern here in Washington, that is administering a few, not granted, but delegated powers, that the States have intrusted it to administer. [Laughter] Why, sir, this is a monstrous matter of immorality, as well as schism in political knowledge.43

Utilizing the harsh language which McEdwards views as characteristic of agitators, Wigfall justified the actions of his predecessors whose actions appeared to contradict his opposition to the homestead bill. Declaring "I have a right," and Texas had a right to do with her land as she pleased, Wigfall claimed that his opponents did not understand the difference between a state and a national government. As Alvy King suggests, Wigfall never seemed to tire of lecturing northerners on the doctrine of states' rights.44 In language close to treason, he spoke of the federal land give-away as a "monstrous matter of immorality, as well as schism in political knowledge."45 He was the beau ideal of his states' rights compatriots. Calling the United States

43Congressional Globe, pp. 1536-1537.
44King, Louis T. Wigfall, p. 82.
45Congressional Globe, p. 1537.
Congress "a miserable one-horse concern," the Texan introduced a conflict between Texas and the United States. In the passage Wigfall resembles Lowenthal and Guterman's agitator whom they describe as "Walter Mitty and Jeremiah rolled up in one." Lowenthal and Guterman further suggest: "Such an indiscriminate mixture of trivial and sublime symbols might appear blasphemous or simply disgusting, but the agitator seems to count on a different reaction. Instead of imposing on his listeners the difficult task of following a saint, he gratifies them by dragging the lofty notions of sainthood down to the humdrum." Hardly the typical freshman senator, Wigfall attacked even the august body of which he was a part. In addition, by reducing the awe with which many held the national government, Wigfall helped establish a climate more favorable toward dissolving that government. Above all, he increased the hostility of northerners toward him.

One incident occurred which demonstrated the contempt with which other senators were beginning to regard Wigfall. After the Texan had repeated much of what he had said before regarding the compact arrangement of states, Wilkinson continued questioning about foreigners in Texas until Pugh interrupted to capitalize on Wilkinson's argument. Pugh asked: "Has Texas given a premium to pauperism? Has the policy of Texas had any such result as the Senator supposes? If it has not, then the Senator is in error. What he calls paupers will never go to the land; criminals will never go there." Seeing he was trapped, Wigfall mused: "The clock admonishes me that I had as well go on," [laughter] and began a long discourse in which he attempted to ratio-

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nalize Texas' actions as "good for a new State engaged in war and needing men." When Wilkinson asked if he could repeat the statement, Wigfall admitted: "I do not think I could." [Laughter] When Wilkinson observed: "I think the Senator himself is rather obtuse to-day," Wigfall answered, "it may be so." [Laughter] The interchange may provide internal evidence that Wigfall was drunk during the speech and, if so, some senators were content to dismiss his statements on that basis. However, drunk or sober, Wigfall accomplished his goal of antagonizing northerners.

**Solidification.** Although he wove his efforts to unify the South into almost every sentence, Wigfall emphasized the tactic of solidification of southerners to recognize the homestead bill as a plot to destroy slavery in four specific instances. The first he inserted in his contention that poverty was a crime. Explaining that an industrious person was never poor Wigfall identified the persons he meant as "capitalists." "I have seen something of the capitalists I have been speaking of," he began. "They are as proud as any men in the land. They do not send their children to poor schools; they do not go into poor-houses; they have as great an aversion to that crime of pauperism as the millionaire. I have seen something of them, and I have lived amongst them." Wigfall sought to have southerners take pride in the attitude that they would not accept a homestead, especially offered by Republicans. To bolster his call for unity, Wigfall continued:

The non-slaveholders of the South, ninety-nine times out of a hundred, are landholders. This bill is not intended to provide for them. No one supposes it is intended to provide for them. The Senator from Tennessee [Mr. Nicholson] admits that it is not, in substance. He admits that the effect of the bill is to free-soil the territory of the United States; but he says, in defense of himself as a southern man, that to that complexio
it must come at last; and really it is a matter of very little consequence whether it is to-day or to-morrow.

Calling for other southern men to recognize the dangers in the homestead act, Wigfall evoked humor with the following anecdote:

I have said I happen to feel as Jack Falstaff did in a battle in which he did not distinguish himself for his courage. Honest Jack said, it was true he owed God a death, but it was not due yet, and he was loth to pay it before it was due. [Laughter] It may be coming to that complexion; I know not; but I shall not, by any vote of mine, hasten the catastrophe. "Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof." Now, does this hasten the catastrophe, or does it not?

Through the laughter Wigfall likely sought to temper the impact of his attack on the homestead bill and to reassure southerners that they were right in backing him in the opposition.

Contending that the homestead bill could exclude every slaveholder from moving into a territory "because no man who owns a negro is going to move on one hundred and sixty acres," Wigfall asserted, "we have no pauper population at the South, and I thank God for it." In a superior attitude, he predicted the outcome of the measure:

The only effect of the bill is to fill that country with paupers. We are under no obligation to provide for your paupers. We are under no obligation whatever to build up new States composed of such a population, and I am utterly opposed to it; and I believe that the effect of this thing will be to fill that Territory with a prejudiced, sectional, fanatical population, that will send member after member to this body to agitate, agitate, agitate, and keep up the sectional question, until you put the feather upon the camel's back.

With fear appeals as the basis for rejection, Wigfall urged southerners to realize that the homestead proposal posed a threat to slavery and the southern way of life. Clearly seeking to polarize the sections he stressed "we" are under no obligation to provide for "your" paupers. Therefore, southerners should offer concerted opposition to the odious legislation.
To the charge that Texas gave away land in a manner similar to that intended by the homestead proponents, Wigfall rationalized the actions as legitimate for a new state and a procedure which stopped at annexation. By contrast he suggested that Texas had sold her land, at a fair price; and we have, as a consequence, a population who, having paid for their freeholds, feel like free men. Nor have we suffered from the population obtained under our colony contracts. They have proved to be worthy and industrious citizens; but they were not introduced by New England emigrant aid societies. A policy that is good for a new State engaged in war and needing men, may be bad when the circumstances change. But this is not a question of policy; it is a question of power. I deny the power of this Government to give away the public domain.

Appealing to pride among Texans Wigfall indicated the policy of selling the public property produced superior citizens to the give-away measure dreamed up by northerners. From the extremes of dangers to slavery to the claims of pride in ownership, Wigfall urged southerners to consolidate their energies to defeat the homestead bill. But, if efforts to defeat the measure failed, Wigfall declared: "I trust in God the President of the United States at last will have the nerve to exercise his veto upon a measure that seems so fraught with evil."

Image Building. Consistently Wigfall made statements in his speeches to strengthen his ethos among his supporters. Through frequent references to himself, his ability to interpret accurately the day's events, and his unswerving courage to take a stand which he was willing to defend with his life, Wigfall sought to build his image among southerners.

Assuming a "holier than thou" or superior attitude toward northerners, Wigfall declared that "the greatest mistake any man ever made in these United States was in supposing that the people have not sense." [Laughter] Continuing, he said:
The worst paying trade that any man undertook to make a living at was demagogism. The man who does what is right, and goes before the people and defends his position, will always be sustained. I have great confidence in juries. I never have yet seen a jury that I would not rather talk to than a judge. If my cause was right they would understand it; and their verdict you might rely upon. I have great confidence in the wisdom and virtue and intelligence of the people--not vagabondism or pauperism.

By implication Wigfall suggested that he was open and not afraid to face voters while the homestead supporters engaged in clandestine arrangements which they intended to keep hidden until the homestead act passed. Complimenting his listeners, Wigfall indicated that they were the jury to whom he was taking his case. Apparently his strategy worked because his supporters dubbed him "a bold and fearless thinker" and proclaimed "it will almost always appear that he is right when his positions are divested of the prejudices and clouds that his enemies attempt to throw around them." Aware of his image with the fire-eaters, Wigfall continued to drive the wedge deeper to separate North and South.

Since Pugh suggested that the homestead bill was similar to Wigfall's railroad measure, the Texan likely pleased the spectators and his supporters by his challenge: "If he can show me that it is an iniquitous contract; that the companies are getting more land or money than the Government ought to pay, I will vote against my own bill."

As was true of the mounted volunteers appropriation, Wigfall apparently introduced the railroad bill to gain publicity for himself. Like the border relief proposal, the railroad was irrelevant in the "impending crisis," except to spread his fame as the champion of states' rights. Consistent with the fire-eaters' willingness to risk everything for principle, Wigfall gave the impression that he would bear the conse-
quences of his radical statement. Believing Texans had sent him to Washington with a mandate for action, he gained stature with his constituents whether the bills passed or failed.

Attempting to enhance his own ethos and to underscore his attack on the homestead backers, the Texan boasted: "Whenever I fail to render some evidence of my capacity to represent any portion of the people in any of the States of this Union, either here or elsewhere, than pandering to prejudice, I hope that I shall pass from public life into retirement." Insinuating that the homestead supporters were "pandering to prejudice," without explaining just what he meant, Wigfall called for defeat of the proposal. Offering to vote against his own bill or retire from office if proven wrong, Wigfall posed a choice for his auditors. Because he did not expect his enemies to make a similar offer, the Texan boldly asserted his superiority.

Finally, when Wilkinson insisted that he compare the "pauperism" that he saw in the homestead bill with Texas' right to "dispense her means to charity," Wigfall glibly dismissed the implication: "I have discussed that question often in Texas; and having the Senator from Ohio immediately in my mind's eye, I prefer to go on with him." In that statement Wigfall revealed that he persistently side-stepped issues which he did not want to discuss. Texas newspapers noted Wigfall's superior attitude and approved it. By the senators whom he snubbed Wigfall was likely regarded as an arrogant fool. No matter, the Texan still accomplished the goals of obtaining attention, creating

47 Congressional Globe, pp. 1533-1538.
copy for newspapers, and intensifying the sectional tensions that existed in the country.

**Effects.** Since part of Wigfall's goal was to attract publicity, however adverse, then calling poverty "a crime" accomplished it. The newspapers had a field day. Versions of the speech appeared weeks later in various papers in the nation. The *New York Times* criticized:

> Is Poverty A Crime? Wigfall says it is. And Wigfall knows. Experience has taught him. He says: "I myself have been as poor as anybody." In the presence of the Senate and the world he thus declares that he has been guilty. But Wigfall has reformed. The "rich old boy" remembers with true contrition the early sins of the "poor young man." With humble devotion he now worships wealth, and practices all the virutes of its creed, from ignorance down. He regards knowledge with a pious hate. With slightly pharisaic pride he parades this, his crowning virtue, before the Senate, and declares in verification of it, "I do not read the papers; I never do." 48

Reacting to the aristocratic position from which Wigfall viewed the homestead bill, the *Times* editor considered Wigfall a senatorial oddity, a buffoon whose antics made interesting copy. Little concerned about the kinds of publicity he received, Wigfall knew that "the audience of the agitator is always the public, the members of the community or nation." 49 Apparently Wigfall believed that if by his extreme language he could perpetuate the debate among readers, he could widen the developing sectional gap and drive the South toward secession. To be sure, he thrived on the attention he attracted through his speech making.

Revealing something of Wigfall's emerging reputation in the North, the *Times* editor continued:

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48 *New York Times*, April 7, 1860.

The statement [that Wigfall did not read papers] required no affidavit to accredit it. Of course he "doesn't read the papers. Whatever else may be said against him, no man would think of charging the crime of intelligence upon one who believes that "poverty is another name for vagabondage, and that for crime." The great mission of the Texas sage is at length apparent. To him shall history accord the glory of founding a new school of ethics, and in light of which the philosophy of Christian morality "pales its effectual fires." The elevating tendency of a faith like this commends itself to the peoples of all who love the race. In gratitude to its founder, we invite this tribute for inscription on his tomb: "A criminal by birth—for he had not a thread of apparel he could call his own—yet he grew to a noble manhood, adorned by all the virtues of wealth, and unstained by the vices of knowledge."

While in the North Wigfall became notorious, in the South he attracted followers and defenders. Almost two months later Wigfall's supporters were still attempting to clear up the misunderstandings or confusion caused by the speech. The **Washington Evening Star** editor wrote:

Since so much has been said of Colonel Wigfall's speech in the Senate, we give an extract from the Congressional Globe, in his own words, and not as they are garbled by ill-mannered letter writers from the North, who hope to make a little capital out of every new idea a Southern statesman may originate. Wigfall is a bold and fearless thinker, and arrives at conclusions that appal weaker minds; it will almost always appear that he is right when his positions are divested of the prejudices and clouds that his enemies attempt to throw around them—Let the industrious, hard working man be questioned on this subject, and you will not find that his nerves are shocked because Wigfall has said that pauperism is a crime.\(^{51}\)

In Texas, as usual, Wigfall found defenders. The **Jefferson Herald** printed the following editorial:

The assertion, that Wigfall said in the Senate that poverty is a crime, was stated by the Abolition prints of New England. It is well known that he is himself about as poor a man as Texas affords, and it is to be regretted that some of the papers of his own state are now handling the thing against him as adroitly as the Abolitionists themselves. A Black Republican Senator asserted that

\(^{50}\)New York Times, April 7, 1860.

the white laboring population of the South were a poor, wretched and degraded class, who dragged out a miserable and starved life on account of being unable to compete with slave labor. Mr. Wigfall gave the lie to the assertion, and justly vindicated the dignity of the white population of the South—a population with innumerable facilities for becoming independent, and if they were so imprudent as not to take advantage of that, it was a fault of their own, and they had no right to lay it to slave labor. No man was necessarily poor and dependent in the South. He was right in giving the lie to such an assertion—right in his declaration that by the exercises of a little prudence, each white man in the South could become a king—and right in proclaiming that every one who remained poor and miserable, with the advantages offered him by a Southern residence, was criminally guilty of rank ingratitude to his family. Can any man in the South, or at least in Texas, deny the facts, as asserted by Col. Wigfall. Leave all such work to Black Republicans. Col. Wigfall is a sample of our poor men. There he is—look at him.\(^52\)

As perhaps he expected, Wigfall's disciples excused his antics and blamed all the uproar on "Abolition prints of New England." The editor, in this case, rewrote Wigfall's ideas to make them more palatable to Texans. Echoing the aristocratic attitude, the editor added: "He [Wigfall] was right in proclaiming that everyone who remained poor and miserable, with the advantages offered him by a Southern residence, was criminally guilty of rank ingratitude to his family." Then, in a burst of states' rights pride, the journalist concluded: "Col. Wigfall is a sample of our poor men. There he is—look at him.\(^53\)

Seizing the routine homestead bill that had circulated in the Congress for fifteen years, Wigfall widened the sectional gap by opposing the bill and its supporters. Suggesting the proposal was part of a conspiracy to destroy slavery, he expanded fears and suspicions that already existed in the slave-holding states. Wigfall used harsh

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\(^52\) Jefferson, Texas Herald, reprinted in the Dallas Herald, June 20, 1860.

\(^53\) Ibid., April 25, 1860.
language and radical ideas to create opposition to himself and, ultimately, to the southern cause. From the verbal assaults of northern senators and the unflattering editorials in northern papers, Wigfall emerged for his constituents and a growing number of other southerners as the "persecuted innocence."

Summary

Pleased with his growing reputation among northerners as a trouble-maker and among southerners as a valorous champion of states' rights, Wigfall used the homestead discussion as a vehicle for polarizing the two sections. Through both segments of the encounter Wigfall seemed intent on driving the sections further apart. Aware that the homestead bill was the Republican party's pride, Wigfall especially irritated northerners who favored the proposal. Much more abrasive in his language choice and allusions than in the first encounter, Wigfall committed himself to a course of agitational strategies designed to limit cooperation between the sections. Moreover, by attacking northern Democrats who supported homesteads, the Texan anticipated the rift in the Democratic party which surfaced a few weeks later in Charleston. Typically leading the charge of states' righters who believed they could force northern capitulation by threatening secession, Wigfall taunted and provoked his opponents. Whenever he hit upon a subject particularly odious to the North, the Texan presented every variation he could imagine. For example, on the issue that southerners were superior, Wigfall boasted that they excelled the North in military matters, economics, and honor. In one
instance he suggested all northerners were cowards and offered to let them shoot him if the South did not defeat the North.

Even as he threatened secession and war, Wigfall blamed the possibility of dissolution on New England and Black Republicans. Evoking laughter, he poked fun at the section and provided illustrations that caused his supporters to increase their impressions that southerners were superior to dependent northerners. In a loud, clear voice Wigfall articulated the growing unrest of southerners who saw slavery threatened and reminded northerners that southerners had for years dominated the Democratic party and the country's politics.

In this segment for the first time Wigfall employed the strategy of solidification of the South behind the claim that, as members of a compact, states had the right to withdraw from the Union. Of course the claim was not new but Wigfall began in March of 1860 to restate southern rights to secede as part of his long range plan to divide the Union. As a South Carolinian in the 1840's he preached secession, as a Texan in the 1850's he urged Calhoun to lead South Carolina in withdrawing, and, finally, in 1860 Wigfall occupied a national forum through which he could influence the country. By attempting to solidify the South in the belief that secession was desirable, the Texan followed a course consistent with his earlier career.

To augment his attempts to draw the South together, Wigfall strengthened his own image as one who looked at things plainly and possessed military experience. Even as he sought to strengthen southerners belief in him and secession, Wigfall endeavored to polarize his followers from northerners whom he deliberately antagonized.
Twelve days later, forced to answer Pugh who indicted him for offering a railroad bill similar to the principle of homesteads, Wigfall turned the occasion to his advantage as he persisted in polarizing the sections over the homestead bill. With five predominate strategies Wigfall revealed a progression of attacking a particular person whom Wigfall pictured as representative of a northern conspiracy to defraud the American people of the money that would otherwise result from the sale of public lands; blaming northerners as a group who schemed to cheat southerners out of a rightful share of the unsettled lands; purposely stirring up hatred against himself through his absurd charges toward homesteaders; rallying southerners to recognize the homestead bill as a plot to destroy slavery; and enhancing his own ethos as one man who would follow his conscience courageously speaking out about evil and corruption wherever he found it.

More bold than ever in this segment Wigfall coined phrases and used words designed to attract the press. Aware of the impact which newspapers could exert over the coming Democratic convention Wigfall uttered language certain to be reprinted. Calling poverty a crime and the homestead act a bill to encourage crime, Wigfall not only alienated Republicans but he further strained the relations between already feuding Democrats.

In the increasing number of short exchanges with other senators Wigfall demonstrated a keen mind with which he was able to turn attacks to his own advantage. Moreover, in this section he clearly evidenced his polarization goal through the use of "we" referring to southerners and "you" when addressing northerners. From that time forward Wigfall used the terms as poles by which to identify the sections.
Unwilling to face issues squarely, Wigfall sought to obtain recognition for himself and widen the sectional gaps already evident in the country.
CHAPTER VI

ENCOUNTER THREE: THE DAVIS RESOLUTIONS
ON PROTECTION OF SLAVES AS PROPERTY

Early in 1860 in reaction to Stephen Douglas's squatter sovereignty doctrine, Jefferson Davis introduced a series of resolutions which he intended to serve as the party platform at the Democratic convention in Charleston. According to Roy Nichols, Davis based his seven point proposal on Calhoun's famous resolutions of 1837, "to spike the Little Giant's [Douglas] guns." In his resolutions Davis provided that "neither Congress, nor a Territorial Legislature possess the power to annul or impair the Constitutional right of any citizen of the United States to take his slave property into the common territories." Although debated occasionally throughout the spring, the senators made little effort to pass the resolutions before the Democrats assembled in South Carolina. As Nichols suggests, the proposals were available "as advice to the platform committee at Charleston." The Davis resolutions contributed to the chaotic convention proceedings. After the convention, Nichols concludes:

At Washington all was confusion. The Senate once more became a political convention. The Southern Senators had everything to lose if the party split. Their power would vanish, if defeat of

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2 Congressional Globe, 36th Congress, p. 1480.
the Democracy opened the way for the Republican and opposition parties to gain ground. The party must be rid of Douglas, partly because they did not want him elevated above them and partly because he was a liability in the South. It was of first importance to get the convention back together; and second they would provide a platform, the Davis resolutions endorsed by the South.

Hoping to discredit Douglas or goad him to some indiscretion in debate, the southern senators discussed the Davis resolutions almost daily during May. In a letter to the editor of the Dallas Herald an unidentified Texan reported on Senate attendance: "The Senate was quite full on the Democratic side; but on the other most of the seats were vacant. There was a fine attendance in the galleries." Republicans who attended the sessions did so mainly to encourage the quarrel among Democrats. For instance, decrying southern domination, Kingsley Bingham, the Michigan Republican said: "Mr. President, I have said enough to prove the total depravity of the Democratic party North; the utter abandonment of their principles; their complete and thorough subserviency to southern dictation, they have lost the manly, independent spirit, which was characteristic of the party in the days of General Jackson." Expressing the growing confidence among the Republicans, Bingham continued: "A new era is about to dawn upon us; the desperate struggle which has just taken place at Charleston is one of the dying throes of the slave power. The slave code which these resolutions indicate will never be passed. A party is about to take possession of this Government, with the same name and the same principles as the Republican party of 1800."

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4 Dallas, Texas Herald, June 13, 1860.
5 Congressional Globe, p. 2314.
6 Ibid., p. 2315.
Highlighting the sectional clash within the Democratic party, John Hale of New Hampshire made a wise observation: "The southern wing has been the Democratic party ever since I have known anything about its history, and it will still be. No matter whether they have the majority or the minority, they will control." Further, he warned, "any attempt to take the scepter out of their hands, if it is successful, will place it in the hands of the Republican party."  

Revealing little interest in passing needed legislation and his contempt for southerners, Hale added:

I have felt very little interest in these resolutions because it is not, in my opinion, the appropriate province of the Senate to enunciate dogmas that are to govern the country. We are sent here, sir, for practical legislation. I endeavored, about a week ago, to impress the sentiment on the Senate, but my friend from Massachusetts [Mr. Wilson] thought it was better to let Senators on the other side talk on. He thought they would talk out by and by, and that the best way to come to practical business was to let them discuss these resolutions forever. . . . I have not taken a note of a word that has been said. I have heard but little, very little of them.  

With the Democratic party split becoming more evident daily, there was scant hope that nationally significant legislation would receive consideration.

With the Democratic presidential candidate yet unchosen and the party division increasing, Wigfall joined the debate on Davis' resolutions May 22.

SEGMENT ONE: MAY 22, 1860

Situation. On May 22, the primary target of southern senators was Stephen A. Douglas, who was absent from the Senate. Nichols wrote:

7Ibid., p. 2315.
8Ibid., p. 2213.
Douglas himself was tired and sick, in fact so on the down grade that he had but one year to live. He was drinking again. During the convention he had developed a persecution complex, thinking of his enemies as bloodhounds who were after his political life. When drunk he could get maudlin with self-pity and lose his nerve. In such a mood Latham found him the day after the convention recessed. When in this condition he must be kept off the floor of the Senate, for in the general wrangle he might be baited to say something which would pour oil on the fire. It was a nervous time for his operators.9

Commenting on Douglas' absence, Judah P. Benjamin of Louisiana com­plained, "it is impossible for any one of us to say when he will be here again." Pinpointing the essence of southern opposition to Douglas, Benjamin continued, "the honorable Senator from Illinois; in one of the most extraordinary speeches ever delivered in a deliberative body, has undertaken to defend his individual claims to the Presidency of the United States."10 The tone of Benjamin's words indicates the contempt with which southerners viewed Douglas' demands for the party's nomination.

Following Benjamin's abuse of Douglas, Wigfall and Pugh rose to gain the floor. Pugh secured permission first for a speech in which he disclosed northern Democrats determination to free themselves from southern domination: "When we have made an agreement thoroughly understood, the southern Senators say to us 'you shall take another determination in a certain manner, and you shall close your mouths forever.' If that is the price of peace in the Democratic party, I warn you that peace is at an end." Unwittingly providing the basis for Wigfall's subsequent attack, Pugh eulogized Douglas and directed fear appeals at southerners: "If you kill him, when we go back to the Northwest, we

9Nichols, Disruption of American Democracy, p. 308.
10Congressional Globe, p. 2233.
will take his bleeding carcass and show it to the young men coming up to cast their first vote, and say, this is the author of the Kansas-Nebraska bill; and here is southern gratitude."\[11\\]

**Strategies.** Alvy King concludes that Wigfall always needed an object for his hostility.\[12\\] In this instance he took as his objects George Pugh, the Ohio Democrat and other northerners, of whom he is reputed to have said: "Threaten them, and they will crouch to your feet like so many hounds. Only swear that you are going to dissolve the Union, and the timid creatures will get down on all fours, bite the dust, and kiss the rod raised to chastise them."\[13\\] In this brief segment that occurred on the heels of a long debate, Wigfall sought to polarize the northern and southern wings of the Democratic party through the following strategies:

1. Vilification of Pugh and Douglas as northerners determined to have preeminence or destroy the party.
2. Solidification of southerners as the true wing of the Democratic party.

**Vilification.** Because he had waited for more than six hours while other senators debated the resolutions, Wigfall rejected a motion to adjourn. Engaging in a series of short exchanges Wigfall accused Pugh of falsely representing southern Democrats: "The Senator from Ohio complains that we have attempted to ingraft something new. I deny it."

Recalling the party's convention in the previous election Wigfall

\[11\\]Ibid., p. 2248.


denied Pugh's charges: "After we had nominated the present incumbent at Cincinnati some four years ago, there sprang up a schism in the party. Mr. Buchanan, in his inaugural address, announced precisely the doctrines which we now stand by. He announced them so that the wayfaring man, though a fool, could not misunderstand." Through such phrases as "the wayfaring man, though a fool," Wigfall sought to discredit Pugh as a party influence. To further weaken Pugh's ethos, the Texan continued:

The Senator from Ohio seems to have fallen into some views which really astonish me. I come from a State where there are many who knew him in former times; and I have heard them speak of him. I have heard them speak of the distinguished Senator from Illinois. I have heard them speak of the two Senators from Indiana as good soldiers and true; no sunshine soldiers; no summer soldiers; but men who have borne the brunt and burden of the day. I supposed that when I came here, I should find him a Democrat.

Wigfall emphasized the rift in the Democrat party by suggesting that northerners were the ones who had changed from "good soldiers and true" to something less than Democrats.

Along with other southerners Wigfall disliked Douglas and began a strong attack on the Illinois senator's hopes for the presidency. Accusing Douglas of "dictating to the Democratic party," Wigfall said:

Why sir, the Senator from Mississippi [Mr. Davis] the other day spoke of him [Douglas] as assuming all the power, the pride, pomp, and circumstance of royalty, and occupying the position Louis XIV of France did, when he said "the State, that's me." But, sir, Louis XIV, himself, when he came to die, acknowledged his error, though his sin might not have been forborne him, for on that solemn occasion he said: "I die; but the State will live forever." But Judge Douglas, whom the Senator asks us to kill, and whose bleeding corpse he begs that we shall send back to the Northwest, over which I suppose he will make such a speech as was made over that of Caesar, his bleeding wounds each speaking—he, sir, will find that he is dead, and that the Democratic party is alive, and will live, his efforts to destroy it to the contrary notwithstanding.
Interrupted by a motion to adjourn, Wigfall had to postpone his abuse of Douglas until the next day.

**Solidification.** As was true of other southerners Wigfall believed the South needed to be reassured that the Charleston walk-out was warranted and that continued resistance to Douglas' nomination was the only course which honorable men could pursue. When Pugh accused him of dividing the party over an issue [slavery in the territories] which Democrats were unable to interpret alike, Wigfall suggested that northerners' "misconstruction" developed because southerners had tried to pacify the North. Employing the "patience is not always a virtue" theme, Wigfall continued, "yet, for peace and harmony, and in order to quiet Judge Douglas and his friends, we did agree, in 1856, to leave this question to the Supreme Court." In this passage Wigfall represented southern Democrats as peacemakers who compromised for the sake of good will. Implying that "Judge Douglas and his friends" were troublemakers, Wigfall invited "any plain man" to read the Dred Scott decision. Hinting that northerners pretended to misunderstand slavery in the territories, Wigfall insisted that the courts upheld the southern interpretation. Therefore, southerners should stop trying to appease northerners and deny Douglas' candidacy.

Expanding the argument that the southern wing held the true interpretation of the territory question, Wigfall aligned his cause with the following persons and institutions:

- The Attorney General so understands it.
- The executive department so understands it.
- In the Senate, every Senator having a seat on this side of the Chamber so understands it, and I apprehend that every Senator on the other side, with scarcely an exception, understands the Supreme Court to have decided, if they decided anything, that neither Congress nor the Territorial Legislature have the
right to exclude slavery from the Territories of the United States. That is the general opinion of the entire American people.14

With that much backing on an issue so important, Wigfall called upon his fellow southerners to stand firm in their determination to nominate someone other than Douglas. Through attacks against Pugh and Douglas and reenforcement of southern beliefs, Wigfall widened the gap within the Democratic party.

**Effects.** Wigfall assailed Douglas and Pugh. Likely upset because he had not been a delegate to the Charleston convention, the Texan hoped to influence the party's choice for president. Therefore, he singled out for attack the candidacy of Douglas. Referring to northern Democrats as "summer soldiers," and "sunshine soldiers" Wigfall indicated that he believed the southern wing of the party superior to their northern brethren.

Along with their personal attacks on Douglas and his followers, Wigfall and other southerners pushed to have Davis' resolutions adopted as the Democratic party's platform. Perhaps Charles Sellers is correct in his estimate that "the whole pattern of 'aggressively defensive' southern behavior was a series of constantly mounting demands for symbolic acts by which the North would say that slavery was all right."15 As was true of the fugitive slave enforcement issue, protection of slave property was not a practical or realistic complaint. Rather, because of the increasing insecurity among slaveholders well aware of growing

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14 *Congressional Globe*, pp. 2248-2249.

pressures against the institution, southern politicians stepped up their demands for symbolic acts such as party platform planks or other slavery sanctions. Within the Democratic party, northern acceptance of the Davis resolutions would have constituted reassurance for southerners that slavery was approved.

Determined to achieve a high position in the Democratic party, Wigfall spoke just enough to make clear his contempt for northern Democrats and Douglas. Retaliating against Pugh's accusation that he was dividing the party, the Texan feigned anger in view of the southern Democrats' efforts toward "peace and harmony" during the 1856 campaign. Wigfall contended that the southern wing had been as patient as possible with the Douglasites and the party could survive without Douglas.

SEGMENT TWO: MAY 23, 1860

Situation. Although adjournment had interrupted his speech on May 22, Wigfall still waited nearly an hour the following day before resuming. As the session opened, several senators discussed relatively trivial matters while Wigfall grew impatient. Eager to have Wigfall resume his attack on Douglas, Jefferson Davis asked James Hammond to yield the floor. Recognizing Wigfall's displeasure at the delay, Alfred Iverson of Georgia commented, "the Senator from Texas seems to be very anxious to proceed with his remarks." Evidently Wigfall's non-verbal behavior—pacing, scowling, sighing, gesturing, or spitting tobacco called attention sufficiently to itself to unsettle some

16 Congressional Globe, p. 2270.
senators. At any rate, the Texan communicated that he was "very anxious" to proceed.

According to Alvy King: "Wigfall and other radicals were doing nothing to bring order or to salve feelings. The southern walkout represented just such defiant, concerted action as he had preached for years. He refused to join the efforts of nine of the more moderate southern senators to get the straying delegates back into the fold. Wigfall cooperated zealously, however, with a cabal to discredit Douglas."17

Strategies. Deeply involved in the conspiracy to destroy Douglas' chances for the Democratic nomination, Wigfall sought to polarize the two sections in the Democratic party. To accomplish his goal, the Texan employed four primary strategies:

1. Vilification of Douglas as a desperate politician who would stoop to any trick to obtain the nomination.
2. Objectification of Republicans and northern Democrats as groups who treated southerners unfairly and forced them to consider withdrawal.
3. Legitimizing southerners' walkout at Charleston as the action of honest men who had to uphold their convictions.
4. Image building of himself as an astute political observer who was aware of northern conspiracies and fearless in speaking out against outrages.

Vilification. Immediately launching an attack on Douglas, Wigfall reminded his listeners: "I concluded with an observation that the Senator from Illinois was then dead—I meant, of course, politically—and had I not been interrupted, I was going on to observe that however desirable it might have been to the Senator from Ohio to play the part of Antony over the dead body of Caesar--" Ignoring Pugh's pro-

17 Alvy L. King, Louis T. Wigfall, pp. 94-95.
tests, Wigfall lampooned Douglas saying, "he died, sir, not for a flow of blood, but of ink. He was afflicted with a disease that is as common to politicians as bronchitis is to parsons—the cacoethes scribendi; he died of a pamphlet." Given the opportunity to display the type of language and behavior he had used to further his image in the homestead debate, Wigfall made much of Douglas' political death. In words calculated to attract the attention of the press as well as to aggravate northerners, the Texan boasted, "he died of a pamphlet." Moreover, he widened the breach in the Democratic party and hoped to reduce Douglas' chances for the nomination at Baltimore.

Turning to a specific indictment of Douglas for his Harper's article, Wigfall explained Douglas' downfall. Accusing him of bad judgment, the Texan continued, "and it was precisely when there was no need of such vanity that the distinguished Senator became a pamphleteer. If he was ambitious, it were a grievous fault, and grievously has Caesar answered it, for Douglas 'is in his grave;' and, I regret to say, that 'after life's fitful fever,' he does not 'sleep well.'"

Once again the Texan chose words for the benefit of newspaper writers. Applying Shakespeare to Douglas' actions, Wigfall created an analogy to enhance his image among his southern followers. Calling Douglas a "pamphleteer," and later speaking of Douglas as "seduced by the Devil or some other bitter opponent of the Democratic party," [laughter] Wigfall used what Mary McEdwards termed "concrete diction heavy with

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18 Congressional Globe, p. 2270.
19 Ibid., p. 2272.
unpleasant connotation." That is, while eliciting laughter, Wigfall's language carried the serious impact of associating Douglas with opponents of the Democratic party. This is the only instance of laughter recorded during the speech. Whether the audiences were small, disinterested or unusually serious toward party disruption is not clear.

Perhaps because most senators knew Douglas was drinking excessively, Wigfall called attention to his absence: "I say to Judge Douglas—and I regret that he is not present—that the slave code which I want is his slave code; and I will read it now, for the benefit of the Senate, the slave code which he was once willing to give, but is now unwilling to afford." Mentioning Douglas' absence and linking him with the unpleasant connotation of "slave code," Wigfall apparently hoped to demonstrate that the Illinois senator was unfit to be President. Tracing in detail Douglas' public pronouncements on territorial questions in 1850, 1855, 1856, and 1857, Wigfall suggested that the Illinois senator reversed his position toward Kansans. Hinting that Douglas changed for political reasons, the agitator questioned: "Why this change? Who has been moving the screws in the spectacles? Why this change in vision? This time he was in full faith and fellowship with the party; and the South was sustaining him for the nomination for President." Creating the impression that the "Little Giant" had deserted not only southern interests but party interests as well, Wig-

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21 Congressional Globe, p. 2273.
fall called for Douglas' repudiation. Singular in his purpose to defeat Douglas' presidential hopes, Wigfall possibly created sympathy for him among the Republicans.

In a sardonic mood, Wigfall broadened his attack to include Alexander Stephens of Georgia and A. G. Brown of Mississippi:

There is no desire on our part to force slavery on any people. Judge Douglas writes letters and makes speeches against reopening the slave trade. One would suppose that it was seriously contemplated. Mr. Stephens, at present, is his pet. His organ denounces Mr. Yancey as a slave-trader. How stands Mr. Stephens on this question? Could any argument be more cunningly devised to attract the southern mind to this question, and make it an issue, than the speech of Mr. Stephens delivered in Georgia last summer? Is he denounced by Dr. Douglas? No; there is now but one political Democratic heresy--anti-Douglasism. Mr. Brown may urge a slave code, and Mr. Stephens may insinuate the necessity of the slave trade, and it is all very well; but, if Yancey, acting under the instructions of his State, will not support Douglas, he is immolated.22

Choosing phrases such as "cunningly devised argument," referring to Douglas as "Dr.," denouncing Stephens as Douglas' "pet," and suggesting that northerners regarded southerners as heretics, Wigfall sought to polarize the Democrats. What Wigfall tried to accomplish attacking Douglas resembles Lowenthal and Guterman's conclusions regarding agitators of whom they concluded: "That such epithets of degeneracy are vague does not impair their usefulness. For one thing they arouse distrust of everything the enemy says or does."23 Wigfall apparently wanted southerners to mistrust Douglas.

22Ibid., p. 2274.

23Lowenthal and Guterman, Prophets of Deceit, p. 54.
Before reading from the Cincinnati platform of 1856, Wigfall tested the gallery audiences with these words: "I will not read much of it, for I am wearying myself, and, I fear wearying the Senate." Amid shouts of "go on," from his supporters, the Texan continued:

Judge Douglas does not understand, or will not understand, what he would learn if he will pick up any book on political ethics, and read that there is a vast difference between slavery and slaves, between the political institutions of a country and its property; that sovereign power can establish political institutions, and that whatever is PROPERTY, I care not whether it be in man or mules, the Government is bound to protect.24

Sarcastically adding "Judge," Wigfall questioned the Illinois senator's competence. Despite Douglas' experience as a lawyer, judge, and senator, the Texan implied that Douglas lacked basic political knowledge and ethics. Moreover, he probably chose the term "mules" to suggest Douglas' stubbornness.

Asserting that Douglas lacked strength even in the North, Wigfall reviewed the "Little Giant's" sins:

When a man who had repudiated our platform; who had put a false construction upon it—a most dangerous one; who had been disorganizing the party; who had been making false and impracticable issues; who had been keeping up the agitation day after day, not only upon the stump and in the Senate, but in the magazines of the country; when he who denounced us in advance as disunionists and fire-eaters, and charged us with disloyalty to the Government—when he and his friends thrust themselves and their platform upon us, I say to them, . . . "Gentlemen, do not offer us this pill; we cannot swallow it. . . . You defeat the party if you nominate him.

His language at a high emotional peak, Wigfall appealed for sympathy because southerners like Yancey and, of course, Wigfall had been denounced as disunionists and charged with disloyalty. Among his defenders in Texas, Wigfall was regarded as a super-patriot instead of

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24 Congressional Globe, p. 2275.
a traitor. Appealing to southern pride, Wigfall spoke of Douglasites "thrusting themselves and their platform upon us." To strengthen southerners' determination that Douglas' nomination would destroy the party, Wigfall warned: "When it comes to an issue like that, there are two that can play the game. Mr. Douglas may destroy the party; but he cannot be elected President." To exemplify confidence, the Texan continued: "But if this party is not to be saved except upon such terms as he [Douglas] proposes, I say let the flames lick the heavens, burn it, shake it until it tumbles and falls on his head, and I think we can save ourselves." Remarkably more personal than other senators in attacking Douglas, Wigfall referred to the actions of the remaining Charleston delegates who adopted the two-thirds rule as an example of northerners' rejection of the Illinois senator. "He must be blind," Wigfall continued, "who does not see a razor in that; who would not have anticipated throat-cutting after that proceeding."

Contrasting the fairness of his own offer to the unbending demands of Douglas, Wigfall proposed a solution: "I tell Mr. Douglas and his friends how harmony can be restored. Let him withdraw. We are disunionists, are we? We are factionists! We are sectionalists! The people of the southern States will take any man saving and excepting Stephen A. Douglas, or his friend Mr. Pugh, whether he lives North, South, East, or West." Daring his opponents to offer another candidate, the Texan teased, "is he the only man in the Union?" Turning to perhaps his favorite passage from Shakespeare, used often against Houston in Texas, Wigfall sarcastically mocked:
Now is it Rome indeed, and room enough,
When there is in it but one only man.
He doth bestride the narrow world
Like a colossus; and we petty men
Walk under his huge legs, and peep out
To find ourselves dishonorable graves. 25

According to Smith, "the rhetor often employs language highly charged
with emotional content when referring to the person vilified." 26

Instead of the "Little Giant" image, Wigfall conjured up pictures of
Douglas as an overgrown bully who had insisted on his own way in the
Democratic party for too long. According to Wigfall, the alternative
to southerners regarding themselves as "petty men" who "peep out to
find dishonorable graves" was to repudiate Douglas' presidential hopes.

Finally, Wigfall called for Douglas' rejection on the grounds that
he could not get a dozen votes in the South:

I say Judge Douglas has not any strength in any southern State;
and that there is nothing but the apprehension of the election
of a Black Republican that could give him the vote of a single
State; and there are some five or six or seven States in which
the people would see a Black Republican elected before they
would vote for him. These are the facts. 27

Consequently, Wigfall hoped that he had convinced northern Democrats
to join southerners in selecting a candidate who could unite the party.
Disregarding the consequences, the Texan probably believed that he
had polarized the party to the extent that Douglas could not receive
the full support of the Democrats.

Objectification. To discredit the Douglasites, Wigfall hinted
at a long-range conspiracy by the North against the South. With such

25 Ibid., p. 2276.
26 Smith, Rhetoric of Black Revolution, p. 28.
27 Congressional Globe, p. 2276.
phrases as "our bitterest enemies," clothed in "the garb of friendship," he sought to intensify the suspicions of southerners who already felt that they had been duped. Playing on terms such as "monstrous proposition" which had been used to describe the Davis resolutions, Wigfall said:

The Senator from Ohio regards it as a monstrous proposition, that it shall be charged that the Constitution of the United States establishes slavery in a Territory. I say also that it is a monstrous proposition. I say, furthermore, that it is a proposition that no man living south of Mason and Dixon's line has ever advocated. It has been suggested by these who, in the garb of friendship, have been our bitterest enemies; who have worn the uniform, and have shot down their fellow-soldiers in the fight. It has been used and asserted by those who would excite prejudice against the party of which they professed to be members.28

Loosely categorizing Pugh and northerners as enemies guilty of exciting prejudice against southern Democrats, Wigfall utilized what has been termed the "pity-poor-me theme," which, according to Paul Brandes, causes the agitator's supporters to think he is being persecuted while trying to do what is right.29 Claiming unusual insight, Wigfall revealed: "I have watched the course of political men, and I find that those who have run off on this heresy of squatter sovereignty are using arguments which are calculated to excite the passions of the non-slaveholding portion of this country."30 Through obscure language designed to disparage northern Democrats Wigfall warned of "political men who have run off on this heresy of squatter sovereignty."

28 Ibid., p. 2270.
30 Congressional Globe, p. 2271.
Evidently he hoped to arouse southern senators to recognize the dangers of accepting Douglas' candidacy and to recognize northern intentions to destroy slavery.

Contrasting the actions of the two sections, Wigfall continued:

If the Government is not satisfied, and will not repeal the obnoxious act, let the State withdraw, and go, as I said, in peace. But they [Northerners] do not do that; they get up societies, publish pamphlets, they make speeches, they send in petitions, they pass acts of their Legislature to annoy us. They continue irresponsibly avoiding the performance of their duties; willing to wound, yet afraid to strike. They dare not meet the issue fairly and squarely, and say they are not bound, under the Constitution, to deliver up fugitive slaves, and that if we attempt to enforce the duty on them they will leave the Union. They dare not do it.31

Implying that the South was fair, responsible, and honest, the Texan questioned northerners' motives. In the quotation above Wigfall oversimplified the process of dissolution and conditioned his followers to accept secession as a peaceable solution. Repeating "they" in reference to northerners Wigfall objectified or attacked an ill-defined group. Northerners could be Republicans or Democrats but Wigfall wanted his readers to believe "they" opposed slavery, annoyed southerners, published pamphlets, made speeches, were irresponsible, and yet afraid to face issues.

Through an extended analogy of the states as the planets revolving around the Constitution as the solar center, Wigfall pictured the destruction of the whole system if planets went off in one direction and another until they were all dispersed, or the reverse if the centrifugal force ceased and the centripetal force drew the planets together to meet with crashing force against the center. Regardless

31Ibid., p. 2277.
of one's preference, Wigfall reminded the listeners that the whole system perished. Extending the image, he continued: "That is just the point of view I have of secession and consolidation, and I trust God that neither calamity will ever befall the country." Having decried Douglas and northerners, Wigfall focused on Republicans as he vilified what happened when the party became abolitionized:

The mud was stirred up, and the waters became dark. The sediment rose to the top, and since then we have seen nothing but the thick scum evidencing the corruption it covers, and tainting the atmosphere with malignant malaria. When that noble old Whig building was torn down, with the rubbish that remained was mixed, and upon it was thrown, the filth of Abolitionism. Republicanism is hardly the debris of Whiggery. It is not the less. Slush has been thrown into the old Whig barrel.32

Perhaps speaking for border states residents who might read newspaper reports of the speech, Wigfall eliminated all references to humanity for the description of "Republican Abolitionism." Approximating Lowenthal and Guterman's agitator who transforms the enemy "into a low animal," Wigfall persisted with images such as "mud," "sediment," "thick scum," "corruption," "filth," "lees," and "slush." To remove any hope of rehabilitation, he diagnosed the condition as "malignant malaria." No wonder Wigfall believed secession the only alternative to a Republican President. Suggesting Republicans were less than men, he continued: "They think a woman a man with a petticoat on, and a negro a black white man; that every one is created equal." To a society where the Negro was considered biologically inferior, Wigfall argued cogently.

32 Ibid., p. 2278.

33 Lowenthal and Guterman, Prophets of Deceit, p. 36.
Although he traveled North only once prior to 1860, and possibly had not seen a Republican before he became a senator, Wigfall described Republicans as "the tribe of Free-Soil philosophers who indorse vile theories of human rights, begins with anti-masonry, and indeed with anti-slavery. They go for all impractical issues. They live upon excitement. They misrepresent political issues, and make appeals to passions and prejudices." Incorporating verse, he railed:

They are a canting crew,
So smooth, so godly, and so devilish, too,
Who, armed at once with prayer books, and with whips,
Blood on their hands, and Scripture on their lips,
Tyrants by creed, and torturers by text,
Make this world hell in honor of the next. 34

Close to what Lowenthal and Guterman concluded of agitation in which "all these bewildering matters have been reduced to a common denomina­tor—they are nothing but various aspects of the essentially ruthless­symptoms of one big, horrid, overwhelming, super-human or subhuman elemental phenomenon," 35 Wigall described Republicans. With this "tribe without any principles under heaven, except hostility to the institutions of the South," attempting "to claim the reins of Govern­ment," Wigfall believed the South justified in leaving the Union. Through the combined strategies of vilification of Douglas and objecti­fication of northerners, Wigfall evidently attempted to cause his followers to reject Douglas as the party nominee.

Legitimation. In order to accomplish his overall goal of polariz­ing the northern and southern halves of the Democratic party, Wigfall

34 Congressional Globe, p. 2278.
35 Lowenthal and Guterman, Prophets of Deceit, p. 36.
justified the southern walk-out at Charleston, a radical party action which was being criticized severely. Pretending to correct false impressions, Wigfall utilized the persecuted innocence theme: "We have said that wherever the American flag floats, the Government is bound to protect the persons, the lives, the liberties, and the property of all the citizens of these thirty-three States. That is the extent of our claim, and it has been tortured into quite a different aspect." Further, Wigfall claimed: "When we offer the olive branch, they show the sword." Referring specifically to those delegates who had walked out of the Charleston convention, he told his listeners and readers that northern newspapers had "denounced them as 'Yanceyites,' 'nullifiers,' and 'disunionists.'" Rhetorically Wigfall asked: "Now, sir, was that in the spirit of conciliation and peace?" For those who sympathized with the southern branch of the Democratic party, Wigfall apparently hoped to strengthen their will to resist the growing northern wing.

Reacting to Douglasites' denunciation of Yancey, Wigfall defended the Alabamian and worsened party divisions. He said: "According to the old Jewish ceremonial, he is made the scapegoat that is to carry off the sins of the Senator from Mississippi [Brown] and the Senator from Illinois [Douglas], and all others who have made this issue, and have produced the dissatisfaction, the dissension, and the distraction that now exists in the party." Returning to the tactic of "persecuted innocence," or "pity-poor-me," theme, Wigfall questioned: "Is there honesty in it?" He featured the South's as the righteous cause. To extend the claim Wigfall continued:

And the men who are guilty of this [Douglas and Pugh claimed the Territories question was not decided] rise here and denounce us;
and because we are getting tired of the association with them, they pretend to think that we are tired of the form of government under which we are living. Why, sir, I may have a very disagreeable neighbor, or I may be boarding with a very disagreeable companion, and yet the fare may be good, and the beds may be comfortable, and the house well furnished. This is a most excellent Government; this is a most glorious Union; we love it, and we intend to preserve it.

Using the analogy of the disagreeable neighbor or companion, Wigfall, as he often did, pictured the North in a bad light.

To justify rejection of Douglas as the party nominee, Wigfall posed a hypothetical case for northerners:

Why, sir, when the Senator from Ohio complains that we do not nominate Mr. Douglas, and insist that he shall not be nominated, I ask him, in all candor, what would he and the Senator from Illinois say if we were to insist upon nominating Mr. Buchanan. Would they not say, "There is an irrespressible conflict; difficulties have grown up during this Administration; you have no right to ask this thing of us; it is not fair; it is not kind; it is not just; select some man who has not been engaged in this conflict; select some man who can rally in the strength of the whole party; do not force this thing on us. You know that Mr. Buchanan is distasteful to us; then do not force him upon us; give us a man who is not; give us a man who agrees with him in principle, who will administer the Government as he would; and we, as a band of brothers, can again display our flag; we can again go into battle; we can again fight the good fight, and keep the faith.

Turning the tables on his opponents, the Texan assured them that if such an appeal were made to him, he would respond "to the justice of the appeal." Thereby, he justified the South's rejection of Douglas.

Image Building. Typically, Wigfall included statements seemingly designed to bolster his ethos among his followers. Revealing his role as the self-appointed southern spokesman, Wigfall accused: "The difficulty is, in this country, that Representatives too closely follow the opinions of their constituents. They are too frequently mere popularity hunters. They do not always discharge their duties conscientiously. They do not take the responsibility of acting according
to duty, and going to their constituents and explaining it." Wigfall claimed that he acted according to his sense of duty and stood ready to answer for his decisions.

At one point, when the Chairman asked Wigfall if he would yield to a question from Pugh, the Texan, demonstrating supreme confidence, replied: "Yes, sir; as often as the Senator chooses to interrupt me." Evidently Wigfall sought interaction with other senators, particularly northern Democrats in this instance, as a means for exciting his listeners and attracting newspaper coverage.

Relentlessly pursuing Douglas, Wigfall boasted that he had seen through the sham of the 1850 compromise:

I hardly know how to reason with men who talk about squatter sovereignty, I do not like to use terms that are not civil; but really the absurdity of the thing affects me more than its iniquity. There was a hullabaloo made by the Senator upon the question of our adopting and indorsing the compromise measures of 1850. This is one of the sins that I, at least, as a Democrat, am entirely free from. I never either adopted or indorsed them, and before God, I never will. They were called the five healing plasters to heal five bleeding wounds; but they have caused the wounds to fester.

Wigfall pretended to be above discussion such an action as odious as compromise. With language like "squatter sovereignty," "absurdity," "hullabaloo," "five healing plasters," and "wounds to fester," he attracted newspaper coverage, probably enhanced his ethical appeal among Texans and angered Douglasites. Wigfall declared: "This [endorsing the compromise] is one of the sins that I am entirely free from. I never either adopted or endorsed them, and before God, I never will." Through his stern insistence that he would never endorse the compromise of 1850 [basically the platform suggested as a means for uniting Democrats behind Douglas in 1860], Wigfall provided direc-
tion for any southerners who might have been hesitant in refusing to back Douglas. He apparently attempted to speak for the South.

Asserting that he saw all around him men who could "rally the party in the next contest, and bear again our flag to victory," Wigfall denied that southerners would be the cause of a Black Republican's election. He warned:

I say disunion is imminent if a Republican is elected. I believe, though he may be inaugurated, he will never be the President of thirty-three States of this Union. I say to gentlemen on that side of the Chamber that they are playing with edged tools; and I say to Mr. Douglas and his friends that they are guilty of a most grievous sin in pressing the claims of any single individual who is distasteful to an overwhelming majority of half the States of the Union, and not popular, I believe, in the rest—a man who cannot be nominated by his own friends.

Assuming the role of "persecuted innocence," Wigfall said: "It is quite fashionable of late to denounce any man who talks about the possibility of a dissolution of the Union. Hay is put on his horns and he is to be run after with pitchforks. He is a traitor, a tory, a rebel! They use all sorts of incongruous terms." Wigfall had talked of dissolution and "they" had called him names. Rather than defend himself, the Texan chastised those who used "incongruous terms." Perhaps choosing deliberately colorful language likely to be reprinted in newspapers, Wigfall attempted to present himself as a fearless spokesman.

Implying unusual concern for the question of Douglas' candidacy, Wigfall explained to his followers why he used documentation on this occasion:

I dislike very much to read from documents, and it is not my habit; but in order that I might not be charged with exaggerating, I will read more from what the Senator [Douglas] said in the debates of February 23, 1859. I never speak from notes, and ex tempore speaking has been so much my habit that I feel embarrassed by it, and I feel that I never do myself and the subject
justice when I resort to it. But it is necessary that this subject should be understood; and I propose to-day to explain, or at least, to give my understanding.\textsuperscript{36}

Admitting embarrassment at using notes, Wigfall likely impressed those who read the speeches. After all, if a man admits his weaknesses, they could probably have confidence in him as a truthful spokesman.

Through the four strategies of vilification, objectification, legitimation, and image building, Wigfall worked toward his goal of polarizing the Democratic party and denying Douglas the united support as the presidential candidate.

Effects. When Wigfall finished speaking James Doolittle, the Wisconsin Republican commented: "The Senator from Texas informs us that the Senator from Illinois is politically dead. If that be so, I will say, for one, that this is the longest funeral ceremony that I have ever attended." [Laughter]\textsuperscript{37}

Joining other southern senators determined to defeat Douglas' nomination, Wigfall attacked the Illinois senator from virtually every view. He hoped to undermine Douglas' chances for southern support and widen the rift in the Democratic party ranks. He also diminished hopes for North-South cooperation in 1860. Apparently addressing a small immediate audience, Wigfall received encouragement from other southerners such as Davis whose own presidential hopes may have motivated him to encourage the Texas fire-eater to abuse northern opponents.

According to the Montgomery, Alabama \textit{Advertiser}, the \textit{Dallas Herald}, the \textit{Texas Republican}, and even the more moderate Clarksville \textit{Northern

\textsuperscript{36} Congressional Globe, pp. 2271-2276.

\textsuperscript{37} Ibid., p. 2278.
Standard, observed King, "such diligence for the southern cause won him high rank among the statesmen of America." 38

In his attempts to discredit Douglas, Wigfall possibly went so far that he stirred sympathy for Douglas among northerners in both parties. Northerners regarded Wigfall as a fierce individual from whom they might fear bodily harm. Through rough language and sarcastic taunts, he continued to advance his reputation as a troublemaker.

Reacting to Wigfall’s opposition to the admission of Kansas "on account of its bad moral character," the New York Times editor revealed with stinging sarcasm his contempt for the Texan:

Mr. Wigfall objects to the admission of Kansas to the Union on account of "its bad moral character." He says he is unwilling that "Texas should associate with such a State." The purity of such an innocent as Texas must be preserved from contamination. To retard so good a work, for the mere purpose of introducing two Republicans into the Senate would be in the highest degree improper. Texas has already suffered severely from Yankee immigration, such as has populated Kansas. Under the circumstances Mr. Wigfall’s protest is not unnatural. We believe he himself had his feelings hurt and his fears aroused on more than one occasion, by the brutal and boistrous bullying of Mr. Seward and other Republican Senators of the same school. A sensitive, scholarly man, of studious habits, retiring and fastidious temperament, such as Mr. Wigfall is known to be, can hardly be blamed for dreading the fresh influx of swaggering, blaspheming, drinking, cock-fighting Yankees, into the body which he adorns. 39

SUMMARY

Left almost by themselves in the Senate during May the Democratic senators used the time almost as if they were in convention. Encouraged by Davis and other southerners, Wigfall attacked Douglas apparently

38 King, Louis T. Wigfall, pp. 95-96.
to polarize further the two branches of the party and to help destroy
the Illinois Democrat's hopes for a united party nomination.

In addition, the Texan reassured southerners who walked out of
the Charleston convention that their action was a stand for constitu­
tional rights and that the party would live without Douglas. It is
significant, perhaps, to note that even in the party ranks when common
sense demanded a united Democratic party, Wigfall persisted in agita­
tion which divided his brethren. He seemed uninterested, or possibly
incapable, of positive, resourceful, long-range planning. Obviously,
Wigfall enjoyed the process of identifying and pursuing those he
regarded as enemies.

In the second segment the Texan became even more vitriolic in his
assault on Douglas. Attributing dreadful characteristics to the
Illinois senator, Wigfall attempted to convince his followers that
Douglas was unfit to serve as President.

Adding northern Democrats and Republicans as objects of his atten­
tion, Wigfall blamed Democrats for party infidelity which they dis­
played in courting Republicans. The Texan pictured a large group who
schemed to defraud southerners of political power and place. Blurring
distinctions between Republicans and northern Democrats, Wigfall
probably made the party split appear worse than it actually was. More­
over, he evidently sought to intensify strife.

In answer to some party members who censured the southerners who
walked out at Charleston, Wigfall defied northerners to eliminate the
need for party division by selecting a candidate acceptable to the
South.
Wigfall also inserted statements designed to enhance his ethos in the South. Although he was not a dominant force in the party or the nation, Wigfall desired to be and he projected his aspirations by speaking often.

The Texan shamed Douglasites for labeling southerners as traitors and heretics. Warning that disunion was imminent if a Republican was elected, Wigfall contended that the only way to prevent a Democratic party disaster was to select an alternate candidate. Indicating Douglas had outlived his usefulness in the party, Wigfall assured his hearers that there were several men behind whom Democrats would unite. Thus the Texan contributed to the already doubtful prospects that the Democratic party would unite.
CHAPTER VII

ENCOUNTER FOUR: IN RESPONSE TO DOUGLAS ON POWELL'S RESOLUTION

The Charleston convention in 1860 was the beginning of the end for southern domination of national politics. According to Robert W. Johannsen: "All the forces of sectional animosity that had been building up between the North and South over a decade were focused on those ten fateful days." Reflecting on Lincoln's subsequent victory, Allan Nevins concluded: "Had Douglas been nominated at Charleston, Lincoln might well—in view of the different trend which the campaign would have taken—have lost." If the process of nominating candidates was confusing, the campaign was worse. Because three Democrats were in the race, all experienced difficulty in obtaining newspaper endorsements, financial support, and voter commitments. David Potter has observed that "every journal used the same basic argument—namely that the voters should concentrate on the editor's candidate [Bell, Douglas, or Breckinridge] because that candidate could offer more effective opposition to Lincoln, whose defeat was essential to the safety of the


Union... With confusion reigning, notes William Baringer, "no clear mandate could possibly emerge from the election." Nevins described it as:

... a campaign packed with emotion, especially in proud communities in the Deep South, but lacking all the ordinary excitement of a close rivalry. The country had the sensation of watching one of the old double dramas of the Elizabethan stage, a play within a play; the outer drama determining whether Lincoln, Breckinridge, or Douglas should regain national leadership, while the far more fateful inner drama decided whether the republic should be torn in twain.

In Texas during July and August especially, the atmosphere became tense, alarming, and hysterical over slave insurrection rumors. Nevins revealed: "Incendiary fires were reported in nearly a dozen Texas towns --all, of course, 'kindled by the torches of abolitionists.' The wave of hysteria in Texas, the worst thus far known, resulted in lynching of a moderate antislavery man named Bewley, and it prompted strong protests in the church press of the North." At home in Marshall, Texas, between speaking engagements for the Breckinridge-Lane ticket, Louis Wigfall served as part of a twenty-four hour guard set up to prevent Negro uprisings. After Lincoln's election, Wigfall returned to Washington determined to hasten secession.

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5 Nevins, The Emergence of Lincoln, p. 272.

6 Ibid., p. 307.

In view of Lincoln's election, southern Democrats returned to Congress in surprising numbers. Nichols explains that "the twelve Democratic Senators and thirty Representatives of the lower South had at least two reasons for returning:

If they stayed away the Republicans would secure easy control of the House and might be able to dominate the Senate, so that the power of the federal government could be turned against them. More important, they were disappointed at the apathy of the upper South. They wanted a chance to meet and press their associates from that section. They had come to arrange a peaceable separation from the northern states and to promote their new confederacy. These men had no interest in averting crisis; their purpose was to hurry it on.\(^8\)

Other blocs of Democrats were equally interested in avoiding secession and the southerners soon discovered that they could not present a united front. Although Buchanan sent to Congress a plan for constitutional guarantees to prevent secession, the Democrats had their own proposals: northwesterners wanted pacification at any price; southerners were anxious to unite the South for secession; and the leaders of the upper South, along with northerners worked on compromise proposals.\(^9\) The Unionists appointed Lazarus Powell of Kentucky to propose a committee of thirteen to study the President's plan. The committee, the Unionists hoped, would draft a conciliatory solution to be offered by John Crittenden whose prestige might influence adoption and save the Union.

Leaving no doubt why he returned to Washington Wigfall co-authored a manifesto intended for circulation among southern states as they


\(^9\) Ibid., pp. 393-395.
pondered secession. The document read in part as follows:

The argument is exhausted. All hope of relief in the Union is extinguished, and we trust the South will not be deceived by appearances or the pretense of new guarantees. In our judgment the Republicans are resolute in the purpose to grant nothing that will satisfy the South. We are satisfied the honor, safety, and independence of the Southern people require the organization of a Southern Confederacy.¹⁰

In the manifesto Wigfall demonstrated a subtle change in his language choice following Lincoln's election. Assuming a more extreme position, he chose words of finality: "the argument is exhausted . . . hope . . . extinguished." He and other southerners sternly called for "organization of a Southern confederacy." Consistent with the "hierarchy of values" which Ralph Eubanks observed were "liberty, honor, and eloquence,"¹¹ Wigfall called for secession to satisfy the "honor, safety, and independence" of the South. Bearing the signatures of six other senators [James L. Pugh of Alabama; Jefferson Davis and A. G. Brown of Mississippi; Alfred Iverson of Georgia; John Hemphill of Texas; and Judah P. Benjamin and John Slidell of Louisiana] and twenty-three representatives, the message was telegraphed to South Carolina's delegates on the eve of the secession convention. As the signers had hoped, the manifesto was also widely circulated in southern newspapers. "Discussed throughout the Deep South during important local elections," according to Alvy King, "it was extremely significant that after the signing of the manifesto, most of the southern moderates seemed convinced that they could not stop the secession movement. They turned

¹⁰ Texas Republican, January 12, 1861.

their attention to negotiating for a more satisfactory position for
the South when it got back into the Union."¹²

SEGMENT ONE: DECEMBER 11, 1860

Situation. Although Powell introduced his resolutions December 5, 1860, no debate occurred at that time. When they were brought up again December 11, several senators, including William Bigler, the Pennsylvania Democrat; James Dixon, Republican from Connecticut; Alfred Iverson of Georgia; George Pugh, the Ohio Democrat; Stephen Douglas of Illinois; J. C. Ten Eyck, the New Jersey Republican; James Green, the Missouri Democrat; Lazarus Powell of Kentucky; and Virginian James Mason all spoke before Wigfall gained the floor.

The galleries were full and responsive to southern senators who charged that the northern states had not enforced the fugitive slave laws and to northern senators who denied the charge. At one point, the presiding officer threatened to clear the galleries if disturbances did not cease.

Douglas minimized southern complaints but it was not until the "Little Giant" challenged Mason of Virginia to specify southern grievances and present a law to correct them that Wigfall spoke. Typically, the Texan eagerly sought an opportunity to match wit with Douglas.

Strategies. During the short segment two strategies emerge to highlight Wigfall's goal of polarization of the South against the North:

1. Vilification of Douglas whose surprising continuing political strength threatened to keep the border states in the Union.
2. Calculated antagonism of northerners to delay compromise efforts until South Carolina seceded.

¹² King, Louis T. Wigfall, p. 104.
Vilification. Since the debate had gone on for hours with neither side making much progress, Wigfall apparently decided to inject some life into the discussion by attacking Douglas who had seemed poised and confident. Accepting Douglas' challenge, Wigfall evidently hoped to embarrass the Illinois Democrat, to reduce the likelihood that southerners would accept compromise, and, incidentally, to enhance his own image. The Texan also helped to create chaos on the Senate floor.

Brasquely opposing Vermont Republican Solomon Foot's request to adjourn, Wigfall sarcastically said of Douglas, "he pledges himself here and before the country, and as a Senator, that if we will make out our list of grievances, and state the specification, he, by his vote, will remove them." Possibly stressing "before the country," and "he, by his vote," Wigfall demonstrated that his disdain for Douglas remained strong. Listing protection of slavery in the territories as one of the grievances that needed correction, Wigfall discussed in detail how and where slavery should be protected. Reflecting the mood of many southerners he "demanded" protection of "that species of property" by federal legislation "in the District of Columbia, in the forts, in the navy-yards, in the dock-yards, on board of our merchant vessels when three miles from land, and in the Territories." Perhaps emphasizing "in the Territories," the Texan probably anticipated the answer: "Will the Senator [Douglas] give us that protection?" Through a series of brief exchanges between the two senators Wigfall kept pressing Douglas for a yes or no answer. In turn Douglas attempted to prove that Wigfall had once voted that no need existed for the protection he demanded. Becoming confused Douglas read from the wrong bill to the delight of the Texan. Once Douglas apologized, saying: "I was sick at the time"
[that a bill under question was discussed] and absent from the Senate. I have stated it from recollection of it as it was in the newspapers; but if I find that I have done the Senator from Texas injustice on any matter of fact, I should like to correct it." Purposely attempting to weaken Douglas' image, especially in border states where Douglasites were trying to preserve the Union, Wigfall complained: "Mr. President, the Senator from Illinois, instead of answering my question, with what might be considered Yankee shrewdness propounds another; and instead of speaking to my indictment he prefers one against me." Suggesting the "Yankee" could not be trusted, Wigfall further demanded: "Now, sir, I stand upon the record, and defy him to produce it here." Through the personal attacks the Texan questioned Douglas' credibility.

_Calculated Antagonism._ To redeem his pledge to state southern grievances and to bolster his image as a states' rights defender, Wigfall spoke of the inhabitants of a territory--presumably Kansas--who did not respect slaves as property. Repeating some of the same descriptions he had used in the homestead discussion, "gathered from every quarter of the world--from the Five Points of New York and the purlieus of London," the Texan indicated that dregs of society had been assembled by abolitionists "under homestead bills," had "squatted" upon land that belonged to southerners, and had in "arrogance and impudence" decided "what is property and to confiscate it." Inquiring whether or not Douglas would solve those problems Wigfall reiterated that they were only some of the grievances under which "we are excited," under which "we are suffering." Although northerners urged passage of the homestead bill earlier in the month, Wigfall seemed to have
little desire to discuss the issue except to stir up distress in the Senate and to intensify suspicions among his followers.

Possibly sensing that Douglas was weary late in the day, Wigfall demanded an answer. Then, spelling out his proposition that slaves were property, he chose language apparently calculated to irritate opponents of slavery. Citing the constitution as authority, he spoke of "a clear, distinct recognition of the principle that man has the right to own property in man—yes, sir, and to traffic in the souls and bodies of men." He could have phrased his thoughts in numerous ways, but "traffic in the souls and bodies of men" surely was odious to northerners.

In the short time he occupied the floor, Wigfall involved five other senators [Douglas, Davis, Green of Missouri, Brown of Mississippi, and Iverson of Georgia] in one of the most confusing and distracting displays of his career. One incident serves to illustrate the chaos Wigfall created. The question was whether or not Wigfall had voted for a bill denying the need for intervention on behalf of slavery in the territories. When Douglas reasoned that since southerners had not brought in a bill to solve the problem they certainly should not dissolve the Union, Wigfall retorted with sarcasm: "Oh, we do not intend to dissolve it at all!" [Laughter] Trying to make sense out of the discussion, Iverson of Georgia asked Wigfall to repeat the case. With glee the Texan responded: "You voted with the rest of us on that matter?" When Iverson said no, Wigfall returned: "You voted against us?" to which Iverson said, "yes, sir," "Then," Wigfall joked, "you
voted right and you need not explain."\textsuperscript{13} By then, when the discussion drifted far from attempts to preserve the union, Wigfall agreed to adjourn.

**Effects.** Relishing an opportunity to attack Douglas, Wigfall ridiculed lapses in the Illinois senator's memory, attacked his unwillingness to "abandon his squatter-sovereignty notions and agree to protect slaves as all other property," and presented himself as an untiring fighter for states' rights. It is perhaps significant that, for the first time, Wigfall did not deliberately attempt to build his own ethos. However, the Texan delayed the progress of those who hoped for compromise to save the Union. As Nichols points out, Wigfall and others succeeded in postponing passage of Powell's resolutions by an "angry" and "bitter" debate.\textsuperscript{14}

**SEGMENT TWO: DECEMBER 12, 1860**

**Situation.** On December 12, 1860, the secessionists were still uncertain that any state would withdraw. South Carolina was in secession convention but other southerns moved more slowly. Alarmed because Sam Houston stubbornly refused to call a convention in Texas, Wigfall was also disturbed that secession sentiment was uncommitted in the upper South. Therefore, in the Senate he continued his agitation to drive apart the North and South and to win the middle states for secession.

\textsuperscript{13} *Congressional Globe*, December 11, 1860, pp. 57-58.

\textsuperscript{14} Nichols, *Disruption of American Democracy*, p. 394.
Because adjournment interrupted his speech of December 11, Wigfall was entitled to the floor on December 12. However, when R. M. T. Hunter of Virginia requested permission to report a bill back from committee, Wigfall agreed. Although the bill was routine, Hunter excited some senators with an amendment to use public land sales to redeem treasury notes. Suddenly the homestead issue surfaced causing several senators to offer opinions ranging from "no effect at all" to cutting up the homestead policy "by the roots." Interpreting the series of votes as paradoxical, the Republican Simon Cameron commented: "I was a little mortified and greatly surprised to find gentlemen on the other side who were talking about secession all voting to save the credit of the country, while my friends here, who ought to be for saving this country, were deserting us." 15

After the debate, Wigfall continued. Providing an example of what Charles Sellers and other historians term the "aggressively defensive behavior of the South," 16 the Texan claimed his purpose was to defend himself against Douglas' attack of the day before. In addition, he wanted to justify South Carolina's secession convention and to encourage other southern states to follow.

**Strategies.** To accomplish a broad goal to polarize, Wigfall emphasized at least four major strategies:

1. Vilification of Douglas and Lincoln as pretended Union-savers who were actually enemies of the South.
2. Objectification of northerners as conspirators determined to destroy slavery.

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15 *Congressional Globe*, p. 69.

3. Solidification of southerners' beliefs that northerners exploited them while scheming to eliminate slavery.
4. Legitimation of South Carolina's imminent secession.
5. Calculated antagonism of "Union-savers" whose efforts the Texan considered useless.

**Vilification.** Summarizing the events of the previous day, Wigfall accused Douglas of "indulging in some patriotic platitudes upon the subject of saving the Union." Anxious about the fate of secession efforts, the Texan restated the case to his own advantage. Assuming the "persecuted innocence" theme, Wigfall revealed his goal of discrediting Douglas. "I understood him to say that he was prepared to make any effort in his power to accomplish that very desirable object saving the Union," Wigfall began:

He congratulated the Senate upon the fact that we were going into details, and asked for specifications as to the wrongs or imagined wrongs, under which the southern States were suffering, or supposed themselves to be suffering; and, as I understood, pledged himself that when our grievances were made known, he would be ready to redress them, as far, of course, as lay in his power.

Clearly for the benefit of southerners, Wigfall seemed conciliatory while inserting barbs such as "imagined wrongs," or "supposed themselves to be suffering," intended to give the impression that Douglas did not regard seriously southerners' complaints. Implying false promises which Wigfall implied were typical of northerners, the Texan repeated "I understood him to say that he was prepared to make any effort in his power," and "pledged himself . . . to redress grievances, to introduce the concept of honor for his southern constituents." If Douglas failed to keep his pledge, southerners could rightly reject him and other northern Union-savers as dishonorable.

"Under this state of things," the Texan continued, "I have stated to him that one of our grievances under which the southern states
supposed they were suffering was that this Government denied that
slaves were property." Sarcastically injecting "supposed they were
suffering," Wigfall expected southerners to respond knowing, not
supposing they were suffering. To reduce Douglas' ethos, Wigfall added: "I asked him the plain question as to whether he was prepared
to give us assurance that our property would be protected when within
the Federal jurisdiction. I did not get a direct answer, and I sup­
pose I shall not." To drive the wedge deeper between North and South,
Wigfall assumed a superior attitude to imply that southerners asked
"plain questions" to which northerners, especially Douglas, would not
give "direct" answers.

To extend the concept of right on the side of the South and to
undermine chances for reconciling the two sections, Wigfall indignantly
recalled that Douglas answered, "first, if we [southerners] desired
protection, we should introduce a bill, and that I would learn by his
vote whether he was ready to afford that protection or not." Wigfall
probably chose words such as "desire protection" deliberately to
enrage southerners. Men of the South did not "desire" protection, they
demanded it. Further, Wigfall depicted Douglas as a northerner not
really sympathetic to southern sufferings. Instead of an honest "yes"
or "no" Wigfall complained of the indignity of being told to introduce
a bill to learn Douglas' intentions. Although he was stalling for
time himself, Wigfall gave the impression that Douglas was in no hurry
to avoid secession.

As if to seal forever the gulf between Douglas and southerners,
Wigfall continued: 'He then proceeded to charge me personally, and
upon Senators from the South, that during the last session of Congress
we had, by our votes, repudiated this very doctrine—the right of protection." In the statement Wigfall attempted to build his own ethos by suggesting that he bore the brunt of an attack against all southern senators. Creating the impression that he would not retreat, Wigfall boasted: "I took issue with him and asked to be tried by the record."

Then, highlighting Douglas' weaknesses, the Texan recalled: "He failed to produce it. He attempted to do so. He mistook a resolution which was introduced by the Senator from North Carolina [Mr. Clingman] for a resolution that was introduced by the Senator from Mississippi [Mr. Davis]." Explaining to the audience that the Illinois Democrat had excused himself because "at the time the debate took place he was sick [emphasis mine]; that he might have been misled by the newspapers; and that he would this morning bring in the record," Wigfall impugned Douglas' ethos. Resuming the pose of "aggressively defensive" behavior, Wigfall declared: "Now, sir, I undertake to prove the negative." Stealing Douglas' advantage, Wigfall proceeded to read lengthy passages from the debates on Davis' resolutions of the previous spring. Besides consuming time, Wigfall repeated many of the arguments of various southern senators on slavery in the territories.

Pretending to offer the olive branch, Wigfall set forth "the conditions" for removing "one" of the difficulties to a reconciliation. "I ask the Senator [Douglas] now," the Texan began:

Will he propose amendments to the Constitution; will he vote in this body for amendments to the Constitution; will he pledge himself, in good faith, to go back to the people of Illinois, and urge before them the ratification of those amendments to the Constitution, not only vesting in the Federal Government the power, but also making it its imperative duty, to protect slave property, as it is its duty to protect every other species of property?
Again emphasizing honor or "a pledge in good faith" which he had already implied Douglas lacked, Wigfall set forth impossible demands. Suggesting that Douglas "urge" the people of Illinois to vest in the federal government not only the "power" but also making slave property protection its' "imperative duty," Wigfall surely irritated northerners for he was reflecting an attitude of superiority that intimated northerners would get down on their knees and beg for ways to please the South.

Once more, Wigfall let his "aristocracy of mind" show.

Perhaps fighting upper South apathy Wigfall wanted to prove that the South had cause for alarm and, in the process, to reduce Douglas' influence. In a derisive passage, the Texan continued:

But he answers me, that I am mistaken; there is no excitement upon the subject at the South; we have never complained; the people are not dissatisfied. He tells us that there are two extremes in this country. The people of the far East and those who live down upon the Gulf misunderstand this question entirely, and the people of Kentucky and of Illinois understand it all, and he, and some gentleman, I do not know who, from Missouri, who happened to be in the Chamber, would, if they were appointed a committee, settle this whole difficulty in the course of a very few minutes. Now, sir, I say to the Senator, that neither he nor any friend of his in Missouri can settle this question.

Possibly dismissing any secession hopes for Kentucky, [Bell carried the state] or Missouri which belonged to Douglas, the Texan seemingly sought to polarize the sections and reduce the moderates' power.

Asserting that because the United States represented a compact, the states alone could settle the question by altering the compact, and "conceding to this Federal Government powers which this Federal Government does not now possess" and "have a new understanding of the bargain," Wigfall believed, "then this Union can be saved." To impress the idea upon his listeners, Wigfall repeated "Federal Government." Referring to Douglas and the Unionists, the Texan warned:
"This Union is not to be saved by flattering either here upon the floor of this Senate or upon the stump. You cannot save this Union by singing hosannas to it. You cannot save this Union by the 4th of July speeches. Whipped syllabub is not the remedy for the patient." Probably speaking for the reporters present, Wigfall selected quotable words such as hosannas, "4th of July speeches," and "whipped syllabub," which he probably expected to see in print. In the passage the Texan contributed to his image among southerners as an outspoken, courageous leader. Disregarding the "solution" he required of Douglas earlier, Wigfall demanded of the Illinois senator: "you have got to come down to your work, and you have got to do something practical."  

Using Douglas as a "scapegoat" or the exemplification of northern mistreatment of the South, Wigfall said, "yesterday, when we asked for bread, he offered us a stone. When we asked for a fish, he gave us a serpent. When we asked for additional guarantees, he got up here to explain that we had nothing to complain of." Accusing the "Little Giant" of underhanded behavior, Wigfall complained, "he will not say whether he would amend the Constitution or not. He wants us to act by bill. He wishes us to indulge in child's play of introducing bills upon this question, spending weeks and months in discussion, while these States, one after another, are walking out of the Union." For southerners, Wigfall wanted Douglas to bear the blame for disunion.

In one of his most vehement tirades, Wigfall attacked Abraham Lincoln. As if to reveal a secret to his followers, the Texan declared:

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17 Congressional Globe, p. 71.
"Your President elect a few months, or possibly weeks, before his nomination was a hired Abolition lecturer." Choosing words distasteful to many northerners as well as southerners, Wigfall vilified Lincoln as "a hired Abolition lecturer," and even stated his fee. Apparently determined to thwart compromise, Wigfall assailed two of the northerners with whom cooperation was needed to save the Union.

Objectification. During his attack on Douglas Wigfall uttered an example of the strategy Arthur Smith terms "objectification" or placing blame on a group: "but it [Wigfall's complaint] was that the Senator from Illinois and those whom he represents, deny our right to legislation." For southerners who already mistrusted northerners, Wigfall's "those whom he represents" created sinister images of "Black Republicans," abolitionists, whatever the listener or reader might imagine. Shifting the blame for dissolution to Douglas, Wigfall wondered, "will he interpose to protect that species of property?" Minimizing hope for compromise, Wigfall continued: "There is the plain, naked proposition which can be understood by anyone; but which, I say in all candor, I do not expect to be answered directly and plainly by him [Douglas]." Polarizing, Wigfall contended that southerners dealt truthfully while Douglasites were underhanded, evasive, and not genuinely interested in preserving the Union.

Of Seward's "irrepressible conflict" claim, Wigfall asserted, "he did not know what he was talking about." Then, lecturing northerners on the Constitution as a treaty between states, the Texan continued,

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18 Ibid., pp. 73-74.
19 Ibid., p. 71.
"your irrepressible conflict idea is predicated upon the supposition that this is a consolidated Government; that there are not States; that there is a national Government, as they call it." Wigfall spoke of "they" to polarize the two sections. Picturing Seward as the master conspirator who had deluded the North, Wigfall lamented: "This is a fatal error. If you could have seen it in time, much of this difficulty could have been avoided." Through Seward, Wigfall pictured abolitionists unnamable to persuasion.

If northerners wished to reduce tension between the sections, Wigfall recommended—with tongue-in-cheek—that they cease discussing abolition: "Thank God that you are not like us, poor publicans; but do not be thrusting your blessings all the time in our faces." In the scriptural reference to "poor publicans," Wigfall perhaps expected the audience to remember that in the story of the two men who went to pray it was the publican who went down to his house justified rather than the Pharisee. Inferring that northerners were the Pharisee of the biblical story, Wigfall indicted them as a group.

Blaming southern distress on "that Helper book endorsed by your-sleves," "the preachings and teachings of the Senator from New York" [Seward] and "other Black Republican leaders," "pretended followers of Christ," northern schools in which "you teach your children to hate us," "in your pulpits you teach it is a religious duty," and "upon the hustings you teach it," Wigfall lumped together all northerners. As a climax to the enemy's activities, he declared: "Your eighteen northern slave-holding States nominate two of the most fanatical of your sect as candidates for President and Vice-President. You elect them and you tell us that they shall be inaugurated." Wigfall intended
the remarks as much for those who read the speeches as for northerners whom he addressed. He wanted to impress upon southerners that Lincoln and Hamlin were two of the "most fanatical" northerners. Thereby, Wigfall placed Lincoln on the level with John Brown and every other abolitionist. Increasing fear appeals to the South, Wigfall spoke of Seward and other abolitionists in terms of conspiracy: "The Senator from New York told his John Brown, Wide-Awake Praetorians that their services could not be dispensed with after the election; that they would be needed to secure the fruits of victory. One half million of men uniformed and drilled, and the purpose of their organization to sweep the country in which I live with fire and sword." When Seward interrupted to deny making the statement Wigfall attributed to him, the Texan accepted the denial and proceeded: "But that this praetorian band is organized; that its members do undergo military drill; that it is a military organization, no man who has looked upon them, as I did last summer, and heard their regular military tramp, does or can doubt." The reference subtle, even in his denunciation of abolitionists, Wigfall managed to introduce information about his personal experiences as a means to enhance his ethos.

**Solidification.** Exaggerating the southern malaise, Wigfall declared: "My objection to the course we are now pursuing, is simply that these discussions amount to nothing. We cannot save the Union. The senators on the other side, and the Senator from Illinois can, possibly. If they cannot, it cannot be saved." Then, stressing a

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20Ibid., pp. 73-75.
condition of unrest that he promoted, Wigfall added: "The people of the South are dissatisfied with the present Government, as it is about to be administered by the President-elect. There is nothing that will satisfy them except amendments to the Constitution." This is the agitator at work: blaming others for not redressing grievances; proposing impossible schemes; and detailing circumstances worse than his followers believed existed, Wigfall's message was that there was no hope for the union.

Through a series of hypothetical cases, Wigfall contended that any amendments "must be made by the northern States unanimously, or they will not be satisfied." Appealing to border states, he said:

Suppose that amendments were proposed by us, and the fifteen slaveholding States were to ratify them; suppose that ten non-slaveholding States were to ratify them; suppose that New York and Pennsylvania and Ohio and Illinois and Indiana and Iowa and other border States were to refuse the ratification; of what practical use would they be to us? None.21

Wigfall depicted what Lowenthal and Guterman called "malaise," or "a psychological symptom of an oppressive situation."22 Wanting dissolution, Wigfall rationalized the South's position and demanded that northerners offer a remedy. He questioned: "What is the use of our discussing on this side of the Chamber what we would be satisfied with, when nothing has been offered us." Emphasizing the hoplessness of the union-savers' efforts, Wigfall set forth "solutions" which the North might offer:

21Ibid., p. 72.

If they will rise here and say in their places, that they desire to propose amendments to the Constitution and beg that we will vote for them; that they will, in good faith, go to their respective constituencies and urge the ratification; that they believe, if these Gulf States will suspend their action, that those amendments will be ratified and carried out in good faith; that they will cease preaching this "irrepressible conflict," and if, in those amendments, it is declared that slaves are property, that they shall be delivered up upon demand; and if they will assure us that Abolition societies shall be abolished; that Abolition presses shall be suppressed; that Abolition speeches shall no longer be made; that we shall have peace and quiet; that we shall not be called cut-throats and pirates and murderers; that our women shall not be slandered—these things being said in good faith, the Senators begging that we will stay our hand until an honest effort can be made, I believe that there is a prospect of giving them a fair consideration. [Laughter on the Republican side]23

As northerners had done in the past, Wigfall demanded that they bow to southern domination. Repeating the words "beg" and "begging" to exemplify capitulation, Wigfall likely irritated northern Democrats who were tired of being considered doughfaces. From the Republicans whom Nichols concluded, "sat back and left the field to the Democrats,"24 Wigfall drew laughter. Possibly pretending offense that his "solutions" were not taken seriously, he said: "Senators laugh in my face. I beg that my friend from Kentucky [Mr. Powell] and other Union-savers upon this floor, will look and see the derision, the contempt, that is expressed in every Senator's face on the other side when I make these propositions." Still trying to woo Kentucky for secession, Wigfall counseled: "Fas est ab hoste doceri--learn even from your enemies some wisdom." He advised against wasting time in "idle prattle" about saving the Union. Labeling the North "they," Wigfall warned southerners

23Congressional Globe, p. 72.

24Nichols, Disruption of American Democracy, p. 400.
against being duped by the Yankees: "You are regarded as poltroons; and they talk of force by coercion, of holding this glorious blood-bought Union, as they regard it, together with hemp." Rebuking union-savers, Wigfall suggested that Powell's resolutions were demeaning:

Any yet you petition and beg and ask that this "glorious Union" may be continued, in order that you may be taxed, and that the hard earnings of those men whom you represent shall be taken from their pockets in order to build up northern wealth and property, to clear out their harbors and construct their roads. This is the manner in which you are treated when you talk of compromise.25

Plainly delaying the hope that the resolutions and, ultimately, Crittenden's compromise proposals might avert crisis, Wigfall kept driving the sections apart. Although he had already implied that Douglas and his clan were liars, Wigfall added robbery to the charge. Southerners who would permit themselves to be taxed, who would allow their "hard earnings taken from their pockets to build up northern wealth," and still desire to keep the "glorious Union" together, according to Wigfall, "had a screw loose somewhere in their heads." In this portion of the speech Wigfall appealed to southern fears that the South was falling behind the North. As Kenneth Stampp points out:

Enmeshed with slavery were other economic differences which contributed to sectional hate. The South was a static, agrarian, debtor section, tied to an economy of staple crops. The North was a dynamic, commercialized, industrializing creditor section. The South was exploited and the North was the exploiter. These matters, together with slavery, were always back of the tirades of the agitators.26

25 Congressional Globe, p. 72.

Alluding to 1844 when he made the same prediction to a South Carolina audience, Wigfall admonished: "I tell you, as I have told the people whom I represent, long and long ago, you will not be permitted to keep that which you now have." Suggesting superior insight, the Texan boasted: "I knew what the result would be. I say to the Senators on the other side that you will have to abolish your Abolition societies if you expect to live long in our company."

Using prestige appeals to help establish that "there is no principle of international law better settled than that every State is responsible for the conduct of its citizens," Wigfall recalled "when James Monroe was President of these United States, and John Quincy Adams, a citizen of Massachusetts, was Secretary of State, and John Forsyth, of Georgia, was minister to Spain, and Andrew Jackson was commander-in-chief of our forces upon the Florida frontiers," the United States became involved in a dispute with Spain. Implying similarities between Jackson's Florida invasion and southerners' intention to form their own Confederacy, Wigfall allied secession with the Tennessee hero. Wigfall possibly mentioned to Jackson for the benefit of secessionists in that border state. After all, if Andrew Jackson sanctioned secession--some might rationalize--it must be all right. In this instance Wigfall conformed to Lowenthal and Guterman's conclusion that the agitator "is always eager to tie up his cause with respectable ideas and names."  

27 Congressional Globe, pp. 72-73.  
28 Lowenthal and Guterman, Prophets of Deceit, p. 96.
Seemingly to strengthen the will of Texans and other southerners, Wigfall warned northerners, "you shall not--that is the word I choose to use, and I reflect the feeling and determination of the people I represent when I use it--you shall not permit men to go there and excite our citizens to make John Brown raids or bring fire and strychnine." Daring his listeners to retaliate, Wigfall issued the ultimatum. In the statement the Texan likely increased his ethos among his followers whom he wanted to be regarded as a champion of states' rights. Creating fearful images of abolitionists making "John Brown raids" or bringing "fire and strychnine" to southern states, Wigfall apparently attempted to strengthen the South's will to resist, "Up until the John Brown raid," Craven concluded, there had been much Southern protest and indignation because of Northern criticism of slavery and because of denial of equality in the territories and in the distribution of governmental favors. But there had been little panic and much confidence in the Southern politician's ability to protect his section. Now all was changed. Talk of the "irrepressible conflict" and of "the higher law" now meant something.

As a means for stirring slaveholders into separating from trouble-making northerners, Wigfall threatened:

You shall not publish newspapers and pamphlets to excite our slaves to insurrection. You shall not publish newspaper and pamphlets to excite non-slaveholders against the slaveholders or the slaveholders against the non-slaveholders. We will have peace; and if you do not offer it to us, we will quietly, and as we have the right to do under the constitutional compact to do, withdraw from the Union and establish a government for ourselves; and if you then persist in your aggressions, we leave it to the ultima ratio regum, and the sovereign States will settle that question.

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29 Congressional Globe, p. 73.
30 Avery O. Craven, "Why the Southern States Seceded," in Knowles, The Crisis of the Union, p. 64.
"Where the battle's wreck lies thickest And death's brief pang is quickest." And when you laugh at these impotent threats, as you regard them. I tell you that cotton is king! [Loud applause in the galleries] 31

Repeatedly shifting the blame for possible secession, Wigfall claimed that the South was on the side of right, truth, and honor while northerners published newspapers "to excite our slaves to insurrection." The Texan probably spoke of slave insurrection deliberately to remind fellow Texans and other southerners of the unrest of the previous summer. Once more Wigfall chose "you" referring to northerners and "we" southerners to accentuate the differences between the sections. To prompt southerners' awareness of his states' rights mission, Wigfall spoke of northerners laughing "at these impotent threats as you regard them." In a flourish which drew "loud applause in the galleries," the Texan cried "Cotton is King."

Through repeated references to the South's sufferings because of northerners, alleged violation of rights, financial and military superiority, honor, and allegiance, Wigfall agitated toward what Jesse T. Carpenter termed "a Southern mind." Carpenter concluded: "The greatest contribution of Southern conditions to the development of sectional unity came through the creation of a Southern mind—a common consciousness of common interests, common traditions, common aspirations, common problems, and dangers. Such was the essence of a distinct Southern nationality that led the people to think of themselves first as a part of the South, and only then, if at all, as part of the Union." 32

31 Congressional Globe, p. 73.
Warning northerners that disruption meant bankruptcy for them, Wigfall said: "I know that you do not regard us as in earnest. I would save this Union if I could; but it is my deliberate impression that it cannot now be done." Claiming that he desired the Union to be saved, he boasted: "I have always been a Union man; I am now a Union man—not from any silly notion that it is of divine origin; not from any absurd idea that I suppose it is an inheritance from our fathers, for it is neither one nor the other." On that premise, Wigfall restated his arguments on the compact arrangement of states. In that statement the Texan counteracted widespread alarm among many Americans fearful of the implications of secession. Emphasizing "silly notion," and "absurd idea" he attempted to calm southerners' fears.

Stating that federal protection of property in the territories as a part of the Democratic party's platform was an issue in the campaign, Wigfall claimed that the election results settled the question of separation. He said: "The question was canvassed; the right of the State to secede was discussed; the whole matter of resistance was argued; and the distinct issue was there made that the election of a Black Republican President would be an overt act." Referring to the "northern people" and their "fanatical notions," Wigfall directed "the grievances of a particular group toward another collective body." "It has been attempted to be explained, that all this is very unreasonable," he sarcastically observed:

33 Congressional Globe, pp. 73-74.

Suppose it is. You have got to deal with our folly; and I say to you that you have got to yield to our foolish determination of having that principle recognized in the Constitution of the United States, or that State certainly goes out of the Union. What, sir, are we to live with a ban upon us? Are we to be tabbooed; [sic] are we to have the mark of Cain upon our brow without the protection which it gave to him? Are we to be told that we are not your equals; that the property which we hold is not property; and that wherever this Government, which we organized, has jurisdiction, it shall not only not protect our property, but will confiscate it; and should we be freemen if we submitted?

With the contention that the South was being unfairly treated, Wigfall sought to draw the section closer together to oppose the North. He asserted that northerners regarded southerners as "tabooed," and "unequal." Moreover, the Texan appealed to southern fear of economic loss suffered from abolitionist inspired run-away slaves. In a superior attitude claiming that the South organized the government, Wigfall used "we" or "our" ten times in the brief statement. Using "we" for southerners and "you" for northerners, he polarized the sections.

Discussing abolitionists' activities, Wigfall mentioned "raids," towns "burned smooth to the ground," "The Mystic Red, an organization entered into by the Methodist Church North and the John Brown men," whose purpose was to "burn our towns, to bring free soil northern capitol in, and thus get possession of Texas, and make it a free State, in order, to belt us round with free States, to starve us out or cause us, like poisoned rats, to die in our holes." Highly charged words such as "burn" which he repeated several times, "free soil northern capitol," meaning dirty money to southerners, "starve," "poisoned rats," and "die," Wigfall chose as fear appeals for southerners reluctant to support secession.
Following a pattern set previously, Wigfall posed hypothetical situations to justify secession. For example, Wigfall wondered how northerners would have reacted had southerners met in convention, "nominated a slaveholder for President and a slaveholder for Vice-President, and had adopted a platform which, in the non-slaveholding States, was regarded as hostile." Continuing the catalog of abolitionists' activities, but ascribing them to hypothetical slaveholders, Wigfall concluded, "if this had been the case, and we had elected such a man, would you have said that there was any obligation upon you to regard the compact as kept?" Explaining that he was "recapitulating to show that we are not acting upon impulse," Wigfall began his funeral oration for the dead Union:

Senators have spoken of the excitement of the South. I tell you the excitement has passed off, the fever has subsided, and the patient has collapsed. So far as this Union is concerned, the cold sweat of death is upon it. Your Union is now dead; your Government is now dead. It is to-day but lying in state, surrounded, it is true, by pomp and ceremony. They are, Senators, but the mournful ceremonies, pomp, and pageants which are seen around the mighty dead. The spirit has departed, and it has gone back to those who gave it—the sovereign States of this Union.

Declaring "there is now in the Gulf States no excitement," Wigfall discussed "a fixed, determined will that they will be free." Claiming "the Union is dead" and "the cold sweat of death is upon it," the Texan exaggerated to create images which the newspapers reprinted. In his strong stand Wigfall sought to attract secessionist followers all over the South.

Legitimation. In addition to reenforcing southerners in their belief in the right of secession, Wigfall attempted to justify South Carolina's actions in assembling a convention. Referring to Douglas's
threat to "hang all the Virginians who attempted to act upon his 'great principle' of the right of self-government," Wigfall quoted from the first volume of the statutes of South Carolina, various legislative acts in the state, and his own knowledge of the state's history. Citing specific dates for the state's acts of resistance leading to the Revolutionary War, the Texan endeavored to demonstrate a consistent pattern of southern pride and patriotism, "not for the wrongs they have suffered, but because liberty was trampled upon." Romanticising about South Carolina, he claimed: "They are acting in the same spirit now." Indeed, as Smith suggests of agitators, Wigfall apparently wanted others to believe that the South possessed: "a spiritual dynamism that sets it off from all other groups because of the appropriation of certain supra-rational influences to its cause." Wigfall viewed South Carolinians as "the chosen people, the saviors, and the beautiful." Quoting the oath of office from the South Carolina constitution, he warned: "Now, Senators, you are dealing with a sovereign State. You are talking about hanging men who obey their oaths." Aware that South Carolina was on the verge of secession and the Charleston forts loomed as tests of federal power, the Texan reviewed colonial history to justify the state's impending actions. Speaking of "the immortal Henry, 'sniffing the tainted breeze afar off,'" Wigfall expounded:

In 1776, three months before the battle of Forte Moultrie, they [South Carolinians] adopted a State constitution; they organized an army; they elected a president; they had all the paraphernalia of government. The battle of Fort Moultrie, on the 28th day of

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35 Congressional Globe, pp. 73-75.
36 Smith, Rhetoric of Black Revolution, p. 37.
June, was fought under State colors, and by officers who held their commissions signed, "John Rutledge, President of the Republic of South Carolina."

Consistent with his compact theory of states, Wigfall contended that secession would not be new and that it was the appropriate course under the circumstances. To northern senators who denied the state's right to withdraw, Wigfall boomed:

Now, you tell those men that, if they obey their oath, if they violate not their allegiance, if they become not traitors to the country that has nourished and nursed them, then they are to be shot down like dogs or hanged like felons. This is the manner in which their remonstrances are met. This is the language of Senators who talk about "our glorious Union," and our being a race of freemen. This is the language used to free Americans! This is in a land of liberty! This is among a people who boast that they have the right of self-government! Well, you will have an opportunity of making the experiment.

With ideas like "traitors," "shot down like dogs," and "hanged like felons," Wigfall developed fearful images for his southern brethren. By associating secession with the American Revolution, the Texan romanticized southern intentions to withdraw from the union. Choosing words reminiscent of Revolutionary speakers—"This is the manner in which their remonstrances are met,"—Wigfall intended to justify or legitimate South Carolina's secession.

**Calculated Antagonism.** By his language choice, Wigfall caused disturbances among gallery spectators and other senators. Once, after enduring the presiding officer's interruption to admonish senators to cease conversations among themselves, William Gwin's recommendation to clear the galleries, and Davis's counsel to ignore the gallery demonstrations, Wigfall continued: "Then, sir, for the third or fourth time--I trust I may be permitted to go on--I say that cotton is king." Quoting statistics on southern crop production, the loss of
which meant disaster for the North, Wigfall blazed: "What tariff we shall adopt, as a war tariff, I expect to discuss in a few months, and in another Chamber," Deliberately reminding the other senators that they were spending their time listening to one who no longer considered himself as part of the United States Senate and that the country was on the verge of war, Wigfall angered his enemies.

Revealing his belief in southern superiority, Wigfall alleged that having the wisdom and genius of thirty-three states to conduct foreign diplomacy was the great advantage of the Union. Nevertheless, he admonished northerners, "but if you suppose that we are to be amused with the clap-trap of 4th of July froth and the idea that there is any sacredness in the compact between nations, or that nations inherit rights, I simply say that those among whom I live have passed that point." An aristocratic planter appeal, Wigfall complimented southerners as men of advanced knowledge and wisdom compared to the clerks, factory workers, and shopkeepers of the North. Among northerners interested in compromise, Wigfall probably stirred anger when he referred to their sincere efforts as "4th of July froth." To demonstrate his devotion to the Union, Wigfall declared that he would "advocate the adoption, without crossing a t or dotting an i, of the same old glorious Constitution . . . when the eight cotton States have withdrawn from the Union, as they will do in the next two months, and meet in convention to adopt a Federal form of government for themselves." Persistently, Wigfall repeated the idea that the South would withdraw and that she had the right.

Intent on forcing southern secession or northern capitulation, Wigfall prophesied economic doom stating that "when these things occur,
your heads [those of northern senators who could have prevented the southern exodus] will not be safe upon your shoulders." Implying that cowardly northern leadership would blame the calamity on the South and train armies which "you expect not to lead, but send to battle," Wigfall railed, "I understand your game as well as you do." In sharp contrast, Wigfall's descriptions of himself or other southerners were always those of honor, truth, integrity, bravery, or some other virtue while northerners he viewed as cowardly, unmanly, treacherous, or dishonest. No wonder northerners hated the Texan.

Sarcastically suggesting that peaceful dissolution might be a good lesson in states' rights, Wigfall predicted that some of the "conservative States of the North," eventually might "leave you in the cold and come with us; and when they do, they will understand the blessings of this Union from having lived out of it a few months, and they will be prepared to carry out in good faith the compact which they entered into with us."\(^ {37}\) Conforming to Brembeck and Howell's concept of repetition as a psychological form of persuasion,\(^ {38}\) Wigfall returned again and again to the compact theory of states as the South's right to secede. Apparently impressed by the force of his suggestion that dissolution might be educational for northerners, Wigfall enlarged it: "If it were not for memories of the past, and for patriotic sentiments which I have heard from persons who live in New England [his wife was a native of Rhode Island], I would regard it as the greatest blessing

\(^ {37}\) Congressional Globe, pp. 73-76.

that had ever befallen the human family, that they could be left to live upon granite and ice." Like Lowenthal and Guterman's supremely confident agitator who unmasks the enemy's "inherent weakness," Wigfall abused New England: "I do not know whether it [suffering from the South's departure] would have any effect upon them; but it is said that hunger will tame a wolf." Repeating his doubt that any hope remained for New England, he stated that he did know that "if they permitted their people further to interfere with us, the sword would settle the contest, and the next treaty which was signed would be in Faneuil Hall, in the town of Boston, and in the State of Massachusetts -- there in that place which has been called the cradle of liberty, and has proven to be the grave of the Constitution." Wigfall expected northerners to react to the concrete description of a southern invasion to end with a treaty signed in Faneuil Hall. As Smith suggests agitators often do, through the reference to Boston changing from "the cradle of liberty--to the grave of the Constitution," Wigfall sought to be "the creator of a term for the opposition to which the masses are responsive." Furthermore, the Texan aggravated the sectional strife and attracted more newspaper coverage.

Reflecting the code duello by which he lived, Wigfall listed the indignities which the South would not endure:

That man slanders us who says that we are disunionists; that man slanders us who says that we are dissatisfied with the form of government under which we live; that man slanders us who says that we are now, or have at any other time been, impelled to the course of action which we are taking by any

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39 Congressional Globe, p. 74.

40 Lowenthal and Guteman, Prophets of Deceit, pp. 39-41.
feeling except the most serious apprehension that our safety demands it.41

Wigfall literally issued a challenge to any one of the northerners who had referred to him as a disunionist. He wanted a fight, some action which might help precipitate secession, and he did not hesitate to face another man's pistol to attain his goal. For southerners, Wigfall's indication that he would be willing to duel no doubt won him high regard. In the South, as John S. Wise recalled of his father's beliefs, "it [dueling] was the only practical method of maintaining in a community of gentlemen the courtesy and deference and mutual consideration which was essential to such society."42

Having implied that northerners were hypocritical in their pretended love for the Union and freedom, Wigfall revealed the real allegiance of southerners. In utterance close to treason he said: "Those people [southerners] do not believe that they are citizens of the United States. I do not believe I owe allegiance to the United States. I believe that I owe allegiance to my State; and to that State that allegiance shall be recognized, and the obligation fulfilled to the letter of the law."43 Thus, Wigfall spoke the words upon which later a motion to expel him was based. For the moment, though, he probably succeeded in a goal of arousing the ire of unionists.

Effects. Admitting that he was little concerned about being consistent, on the pretense of defending himself, Wigfall discredited

41 Congressional Globe, p. 74.
43 Congressional Globe, p. 76.
Douglas as the representative of northern conspiracies against the South. Contrasting the two sections, he objectified the North through discussions of abolitionists activities. In inflammatory language, he pictured great disaster for southerners unless abolitionism stopped. For his audience, especially those who read the accounts, Wigfall blurred the distinctions between abolitionists and northerners in general. Smith suggests: "Blaming the ill-defined body is a rhetorical aggression meant to put the opposition out of action by causing it to spend time defending its views and actions. Once this is accomplished, the agitator can move on to other areas of confrontation with the intention of demonstrating the inadequacy of the status quo." Several times during the debate, Wigfall motivated senators to defend themselves.

Contrasting southern honor and pride with the actions of northerners bent on destroying the South, Wigfall romanticised the southern cause through alliance with the American Revolution. Frequently naming famous men in relation to freedom, independence, or pride from which southern states would secede, he also used history as mythication. Seeking a common ground in freedom and self-determination, he hoped to legitimate any future southern action.

Often illogical, emotional, and irritating, Wigfall effectively agitated sectional strife. He won applause from the galleries, he worked after hours plotting with other southerners to accomplish secession, and he wrote letters to other Texans explaining his actions. As

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44 Smith, Rhetoric of Black Revolution, p. 31.
King suggests, Wigfall "did not expect the northerners to accept his one-sided bargain." He helped polarize the North and South.

The New York Times reprinted inflammatory portions of Wigfall's speech including, "I don't believe I owe allegiance to the United States."46

From John Hale, the New Hampshire Republican, Wigfall received the following criticism:

I listened last week to the long, erratic speech of the Senator from Texas, right before me, [Mr. Wigfall]. If it had no other merit--it was explicit. I understood it; I understood what he wants, what he expects, what he demands, and the way it was put to us that we, northern men representing the successful party--he appealed to several of us here whom he designates as representative men, and even went so low as to name so humble an individual as myself among them--he said we must go home and teach our children certain things.

In the statement, Hale provided insight into Republicans' view of Wigfall--they listened to him with "a good deal of pleasure" hinting that they might not have taken him seriously. Then, revealing some of the resentment Republicans experienced, Hale spoke of Wigfall's directive to them--"even went so low as to name so humble an individual as myself"--to "go home and teach our people certain things." No doubt the Republicans tired of Wigfall's continuing "instruction" on states' rights.

The passage may also exhibit the reason other southerners permitted the rough, uncouth Texan to speak so often. As Hale said,

45 King, Louis T. Wigfall, p. 103.
47 Congressional Globe, December 18, 1860, p. 115.
Wigfall's speech was "explicit. I understood what he wants, what he expects, what he demands."

Defending him against "submissionists" criticism in Texas, the Dallas Herald editor wrote:

They forget that he is the Honorable L. T. Wigfall, Senator from Texas, the peer of Hunter, Mason, Crittenden, Bayard, Hammond, Toombs, Clay, etc., and that he sits an honorable member of the same hall that once echoed with the eloquence of Calhoun, Clay, and Webster. And who are they to abuse him so lavishly and have become blinded by gazing on his brilliant talents, as boys' eyes are darkened by foolishly striving to stare the sun out of countenance? We would ask who are these men, that, from their imprenable fastness of littleness, take so much pleasure in hurling their poisoned shafts at statesmen of patriotism and ability?48

With Texas editors comparing him to Mason, Crittenden, Hammond, and Toombs; associating his name with Webster, Clay, and Calhoun; and referring to him as a "statesman of patriotism and ability;" Wigfall accomplished his goal of establishing a public image among southerners as a states' rights defender. Moreover, he delayed the consideration of Powell's resolutions and possibly won some border residents for secession.

SEGMENT THREE: DECEMBER 13, 1860

Situation. With South Carolina's withdrawal one day closer Wigfall was likely aware that editorials and letters to editors of northern newspapers revealed that southerners far from unanimously favored secession. He might have seen a letter from a "Southern Democrat" which read in part: "Now I am a National Democrat, and did not vote for Abraham Lincoln, but I rejoice in his election because it will release

48Dallas Herald, December 13, 1860.
the popular mind of the middle and border States from the control of the Pro-Slavery idea as a political power." Or, Wigfall might have noticed the headlined report that Governor Sam Houston turned down Texas citizen's petition for a secession convention. With these and similar events as a backdrop, the Texan persisted in secession agitation.

Soon after the Senate convened on December 13, Alfred Iverson of Georgia, "as there seems to be no business before the Senate," moved to consider treaty claims against Mexico. Although debate on amendments to the bill consumed a large block of time, few senators demonstrated interest. Following numerous other routine matters, the Senate resumed consideration of Powell's resolutions, unfinished business from the previous day. Wigfall was entitled to the floor. Senators were aware that South Carolina was in convention and was expected to secede within a week. Continuing the previous day's argument on South Carolina's withdrawal as part of a consistent historical pattern, Wigfall intended to "go somewhat at length into the question." However, because of feedback from Republican senators, he delivered one of the most scathing denunciations of his career. Eager for secession, Wigfall probably deepened the split between the two sections.

Strategies. Continuing his efforts to polarize the two sections, Wigfall chose three primary strategies:

1. Objectification of northern Democrats and Republicans as irresponsible men who did not regard secession seriously.
2. Mythication of South Carolina and southerners in general as brave people of honor.
3. Legitimation of South Carolina's secession convention.

Objectification. Resuming his argument that the United States consisted of "thirty-three separate, distinct political communities called States," Wigfall quoted the Constitution to blame northerners for not recognizing his contention. Supporting the claim that each state was sovereign, he reasoned closely on the nature of treason to illustrate the nature of states. Since the Constitution declared that a person could commit treason, Wigfall arrogantly asked "every lawyer who has a seat in this Chamber whether treason is a crime that can be committed except against sovereignty." Anticipating the answer that treason may also be committed against the United States, Wigfall explained: "Treason consists in levying war against the United States; and one who levies war against the United States, necessarily levies war against his own State, and is therefore guilty of treason." Pleased with his argument, he concluded: "I really do not know how to argue questions so plain. To my mind, they are so conclusive that I need but to state them and feel that argument could not add to their force." Parenthetically adding that one of the states would pass "a solemn ordinance before this day next week, [and] cease to be one of the United States," Wigfall paused at the reaction of Republican Horatio King. Angered, he said: "I see that the Senator from New York smiles. Probably on the other side of your face you will laugh before this thing is terminated." Enraged that the Republicans laughed, the Texan shouted: "Laugh on, laugh on. Before this day next week, I hazard the assertion that South Carolina, in convention assembled, will have revoked the ratification of the treaty that makes her one of these United States." Exposing the Republicans' laughter and emphasizing it, Wigfall objectified the enemy and possibly hoped
to solidify southerners who would be upset that Republicans ridiculed a southern senator.

Predicting that South Carolina, vested with the right to declare war and make peace would send ministers to Washington, he warned: "The sovereignty of her soil will be maintained at the point of bayonet." Blaming Republicans and northern Democrats who could change matters, he continued: "Laugh! Nero fiddled while Rome was burning; and you who have it in your power even yet to save your suffering poor in the dead of winter, when they need both food and fuel, from starvation and destruction, are here treating with contempt those who wish to discuss these questions soberly and seriously." Similar to Arthur Smith's concept of objectification, Wigfall made no effort to "single out any member of the group," but concentrated on the collection of individuals. Labeling the ill-defined group as northerners, "Black Republicans," or abolitionists, Wigfall created a "relatively stable" target that would survive elections or reform.

Calling coercion a "monstrous outrage" which would give "such offense to every other State as to cause them to rally to their respective standards, and rescue the Constitution from the grasp of those who would tear it up and trample it under foot," Wigfall blamed senators who spoke of maintaining the Union by force. Through repeated strikes at northerners, he built the idea that the group was beyond any hope of reconciliation, that the South had borne the North's insults past the point of virtue. To emphasize his point, the Texan

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50 Congressional Globe, pp. 85-86.

51 Smith, Rhetoric of Black Revolution, pp. 29-30.
asserted that northerners "have no sentiment; regard a sense of honor as one of the rules of barbarism and the incident of the institution of slavery." Seemingly perplexed, he decried: "I know [northerners] do not understand, or comprehend, or appreciate the feelings which influence the people of the slaveholding states." Therefore, southerners wasted their time expecting compromise from unfeeling northerners.

Mythicaton. Wigfall romanticized southerners. Repeating the South Carolina oath of allegiance with which "she was welcomed into the Union" while other states knew "that her citizens were bound to swear allegiance to their own State," Wigfall contrasted northerners as "those who swear to obey the Constitution of the United States and violate it, laugh at its oaths." Trying to gather support, he flattered his constituents, "thank God, the people amongst whom I have lived, and whom I represent upon this floor, have never dealt so lightly with their oaths."52 Linking "God," "oath of allegiance," and "Constitution of the United States," Wigfall attempted to create a halo effect for secession.

Smith says of mythication: "This strategy is primarily exhortative in the sense that it becomes a type of group self-congratulation by the agitator in order to inspire them [followers] to greater dedication."53 Returning to the mythication of the South through the example of South Carolina, Wigfall contended that "gallant people have been misrepresented." Using language of emotion, he proceeded:

Their palmetto has withered under the blighting influence of the breath of slander, and its broad leaves have been like the leaves of the funeral cypress; but, thank God, it is again spreading its branches to the sun, and, green and luxuriant, it now

52 Congressional Globe, p. 86.

53 Smith, Rhetoric of Black Revolution, pp. 36-37.
presents itself to the gaze to the people of the thirty-three States as in the brightest days of its glory.\textsuperscript{54}

Of the members of the group being mythified, Smith indicates "they recognize the peculiar challenge confronting them in terms of forefathers and posterity. Indeed, the group often feels that it must perform the planned task, and it along."\textsuperscript{55} As early as 1844, Wigfall had predicted that South Carolina was destined to lead the South in secession. Of that period in Wigfall's career, King writes: "Even after he had left the state, he hopefully asked Calhoun if he could not persuade South Carolina to strike the first blow to rally the South. Twelve years later it did."\textsuperscript{56} Warning that northern "sneers and scoffs will not serve your purposes," Wigfall exclaimed: "You may conquer them; you may trail that palmetto banner in the dust; but you will never reduce that people to slavery. No, sir; South Carolina may be the graveyard of freemen, but, before God, it will never be the habitation of slaves." [Manifestations of applause in the galleries].\textsuperscript{57} The \textit{New York Times} reporter noted "laughing, clapping, and stomping in the galleries; also hissing."\textsuperscript{58} Wigfall continued to create havoc in the chamber. Through his strong language, Wigfall contrasted the two sections, as Charles Lomas suggests an

\textsuperscript{54} \textit{Congressional Globe}, p. 86.

\textsuperscript{55} Smith, \textit{Rhetoric of Black Revolution}, p. 37.

\textsuperscript{56} King, \textit{Louis T. Wigfall}, p. 54.

\textsuperscript{57} \textit{Congressional Globe}, p. 86.

\textsuperscript{58} \textit{New York Times}, December 14, 1860.
agitator may do, to "sharpen the idea being advanced."59 With terms such as "palmetto banner in the dust," the antithetical "graveyard of freemen, but . . . never the habitation of slaves," and calling on "God" for sanction, Wigfall mythified the southern cause.

Later invoking "divine justice," Wigfall expounded:

It is the declaration of divine justice that he who sheds man's blood shall have his blood shed by man; and I say that he who taints the blood more kills than he who sheds it. That proud State that I am speaking of--and I speak of her because she has no representative upon this floor, and because she is about to act, and because there has been an effort to isolate her from her sisters--has not heretofore, and will not hereafter, show any sensibility to that which touches her honor. Her citizens are few; they may be conquered; there may be none left to tell the story of their disaster. It does not follow, Senators, that because a people are weak, they are going to submit to tyranny.

Explaining that he spoke for South Carolina, "because she has no representatives upon this floor," Wigfall emotionalized the state through the statement, "her citizens are few; they may be conquered; there may be none left to tell the story of her disaster." What southerner could resist the appeal to pride when Wigfall declared: "It does not follow, that because they are weak, they are going to submit to tyranny." By weak, Wigfall meant that compared to northern states, South Carolina, indeed the South, was not a match in numbers. In the southern purview, however, numbers did not matter as much as determination, strength, honor, experience, and other virtues which southerners believed peculiar to themselves. To these myths Wigfall made his appeal.

Using history to mythify, the Texan spoke of the king of Lacedaemon and his three hundred who died at Thermopylae. "There was an oath in Sparta as there is an oath in South Carolina," he lectured,

The people of South Carolina have sworn to maintain the independence and the freedom of their State. It is the law of that State. When Leonidas and his gallant three hundred fell, history tells us— I know not whether the inscription is still to be seen— that upon the stone which covered that gallant dead were inscribed these words, "Stranger, tell the Lacedaemonians that we lie here in obedience to their laws."

With the Texas audience in mind, Wigfall added: "In my own State there is an inscription not less touching. Upon the bloodstained stones of the Alamo there is now to be seen written these words: 'Thermopylae had her messengers of death; the Alamo had none.'" To intensify southern commitment to the propriety of secession as a right and South Carolina's course of action specifically, Wigfall mythified the state through emotionalized historical links.

Legitimation. Maintaining that South Carolina would obey federal laws until her right to secede was denied, Wigfall traced the history of the forts in Charleston harbor as a state property which had been "a voluntary gift" to the United States. When the purpose was ended, he believed the forts should be returned to the state. In reference to the forts Wigfall defined the act that would constitute war as the moment the state was denied the right of secession and the troops were kept there "for the purpose of subjugation." Reminding northerners of the high sense of honor that existed in the South, he warned: "If there is an attempt, which I trust God there may not be to strengthen those garrisons, or in a moment of imprudence a man-of-war should be sent into that harbor, I say to you that those forts will be taken,
cost it the life of every man in the State." Infuriated that "it has
got to be a fashion to speak of 'the chivalry;' and when South Carolina
is mentioned, it has become fashionable to speak in terms as to indicate
that those men are not apt to act up to their words," Wigfall romanti­
cized about the state as he traced her participation in wars. "When
have her citizens shown themselves deficient in manhood?" he asked.
In the war with England, he reminded the Senate, "South Carolina, of
her own accord, raised and equipped and put into the field, to cross
bayonets with British regulars, one brigade; when the war broke out
with Mexico, she responded on the 'instant.'" To answer his own ques­
tion as to how South Carolinians discharged their duty, Wigfall quoted
from Claiborne's Life of John A. Quitman: "In the whole history of
war there never has been a more striking example of indifference to
death, the result of stern resolve." "These are the men who are
denounced," he continued, "these are the men who are ridiculed."
Aghast that a "Black Republican newspaper" held South Carolina inferior
to Brooklyn, New York, because the city contained more population,
Wigfall raged: "There is a point beyond which endurance, like patience,
ceases to be a virtue. We are reaching that point rapidly." Repeat­
ing his allegation that "legislature after legislature" has passed laws
to prevent the recapture of fugitive slaves, Wigfall compared South
Carolina's indignation to that of the United States if the British
Parliament passed a law to prevent Great Britian from carrying out the
terms of a treaty between the two countries. Contending that the
northern senators who voted for state laws that violated the federal
Constitution's guarantees of property protection "added purjury to
perfidy," he challenged: "Is this not true? You dare not deny it."
Without being more specific than "legislature after legislature," Wigfall created the impression that northerners were conspiring to destroy slavery. For southerners, Wigfall pictured the only hope lay in rallying quickly to the secession call. Appealing to southern pride, Wigfall added: "And when States confederated with your States complain of this perfidy and purjury, they are told that if they do not silently and patiently 'with bated breath and whispering humbleness' submit, your eighteen million free white men will come down there and reduce them to the condition of the conquered provincedes, that their own army and their own navy and their own treasury shall be used for subjugation." Wigfall intended to justify southern acts of resistance. Among southerners contemplating secession, he probably meant to force commitment. If they believed that the North threatened to "come down there and reduce them to the condition of conquered provinces," the proud southerners would rush to the nearest recruiting station. On the other hand, Wigfall likely expected northerners to resent his allegations. After all, they viewed South Carolina as a rebellious state in violation of federal laws. If they sent troops, it would only be to enforce laws. The result, Wigfall polarized the sections.

Posing a hypothetical situation involving himself and a friend in a robbery on Pennsylvania Avenue, Wigfall said: "Because robbery has not been added to insult and perjury to perfidy, South Carolina and Florida and Alabama and Mississippi and Texas and Arkansas are not to complain!" Several times Wigfall repeated the phrase "perjury to perfidy" to emphasize northern mistreatment of the South. Whether southerners understood exactly what he meant or not, the emotional
impact of the phrase was that the South should be upset. For the first time in the speech, the Texan expanded the implication of South Carolina's secession convention to name the other states which he expected to follow. In listing those states he legitimized South Carolina's bold action. The southern cause enlarged to include seven states, Wigfall added force to his argument that states would withdraw. Sarcastically, he commented: "That sort of logic [that the South should not complain] we do not understand in that region of the country. Our misapprehension, doubtless, is the result of the 'barbarism of slavery.'" Countering northern industrialists contempt for the South's agrarian culture, he reiterated the aristocratic planter attitude: "In that country there are men who, even in this utilitarian age, are not dead to all sentiment; who defend with the hazard of their own lives and with their blood their personal honor; and will be ready to defend the honor of their States as they are their individual respectability." Through the strong appeal to southerners of the code duello, Wigfall justified secession and attempted to rally the South. As Lomas wrote of Robert Barnwell Rhett's July 4, 1859 speech so in Wigfall's speech, "all the stereotypes of evil were seen in the oppressor; all the stereotypes of good were exemplified in the 'oppressed' Southern gentry. No compromise was possible or desired." Rephrasing Rhett's analogy comparing South Carolina to the biblical Sampson, the strong man who perished in the act of destroying God's enemies, Wigfall concluded:

60 Congressional Globe, pp. 86-87.
If we cannot save this Union as it was originally formed by these States, let it be dissolved rather than see a military despotism erected upon its ruins. There is now an effort making to erect such a despotism. The edifice is not yet completed. South Carolina, thank God! has laid her hand upon one of the pillars, and she will shake it until it totters first, and then topples. She will destroy that edifice, though she perish amid the ruins.62

Depicting "Black Republicanism," "Abolitionism," or "a military despotism" as synonyms for northerners, Wigfall stirred southern blood. Embodied in the statement, Wigfall appealed to what Clement Eaton called "two aspects of the Romantic movement as it developed in the Old South—a devotion to the military tradition and a quixotic sense of honor that made him swift to resent an insult."

**Effects.** As he had hoped, Wigfall polarized further the North and South. After the final segment of this encounter a rumor circulated that the Texan might be arrested and charged with treason for his utterances in the Senate and for sending dispatches to the South recommending the seizure of the forts. On January 8, 1861, the New York Times finally reported that the action "was spoken of in the Cabinet, but not seriously. A Cabinet officer mentioned it jocularly, which led to some running comments."63

Quoting the London Times, Henry Wilson, the Massachusetts Republican pictured for his fellow senators the manner in which the British viewed South Carolina's actions which Wigfall praised so highly:

The hallowness of her cause is seen beneath all the pomp of her labored denunciation; and surely to her, if to any community of modern days, may be applied the words of the Hebrew prophet, "a wonderful and horrible thing is committed in the land. The prophets prophesy falsely, and my people love to have it so.

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62 Congressional Globe, p. 87.

63 New York Times, January 8, 1861.
Wilson also delivered a speech to a Republican group outside the Senate in which he reflected the polarization which Wigfall worked to encourage.

Among other things Wilson apparently said:

To-night, thanks be to God, we stand with the slave power beneath our feet. [Applause] This haughty power which corrupted the Whig party, strangled the American party, and used the Democratic party as a tool, lies crushed to the dust and our heel upon it. And gentlemen, that power never rises again; it can never more sway the destinies of the Government of the United States. We have crushed it, and ground it to powder. Now, gentlemen, I say to the men of the South who have been threatening the dissolution of the Union, who are calling conventions, who are mounting the blue cockades, Go, if you dare!

The Dallas Herald printed the quote with the admonition: "If Southern men can read these extracts and then be hopeful of a future administration under Lincoln, their faith must be constructed out of free-soil material."64

The New York Times offered the following observation about secessionists:

If we could suppose a Secessionist to be possessed with a grain of common sense, it might be safely assumed that no rational follower of the faction would countenance an attempt upon the life of the President---but wisdom and foresight are not to be predicated of Secessionists. When it is remembered that in no age or country did a defeated faction treasure up more of scorn and hatred, more of disappointed ambition, of humiliated, and yet unsubdued pride, and lust for revenge, than the Democratic oligarchy which has so long misruled this country. . . . there is no danger of an open attempt. The rebels are too consciously weak to essay anything of that sort.65

Through his words and his actions, Wigfall helped develop the impressions reflected in the New York newspaper.

64 Dallas Herald, December 14, 1860.

On the other side Wigfall's defenders worked equally hard to praise what they regarded as his patriotic efforts. The Paris Advocate editor, for instance, wrote:

The secession movement in the South is said to be the work of demagogues and office hunters. Davis, Toombs, Cobb, Iverson, Brown, Floyd, Thompson, Thomas, Pickens, Slidell, Benjamin, Wigfall, Hemphill, Roberts, and a host of others at the head of the movement were office holders, not hunters. If they are demagogues it has taken the South a long time to find it out; for such brave, true spirits as these she has for years delighted to honor. The recent election reveals the astounding fact that there are in Texas about sixty thousand office hunters and demagogues and only ten or twelve thousand pure, disinterested, immaculate patriots.66

With the sides forming distinctly Wigfall no doubt believed he was accomplishing his goals.

SUMMARY

Encouraged that South Carolina had assembled a secession convention, Wigfall intensified sectional divisions in the Senate and the country at large as he defended individual states' rights to secede. Stirring resentment among union-savers, the Texan attacked their most notable Democrat Stephen Douglas. In the first segment Wigfall drew Douglas into open confrontation which resulted in the Illinois senator's discomfiture and embarrassment. Confused and apologetic, Douglas shrunk under the Texan's unrelenting pursuit. To stimulate negative reaction among northerners and delay compromise Wigfall referred to territorial inhabitants in objectionable language and reminded his hearers that southerners demanded approval of the right "to traffic in the souls and bodies of men."

66Dallas Herald, April 13, 1861, reprinted from the Paris Advocate.
In the second segment Wigfall picked up where he left off the previous day attacking Douglas as a means for dividing the two sections. Relentless in his efforts, the Texan used every possible reference to Douglas' senatorial utterances of the preceding day to weaken the Illinois senator's influence. Linking Douglas and Lincoln, the Texan sharpened further the division between the sections as he reminded his listeners that the President-elect had worked as an abolitionist lecturer. Not the approach of a compromiser, Wigfall sought opportunities to retard peace-making. Although he often addressed northerners as "you or your" as in instances when he discussed the compact arrangement of states, Wigfall really addressed southerners who believed in the theory and welcomed the identification of northerners as objects of blame. He reminded southerners of "that Helper book" and warned of "John Brown, Wide Awake Praetorians" ready to "sweep the country with fire and sword." Through about half of the segment Wigfall established a picture of northerners as insidious enemies intent on destroying the Union. He held Douglas up as representative of northern Democrats who had defected to Republicanism.

In sharp contrast to the despicable picture of their enemies, Wigfall attempted to pull southerners together with references to oppression which they suffered at the hands of northerners. Reminding his followers of abolitionists' efforts to eliminate slavery and to label them cut throats, pirates, and murderers, Wigfall sought to establish the idea that southerners should demand guarantees that abolitionism would cease. In addition to his efforts to strengthen the Deep South's determination to secede, Wigfall attempted to win over the border states as well. Suggesting that the North had not treated
the South fairly in nominating and electing a Black Republican, the Texan endeavored to win support for the idea that Lincoln's election constituted an overt act against slavery. As result, he called on southerners to unite.

In order to win converts for secession Wigfall knew that he had to justify South Carolina's decision to call a secession convention. To accomplish his goal the Texan compared secession to the country's declaration of independence from England and linked the names of famous Americans such as Patrick Henry to South Carolina's honor that drove her to consider dissolution.

Besides uniting the South in secession, Wigfall determined to irritate northerners to the point that they would reject compromises as readily as southerners. Deliberately choosing inflammatory language in which honorable, brave, honest southerners were contrasted to weak, cowardly, treacherous northerners, Wigfall intended to drive the sections apart. In one of the most aggravating passages of the segment Wigfall suggested that dissolution might prove to be a good lesson for northerners who did not properly appreciate the South. The ploy was designed to stir resentment and make the North forget compromise efforts. His words approaching treason, Wigfall expressed his willingness to back up his words with his guns.

In the final segment Wigfall persisted in delaying compromise and separating the two sections. To objectify northerners Wigfall utilized feedback from other senators to demonstrate to his listeners that Republicans were responsible for disruption. Through the move Wigfall illustrated how he seized the day by day activities in the Senate and turned them to his advantage. With an impressive attendance record in
the sessions, the Texan apparently searched for senatorial exchanges
or, in this case, the disruptive non-verbal behavior of Republicans as
the basis for agitation.

Providing one of the few clear examples of mythicization Wigfall
attempted to reassure South Carolinians that secession was a God-sanc-
tioned exercise of their rights and oaths of allegiance. In the context
of mythifying South Carolina Wigfall encouraged other southerners con-
templating secession and built his own image as the defender of a state
whose senators had not returned to the chamber following the election of
a Black Republican President.

Obviously appealing to his Texas supporters Wigfall referred to the
"touching" inscription at the Alamo.

For the benefit of southerners considering secession Wigfall
justified the act. Using South Carolina as his example the Texan
praised the manhood of the palmetto citizens in wars throughout history
and held up the state as an example for others to follow. In this seg-
ment, for the first time Wigfall named some other states that he
expected to call secession conventions.

Through the three segments of this encounter Wigfall maintained a
general goal to polarize North and South. In the Senate where Republi-
cans and some Democrats alike hoped that somehow compromise would end
the secession mood in the country Wigfall refused to let his colleagues
drift along until Lincoln's inauguration and a southern cool-off
occurred. With strategies including calculated antagonism the Texan
delayed compromise efforts and aggravated sectional tensions.
CHAPTER VIII

ENCOUNTER FIVE: THE STATE OF THE UNION

William B. Hesseltine has observed: "The basic problem of American history revolves around the question of how a people diverse in origin and background, engaged in multiple economic activities, and occupying a vast territory without geographic unity could have remained a single nation. The answer is found in the American genius for compromise."¹ In 1860, after dividing their votes among four presidential candidates, most Americans expected the country to survive even the election of a "Black Republican" through compromise. However, quoting Supreme Court Justice John A. Campbell of Alabama, Roy Nichols suggests the sections faced a logical impossibility. "The truth is," the Judge wrote:

that the grievances complained of by the cotton States are either not material or not remedial. What guarantee will prevent the denunciation of slavery and slaveholders in the pulpit, press and academy? What will prevent the pragmatical and conceited Yankee from making foreign newspapers and magazines the vehicle of his mendacity and spite? What will prevent their women and fanatics from irritating the Southern representatives? Who can give self-control to Southern members or prevent them from showing that slavery is ordained of by Heaven?²


Efforts to work out compromises in Congress, moreover, served only to sharpen controversy. Nichols concluded of the senators: "Their oratory emphasized more forcibly than ever the wide variance of opinion and the lack of agreement on remedies." While the Senate eventually adopted Crittenden's Compromise proposal, South Carolina seceded during the time required to bring the matter to a vote. The legislators' three-week hesitation eliminated prospects for conciliation.

Indicating one reason why compromise failed, David Potter wrote: "From the standpoint of a sincere Unionist, there was something self-defeating about getting the Union temporarily past a crisis by making concessions which strengthened the disunionist faction and perpetuated the tendency toward periodic crises." While the unionists expressed their reluctance to forestall the inevitable, secessionists pictured compromise as "submission." For example, the Dallas Herald reprinted "A Patent Sermon" which reveals the mood of secessionists:

My Dear Submission Brethren: You will discover that our text [is] from the first chapter, verse the first of "the Devil's own Book." The language of the text was first addressed by our good mother Eve and father Adam unto their Creator who was advising them to avoid the Serpent which had slipped into the Garden of Eden. When the voice of God spake unto them saying--"Beware of the Serpent" their reply was in the language of our text--"Let us wait until he does something" . . . Had Adam and Eve been fire-eaters instead of apple-eaters, they would never have waited for the "overt act" of the Serpent, and consequently they would never have tasted of the tree of knowledge. If, instead of Adam, Bill Yancey had been placed in the garden, and in place of mother Eve, one of those fire-eating women who declare they had rather be the widows of States Rights men than the wives of Submissionists, had been given him, when the Serpent creeped into Eden, they would have "Bolted" as some of our politicians did at Charleston.

3 Ibid., p. 402.

After quoting numerous examples from the Bible and American history, e. g. Boston tea party, the writer continued:

But like Yancey, and Rhett, and Wigfall, they would not wait for something to be done. When the Northern States have nullified the Fugitive Slave Law, and driven us from the Territories of the Union, the greedy fire-eaters have kicked up and said, "Let's dissolve the Union;" but we have invariably replied, "Wait till he does something." When the Abolitionists abolished the slave trade in the District of Columbia and admitted California with her squatter sovereign Constitution, these same hot heads got mad and said "Burst up the Union;" but we all said, "Wait till they do something." . . . Now, my brethren, they have elected Lincoln who is pledged to put us on an equality with the negroes socially, morally, and politically, and have completely driven us away from the Federal Government; and still the fire-eaters say, "Dissolve the Union." Again we reply in the language of the test, "Wait till he does something."^5

In January, 1861, the New York Times discussed southern activities:

A caucus of Southern Senators was held at the National Hotel last evening to consult as to the interests of the seceding States. It is understood that they advocated separate and immediate secession. Messrs. Alfred Iverson of Georgia, Benjamin Fitzpatrick of Alabama, C. C. Clay of Alabama, Jefferson Davis of Mississippi, Judah P. Benjamin of Louisiana, John Slidell of Louisiana, R. W. Johnson of Arkansas, John Hemphill of Texas, Wigfall, S. R. Mallory of Florida, and David L. Yulee of Florida were present. Senator Fitzpatrick gave a negative vote.6

In the Senate demostrative spectators crowded the galleries. Discussing a speech of Robert Toombs early in January, a New York editor indicated the prevailing mood: "The Senate was full today. Mr. Toombs made a very noisy and ranting secession speech, and at the close was greeted with a storm of hisses and applause, which continued for some time."7 Another reporter gave evidence of tensions among senators that surfaced in an incident between Ohio Republican Benjamin F. Wade and

^5 Dallas Herald, December 19, 1860, from the Quitman, Texas Herald.


^7 New York Times, January 8, 1861.
Louisiana's Judah P. Benjamin: "After Wade had taken his seat, Senator Benjamin approached him and congratulated him upon the able and eloquent speech he had just made; but, said Benjamin, 'You would not coerce Louisiana, would you?' Wade raised his arm and brought it down heavily upon his desk, with the remark, 'Yes, by G-d, we'll make a desert of it again.'" With such prevailing attitudes, it is not difficult to see why compromise was nearly impossible.

SEGMENT ONE: JANUARY 31, 1861

Situation. On January 28 Alfred Iverson of Georgia resigned his seat in the Senate, leaving a void which Wigfall and the other southerners remaining were compelled to fill. Although secessionists took solace in the fact that the Confederacy was about to be formed in Montgomery and Texas was near withdrawal, they worried about the Washington Peace Conference.

When debate opened on the State of the Union, William Seward, the New York Republican presented a petition from a committee of twenty-five New York citizens requesting Congress to find "some plan for the adjustment of the troubles which disturb the peace and happiness and endanger the safety of the Union." Seward's speech following the reading of the petition touched off debate between Seward and James Mason of Virginia. Contending that in the twelve years since the Oregon Bill sanctioned slavery in a land mass twenty-five times the State of New York only twenty-four slaves had been brought in, one slave for every forty-four square miles of territory, Seward minimized the slave question. No

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8 Washington Evening Star, January 15, 1861.
match for the New York senator in debate, Mason was one of those southern gentlemen who according to Seward "avoids by design personalities which might irritate."

Wigfall arrived late missing Seward's call to maintain the "blessed, glorious, noble-inherited, God-given Union." However, the Texan appeared in time to hear Douglas recall his correspondence to a Virginian as follows: "I pronounced my belief that there was hope that this Union may be saved. . . . that in my opinion, all depended upon the action of the border States." Douglas' statement likely bolstered Wigfall's resolve to win the border states for secession. Wigfall also heard Douglas state, in reference to Wigfall's vote on Clark's resolution, "it is no longer worthwhile to conceal from outsiders the fact that the extremists on this side and on the other side are in concert, from different motives, to defeat a settlement."

Incensed at being accused of consorting with Republicans Wigfall began to clamor for the floor. Highly impatient to answer Douglas, the Texan experienced such difficulty in obtaining the right to speak that almost two hours elapsed between the time Milton Latham, the California Democrat first acknowledged Wigfall's eagerness and the time when John Hale referred to him. Suggesting the derision with which northerners regarded Wigfall, Hale commented: "I see the impatience of my friend from Texas. He is impatient that my poor voice may be hushed, and that he may be permitted to illuminate this Chamber with the radiance of the Lone Star of Texas." Judging from Hale's words, Wigfall had accomplished his goal of making himself an object of enmity. At any rate, his opponents made no secret of their dislike for him.
Setting the stage for Wigfall's explosion, Hale concluded his speech as follows:

If there are those of these states that cannot, and will not, be satisfied, in God's name, let them go. I tell you, sir, the Union will be preserved nevertheless. Its stars and stripes shall still float in the valleys and over the mountain tops. True hears shall rally around it. It shall preserve the literature, the learning, the liberty, and the religion of the land; and when you that have gone off, like the prodigal son, in the far country, filling your belly with the husks which the swine did eat, turn at last to this Union, then, sir, and not until then, will we kill the fatted calf and rejoice that the lost is found and the dead alive again. [Applause in the galleries]

On that Scriptural note Wigfall immediately spoke.

Strategies. Through the two-hour segment Wigfall emphasized at least five strategies:

1. Vilification of four individuals who shared the blame for the disrupted country headed for war.
2. Objectification of Republicans and northerners as a group which helped produce the irreversible condition.
3. Calculated antagonism of individuals and northerners to thwart compromise efforts.
4. Solidifying southerners in the belief that secession was proper and the only reasonable alternative.
5. Building his own image as a courageous states' rights defender who, almost alone by then, continued to maintain his post while his state remained in the Union.

Discussion of these strategies reveals an over-riding goal to polarize the South from the North until all opportunities for concession passed.

Vilification. The four who received the Texan's venom on this occasion were, in ascending order of the amount of time spent on each: John Hale, the New Hampshire Republican; William H. Seward, New York Republican; President James Buchanan, a Pennsylvania Democrat; and Stephen Douglas, the Illinois Democrat.

Hale. Blaming the New Hampshire senator for "felicitating himself and his section of the country upon having all the decency, intelli-
gence, virtue, and religion in the country," Wigfall distorted Hale's meaning slightly to cast reflection upon him. The rebuke also provided the Texan an opportunity to defend the Lone Star state and to mythify southerners. Indifferent as to whether or not Hale could maintain the northern institutions about which he boasted, Wigfall assured him that:

The men who live in these States upon the Gulf are neither Indians, nor negroes, nor mulattoes; but they are white men with red blood in their veins, who draw their descent from the best Huguenot blood that was ever shed in defense of religious liberty in France, and from the cavalier blood that never quailed in England; that those men do the voting and fighting; that they do the legislating; that they administer the laws and sit on juries; and that they are entirely capable of self-government.

Thus demonstrating the virtues of southerners, Wigfall held up Hale as an example of Black Republicans who did not understand the South. The Texan also implied that southern states ought to withdraw because "they are entirely capable of self-government."

In the language "Huguenot blood" and "cavalier blood," Wigfall tapped the myths of southern superiority. Believing he could appeal to border states where the attitudes of slaveocracy were still strong, the Texan hoped to bind them together against the dreaded northerners which Hale represented.

Hale had stated that the history of seceding states was written in the history of the Republics of Mexico and South America, meaning that rebellion does not pay. Wigfall changed Hale's intent to suggest that the New Hampshire senator regarded Texans as cowards. Vilifying Hale as a northern despot, Wigfall really addressed southerners when he proclaimed:

I say to the Senator, the history of Texas is already upon the pages of Mexican history. It is written there in blood. It was written there in defense of liberty. You have attempted to do
what the Dictator in Texas did—to trample upon the Constitution of your country; to consolidate and centralize a Federal Republic; to trample liberty in the dust. Texas took arms in her hand and vindicated her right; and she will do it again.

Although he did not use the words "Remember the Alamo," Wigfall meant just that as he attempted to bring together those who resented insults from northerners. In the remarks Wigfall revealed how an agitator takes statements out of context, and establishes new interpretations from the words of the vilified person.

[**Seward.**] According to Wigfall, Seward, long hated by southerners for his "irrepressible conflict" doctrine, "makes astonishing statements, voted as a member of the Committee of Thirteen against every proposition for peace, voted for the Clark resolution, and instructed northerners to educate their children to hate southerners."

The most damaging indictment which Wigfall brought against Seward and the charge that served to polarize the sections, was the Texan's contention that the New York senator contemptuously regarded secession a trivial matter. Shifting the blame for disruption of the nation to Seward and his followers, the Texan rebuked:

The distinguished Senator from New York, who was advertised to make a Union speech some two weeks ago, discussed matters and things generally; and when he came to the practical question, said that as to the secession of these cotton States, it was so trivial a matter that he really did not think it was worth his while to stop and discuss it. He passed that over as one of the incidents that was worthy barely of an allusion, but of nothing more.⁹

For southerners meeting to form a Confederacy and others laboring over the decision of whether or not to withdraw, the Texan nudged some toward separation by revealing that Seward regarded the action as

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"trivial," worthy "barely of an allusion." The result was to cause southerners to stiffen their wills to assert what they regarded as states' rights.

Buchanan. After almost two months brooding over what Alvy King terms President Buchanan's "pusillanimous State of the Union Message denying the right of secession but doubting his authority to do anything about it," Wigfall found opportunity to strike out at the Democratic President. The Texan complained that Buchanan "failed to read or did not understand the Kentucky and Virginia resolutions, obtained the Presidency under false pretenses, favored coercion, regarded the United States as a consolidated government, and was driving the country toward war." Similar to the indictment against Seward, Wigfall claimed that Buchanan "regards this a consolidated Government, in which the withdrawal of a State is a matter of not the slightest consequence." Consistent with Arthur Smith's conclusion that "there is little danger of failure if the agitator can stake out a conspicuous leader who is already held in low esteem," and that "the President of the United States and his cabinet are the most suitable persons to vilify," Wigfall secured an ideal object for his assault in Buchanan whom the Texan insisted had betrayed his party. "I would say," Wigfall continued, "if it were an indictable offense to-day, that he could be indicted for obtaining the office under false pretenses." Apparently Wigfall hoped to

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accomplish at least two objectives in his assault of Buchanan: reduce the already remote possibility that the President's message would serve as a basis for compromise and, perhaps, to goad the old Pennsylvanian into some rash action against South Carolina which would hurry southern solidarity.

Douglas. Of all the persons whom he attacked during the fifteen months he was a United States senator, Wigfall seemed to enjoy most assaulting Stephen Douglas, the "Little Giant" from Illinois. Through his onslaught of the previous spring the Texan helped deny the Illinois senator the support of a united Democratic party. Wigfall's fervor to "get" Douglas emerged on this occasion as strong as ever. Among the indictments Wigfall claimed Douglas has done me and those who voted with me the grossest injustice, offers false hopes that the Union will be saved, has offered his 'great principle' as a remedy for all the nation's ills, has disrupted the Democratic party, has disrupted the Union, is not a man to preach to anybody, wishes to establish a government that does not protect property, has done nothing practical, does not want to save the Union, and is hard to keep on the witness stand.

Three instances of Wigfall's vilification of Douglas warrant closer examination to demonstrate the function of the strategy. The first involved Douglas' restatement of his "squatter sovereignty" doctrine earlier in the day. "The Senator from Illinois has this morning again suggested to us his 'great principle,'" the Texan sarcastically stated:

It is a specific for all things. I do not know whether he has a patent for it or not; but really Doctor Townsend's sarsaparilla pales when it comes within the light of the "great principle" of non-intervention. Why I say to the Senator that that great principle of his disrupted the Democratic party, and has now disrupted the Union; and but for him and his great principle, this day a
Democrat would have been President of the United States, and the Union saved.12

In tune with Brembeck and Howell's observation that "persuaders of dubious ethical standards direct people's pent-up emotional energies at scapegoat targets, then giving the appearance of helping solve the problem at hand but actually only supplying targets for aggressive feelings aroused by the problem,"13 Wigfall focused blame for disruption on Douglas' "great principle." Oversimplifying, the Texan intended to weaken Douglas' continuing strength among Democrats. Because Douglas remained a formidable obstacle to border state secession, Wigfall vilified him as "a Senator who has contributed more than any man in the Union, according to his ability, to the destruction of the Union.

Persistent in his efforts to defame Douglas, Wigfall tapped the slavery malaise in the South. He continued:

The Senator from Illinois wishes us to establish a Federal Government that does not protect property. That is the proposition after you have bolted it to the bran--a Government that is not to protect property. If he would say that as to all species and kinds of property, that when a cargo of goods left Massachusetts to sail for Louisiana, and got three marine leagues upon the high seas, any pirate, or cruiser, sailing even under a regular flag, could seize upon that vessel and confiscate the goods; if he will say that, then I understand that, while his rule is a bad one, it works equally to all sections.14

Suggesting that "he nor nay other man has ever proposed that," Wigfall implied Douglas had defected to the Republican party. In the state-

12Congressional Globe, p. 665.


14Congressional Globe, p. 666.
ment, "that is the proposition after you have bolted it to the bran," the agitator hinted that the Illinois senator attempted to deceive southerners. Moreover, Wigfall improved his own image by implying that he had not been fooled.

There are numerous examples of vilification against Douglas in this segment some of which are discussed under other strategies, but one more is, perhaps, sufficient to illustrate that Wigfall deliberately chose certain words which, in context, bore high emotional impact. Accusing the Illinois senator of "blatherskiting about here on one side or the other, and talking about the Union without going into anything practical," Wigfall continued:

Well, according to the Micawber principle which the Senator from Illinois seems to be practicing, he hopes that "something will turn up" at some time or other by which the Union is going to be saved. I am really not one of those who have acted upon that principle. Now it is the merest balderdash—that is what it is—it is the most unmitigated fudge for any one to get up here, and tell men who have sense, who have brains, that there is any prospect of two thirds of this Congress passing any proposition as an amendment to the Constitution; that any man who is white, twenty-one years old, and whose hair is straight, living south of Mason and Dixon's line, will be content with. I say it is balderdash; and the Senator cannot state any single proposition that will get a vote on the other side, or that has the slightest prospect of being ratified by a northern State. I object to this sort of fudge being indulged in for the purpose of misleading the people.  

Note the words "balderdash" and "unmitigated fudge." Seemingly unserious words, the Texan directed them toward southerners to perpetuate his claim that Seward and Douglas did not regard secession seriously. At one point the most extreme statement that Wigfall could imagine was that Douglas' doctrines were "worse than Sewardism."

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15 Congressional Globe, p. 669.
Through an accumulation of negative impressions resulting from the statements and actions of Hale, Seward, Buchanan, and Douglas, Wigfall sought to convince southerners that all hope for the Union was gone and, with enemies such as the four he vilified working to establish a "substitute Union" which the people of the South had no part in developing, their safest course was to secede.

Objectification. Smith defines objectification as the directing of the grievances a particular group toward another "collective body such as an institution, nation or political party." Like vilification in that both use tactics of sarcasm and seek to embarrass the opposition, Smith indicates that "no effort is made to single out any member of the group, but rather to concentrate on the collection."\(^\text{16}\)

Although he sometimes mentioned Republicans specifically, Wigfall wanted to antagonize his followers against a vague group known as "northerners." Republicans represented the ultimate depth to which all northerners could sink. In this segment Wigfall specified certain Republican sins: "not earnestly trying to save the Union, utterly and wholly opposed to compromise, voting for the Clark resolution, only temporarily a minority, and hoping to amuse the South into staying in the Union." More generally, northerners "ban southern negro property, trample the Constitution, consolidated and centralized government, trampled liberty in the dust, denounce us, deride us, degrade us, offer settlements southerners could never be contented with, hate us, used savage practices, unburied the dead, put George Washington in a coffin.

\(^{16}\)Smith, _Rhetoric of Black Revolution_, p. 29.
painted with devils, marched us before the civilized world branded, deceive your constituents, and deny the right of self-government."

After specifically charging Buchanan with "driving us into war," Wigfall enlarged the indictment to include all northerners and even southern unionizers who did not regard secession seriously. "The other House, and those who sit in this Chamber," the Texan suggested, are sitting idly and listlessly gazing on, when every man within the sound of my voice knows that the very next news that may be flashed upon the lightning from Pensacola or Charleston may be that the Federal troops and the troops of Florida and South Carolina are in deadly conflict. And yet Senators get up here and talk about the Union, and desire that there should be peace, and their wish to preserve it; and they laugh and jest upon the subject.

Disclaiming any guilt himself, Wigfall blamed other senators, especially northerners, who sat idly gazing on while dangers mounted. This is the strategy functioning to create a reaction among southerners that northerners were insane, glibly ignoring the threats of war. Like Nero fiddling while Rome burned, Wigfall implied that there was no way for dedicated southerners to get through to the insensitive, hypocritical northerners who let the nation drift into war.

Wigfall contended that the Republicans had refused to make meaningful overtures to maintain peace. Hypothetically he detailed an involved, unrealistic procedure which the successful party might have followed had they actually desired to save the Union. "But no such thing has been done," the Texan berated:

It was only last night that I saw in a leading Republican paper what purported to be an extract from Mr. Lincoln's own writing, declaring that he was utterly and wholly opposed to any compromise. Under these circumstances, what is there to be gained by this tampering with the question? I will tell you what. It was hoped
that the people of the South would be amused; that the action of
the secession party would be defeated.\footnote{Congressional Globe, p. 665.}

Intent on avoiding defeat of the secession party, Wigfall objectified
Republicans for scheming to gain advantage over southerners. There is
a ring of finality about Wigfall's words in this passage. With the
President-elect "utterly and wholly" opposed to compromise, what was the
use in the border states and other union-savers cowing to this obnoxious
party come to power. Appealing to southern pride and honor, Wigfall
implied that Republicans looked upon southerners as fools who would be
"amused" and let the "Black Republican" slip into office quietly.

The vocal Texan did not intend to permit such folly.

What could be more fair than for Wigfall to set forth the terms
that would have saved the Union? "If at the beginning of this session
any one had really desired to save the Union," the Texan challenged:

\footnote{Congressional Globe, p. 667.}

if any one had risen and said there were States that were in
all probability about to leave the Union; that the right of
self-government was a great right which had been fought for
and achieved by a seven years' war, and therefore, if any State
withdrew from this Union, the Federal Government had no power
to coerce her; had protested and implored against the dissolu­
tion of the Union of the thirty-three States, and had proposed
that the Constitution should so be amended that slaves should be
considered as property, and be entitled to its protection every­
where--had these two simple propositions been introduced in this
Chamber, and been voted for by the Senators on the other side,
all the difficulties would have been settled, the Union would
have been safe, and we again a band of brothers.\footnote{Congressional Globe, p. 667.}

For southerners, the Texan claimed that through arrogance, indifference,
inaction, and a failure to recognize the seriousness of the situation,
northerners had permitted the time to pass when "two simple proposi-
tions" would have saved the Union. No one could blame Wigfall. Rather, "they" had to shoulder the responsibility for dissolution.

Calculated Antagonism. As Smith has observed, "a meaningful agitation is only developed when the status quo rises to block the creation of sentiments favorable to the agitator." To win followers in the South and to help southerners toward secession, Wigfall needed to create active opposition. One of the major problems he faced was the fact that even after South Carolina withdrew, the federal government did nothing one way or the other. Had Buchanan sent federal forces to put down the rebellion then the South would likely have pulled together much sooner; or had the government recognized secession as a right then other southern states would have moved more rapidly to secede. Instead, Buchanan waited, really stalling to let Lincoln deal with the problem. In this segment Wigfall deliberately antagonized northerners in an effort to retard compromise and rush confrontation.

The language of the following passage reveals Wigfall's intention to irritate and anger northerners:

You have gone back and unburied the dead; you have put the Father of his country, as you call him, the immortal Washington, in a coffin painted with devils; and you have marched us, the living and the dead, before the civilized world thus branded, and because of our institutions. These are facts. Washington has been denounced in the northern States from one end to the other as a scoundrel by your free-negro free soiler.

The effect of the strategy was to polarize the two sections. Expecting to receive newspaper coverage of his harsh language, the Texan sought to create ill feelings among northerners who would resent the accusation that they had unburied Washington. Wigfall chose images to sting and

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19Smith, Rhetoric of Black Revolution p. 28.
goad northerners: "as you call him" suggesting that instead of Washington southerners might honor another; and "put him in a coffin painted with devils."

The Texan also chose the Declaration of Independence as the means for stirring resentment among northerners. In a superior manner he first explained the "correct" interpretation of the passage about all men being created equal and then proceeded to show that Massachusetts' citizens did not practice what they preached. "What is the fact as to Massachusetts," Wigfall teased:

I see one of the Senators from that State listening to me. What is the fact as to Massachusetts? Why, on the 18th of July, 1776, they published the Declaration of Independence in the Boston Gazette; and, before God, they published an advertisement for a runaway negro, and offered another for sale. I can produce the record, if you deny it. If you doubt it, on some other day, I will. Did the people of Massachusetts then believe that "all men" meant negroes and Indians? Subsequently to that time, or about simultaneously with that, they passed a law by their Legislature fining and imprisoning any white man or woman who would intermarry with a negro, imposing heavy pains and penalties upon those who would solemnize the marriage. Was that treating negroes as their equals? If a negro was one of that class of the human family spoken of in the Declaration of Independence under the term "all men," and had his happiness involved in contracting marriage with one of the fair sex of another color, were you permitting him the pursuit of his happiness by putting him in the pillory or penitentiary, if, with her consent he consummated the marriage?

Concluding, "the thing is too absurd to talk about," Wigfall likely angered northerners by forcing them to reconcile an incident attributed to their own states and to face the emotional issue of interracial marriage, a subject of controversy in both sections.

Another potent issue in the North was polygamy in Utah. Utilizing the subject to arouse the wrath of northerners and southerners, the Texan proclaimed:
I say that I would dissolve this Union—no, not dissolve it; but I would burst it; I would fracture it, splinter it into more fragments than gunpowder would blow glass, before I would live in a Government in which I was not the equal of any other white man in the country, before I would have my State confederated with States that declare that her institutions, the condition of her men, and of the wives, the mothers, and the sisters of her men, is upon a footing with the condition of the miserable wretches whom they herd like cattle in Utah, when they say that polygamy and slavery are twin relics of barbarism. That is the declaration of the Republican party. It was the declaration in your platform in 1856; and above thirteen hundred thousand men voted that sentiment, socially and morally, the same position.

As if the descriptive manner in which he would dissolve the Union were not enough to incur the anger of senators still hoping to save the Union, Wigfall appealed to southern aristocrat blood when he implied that northerners regarded southern women—wives and sisters—upon a footing with the condition of the "miserable wretches in Utah." Stating, "that is the declaration of the Republican party," Wigfall probably did not win friends in the North.

One example of calculated antagonism occurred during a series of short exchanges between Douglas and Wigfall. Touched off by the Illinois senator's gallery rousing statement that "if the Senator [Wigfall] will just follow men, instead of going off to Texas; sit here and act in concert with us Union men, we will make him a very effective agent in accomplishing the object," Wigfall appealed for a specific proposal, "facts not words, I want bread, not stone." When Douglas retorted, "I do not ask the Senator what occurs in his consultations about Fort Sumter or Pensacola; and he does not ask me for the details of the consultations that we Union men are having with a view to spare the Union," Wigfall replied with one word, "Ah!" and a pause which caused Douglas to attempt to explain what he meant. As he chided Douglas for refusing to disclose "a patriotic effort" to make peace,
the Texan apparently noticed Douglas leaving the Chamber and called him back "because I may want to ask him something else." Evidently Douglas returned to the chamber fuming over Wigfall's lack of senatorial courtesy. After approximately five more minutes during which he continued to deride the Illinois senator, Wigfall asked Douglas where in the Constitution he found the right to protect cargo sailing under the flag of the United States and quipped: "I pause for a reply." Aware that the Texan was baiting him, Douglas indignantly replied: "I do not choose to be catechized, categorically, and have another gentlemen hold the floor over me in debate. When the Senator gets through, I shall reply to so much as I deem it necessary to reply to." Feigning innocence, Wigfall said: "It is usually considered, I believe, a courtesy to give way and let a Senator explain himself." Taking the bait, Douglas lectured: "It is, when he asks for it; but it was never deemed the courtesy of the Senate that you have the right to propound questions and demand categorical answers--by no means." Exuding sarcasm, Wigfall inserted: "Certainly not," causing Douglas to expand his discourse on parliamentary procedure until he repeated, "and when the Senator gets through, if I deem it necessary to reply to his argument, I shall do so." Triumphant, the Texan exclaimed: "Then I am satisfied entirely; perfectly satisfied. The Senator from Illinois cannot find any power in the Constitution to protect property." Revealing the effectiveness of the strategy, Wigfall finally produced an emotional outburst from the typically calm Douglas who had, apparently, borne Wigfall's taunts as long as possible. The occurrence illustrates some of the extraordinary tactics Wigfall employed to engender strife between himself and other
senators. Through his words, his delivery, his actions, and his attitudes, he made himself so offensive that he attracted attention of reporters, spectators, and other senators.

**Solidification.** In striking contrast to the repetition of "you" which Wigfall chose to objectify northerners, he employed "we" to unify southerners. In fact, "you" and "we" appropriately represent the poles toward which the Texan attempted to drive the two sections.

Among the claims to urge southerners to recognize the futility of compromise efforts and to unite in secession Wigfall included:

The Senator from Kentucky [Crittenden] has tried in vain to get compromise, Virginia may become the tail-end of a Black Republican Confederacy, the Union is dissolved, six states are meeting to form a new government, we have been tabooed, northerners say secession is a trivial matter, compromise efforts have led to stultification, no use sitting here, Republicans intend to save the Union with the bayonet, a Constitution and Union have been substituted, our lives and liberties are unsafe, and the States should withdraw as they came into the Union, one after another.

Five instances demonstrate how the strategy of solidification worked.

To shame Virginians, who had called the Peace Conference, and perhaps other border states reluctant to secede, Wigfall said:

Six States are out of the Union. It is known to myself, it is known to everybody, that next Monday they meet in solemn convention, as the old thirteen originally met, to form a new Federal Government. It is known that they will have a President, a Vice President, a Congress, an Army, a Navy, a Treasury, and treaties with foreign Governments. That is known; and yet Senators rise here and say they do not think the Union is in any danger. Do you want Virginia to remain in the Union? God knows I do not want her to go out of it; it does not concern me in the least. If you want to carry Virginia and make her the tail-end of a Black Republican confederation, and the descendants of "light-horse Harry," and Lightfoot Lee, of George Mason and the Pendletons and Randolphs and Washingtons of that day, wish that position, and they certainly entitled to it; it does not disturb us.

Emphasizing that the Confederacy to be formed by the six states would have a President, Vice President, a Congress, an Army, and treaties with
foreign Governments, the Texan suggested Virginia would be missing freedom and liberties in the new government if she chose to become—instead of the southern and national leader which had been her history—the "tail-end of a Black Republican Confederacy." Furthermore, Wigfall implied that the very memory of the Lees, Masons, Pendletons, Randolphps and Washingtons would be desecrated by such an unholy alliance. Therefore, Virginia and all border states should join the South in secession.

Eager to have the border states out of the Union, Wigfall stressed the basic demands of southerners which Douglas and others would need to accomplish to keep them. By inference, if the Union-savers failed, then the border states belonged to the South. "I say then, that at the South we demand that slaves shall be considered as property," he asserted:

and we ask no more protection for them than we do for any other species of property. We simply insist that we shall not be tabooed, that our species of property shall not be the only one which this Government, that we have established, does not protect. That is the position that we take. If the Senator from Illinois wants to save the Union by keeping the border States in it, and inducing cotton States to come back, let him introduce a resolution to amend the Constitution in that particular, and let him and his Republican friends vote for it, and give us any sort of assurance that it will be ratified by the people, and I have no idea that any other States will leave the Union, and I think there is a strong probability that those that are out will come back; but nothing short of this is a remedy.

With conditions which he knew Douglas either could not or would not meet the Texan could inform his constituents that he had cried but the northerners would not agree to save the Union. Therefore, the border states should withdraw.

Injecting a fear appeal, Wigfall contended that southerners had stopped worrying about the question of abolishing slavery. Rather, he indicated, "a question of more importance has been presented to us, and that is, not whether our slaves will be freemen, but whether freemen
shall be made slaves. Not whether you will liberate our slaves, but
whether you will enslave their masters." Wigfall called for southerners
to join their brethren in secession and thus avoid becoming "enslaved"
to northern supremacy.

To illustrate the futility of Union-saving efforts and to explain
how secession could be accomplished, Wigfall stated that he was so much
in favor of the Union that he would disrupt it. "From my youth up-
wards," he contended:

I have been in favor of this Union. I am in favor of it now; and
because I am in favor of it, I am, to use a paradox, in favor of
disrupting it. It is to preserve it that I would destroy it. The
Constitution has been trampled under foot, the principles of the
Constitution have been misunderstood, and a Constitution and Union
have been substituted which were never ordained and established. A
compact has been entered into by individuals which the States never
agreed to; and as a party which disregards the Constitution, which
has a higher law than the oaths which they swear upon this floor,
has possession of this Government; as our rights, our lives, and
our liberties are unsafe; and because I believe this Union to be
the best form of Government that the ingenuity of man ever estab-
lished, I am in favor of the States withdrawing as they came into
the Union, one after the other, each for itself and by itself, and
taking the same Constitution and establishing it between partners,
who will observe their faith and their oaths.20

Calm, deliberate, the Texan presented secession as a natural, orderly
process, without emotion by honorable southerners who would use the same
Constitution to establish a new government in which partners "observe
their faith and their oaths." By implication, border states that re-
mained in the Union were among faithless northerners who did not keep
their oaths. A subtle strategy, Wigfall first indicated that since
northerners had already changed the government, southerners had been
disfranchised, justifying secession. They should pull out, "each

for itself and by itself" and start over to insure that the South's "rights and liberties" would be safe. Following his usual practice of uttering some statement to attract the newspaper reporters, the Texan probably created the phrase, "because I am in favor of it [Union] I am in favor of disrupting it." The remark did gain attention and served as the basis for a subsequent attack by an opponent.

As a final plea for solidification, Wigfall praised the efforts of the venerable John Crittenden of Kentucky [a border state which Wigfall hoped would secede] to bring compromise. Although he did not favor Crittenden's resolutions and stated his belief that they offered no real solution, the Texan still viewed a link with Crittenden as a means for solidifying Kentucky and other border states for secession. Accenting the futility of Union-saving attempts, Wigfall declared, "the distinguished Senator from Kentucky has, morning after morning, raised his voice here and pleaded in vain to have his resolutions considered; yet they have not been considered." "In vain" was the message Wigfall intended to drive home to border states. Because compromise efforts were "in vain" the Texan stressed the need for southerners to secede.

Repeating "we," the uselessness of compromise proposals, the works of northerners and the hypocritical Democratic administration to change the nature of the government, Wigfall appealed to southerners to unite for liberty and safety.

**Image Building.** Seemingly obsessed with the notion that he needed to constantly remind his listeners and his southern followers that he was a totally dedicated public servant, Wigfall time and again made statements designed to enhance his own image. However, with continued
references to himself and his superior insights, the Texan also may have been deliberately alienating opposing senators. Hale's remark that Wigfall was "impatient that my poor voice may be hushed, and that he may be permitted to illuminate this Chamber," provides evidence that some senators resented his persistence and bragging. Nevertheless, Wigfall continued to extol his own virtues. In this segment alone he used "I" at least one hundred times. As Lowenthal and Guterman suggest agitators will do, Wigfall portrayed an image of "the good fellow who has nothing to hide, whose effusiveness and garrulousness know no limit, he does not seem to be inhibited by considerations of good taste from openly displaying his private life and opinions about himself." 21

In this segment Wigfall's image building statements may be divided into two classifications: (1) what he did, and (2) what he suffered from his enemies. Included in the first category were the following:

I have always understood, I say just what I choose to say, I have spoken plainly, I mean just what I say, I vote for no unmeaning paper, I am not silly, I do not intend to make a ninny of myself, I understand the Declaration of Independence, I do not choose to be led by the nose, I do not demand more than I am entitled to, I know about Massachusetts, I shall not resign my place while my State remains in the Union, and I say precisely what I mean and I always mean precisely what I say.

The Texan seemed to enjoy the claim that "I am a plain, blunt spoken man." He restated the contention four times in this segment. In addition to the courage to express his convictions, the Texan vaunted:

I know that the vice of our Government is, that men too closely represent the passions, the opinions, and the prejudices of their constituents, and that it is only here and there you find a man

who can raise himself above the low demagogism of the country, stand for himself, think for himself, speak for himself, and go back to his constituents, and trusting to their wisdom, to their intelligence, and to their virtue, explain to them that he had voted against their instructions for their own good.

Implying that he was the kind of ideal statesman which he pictured, the Texan complimented his constituents as wise, intelligent, and virtuous. He did not directly state that he had voted against Texans instructions but suggested that he had the courage to do it if necessary. His followers in Texas took note and praised him accordingly.

Talking of his political views, Wigfall assumed an air of superiority: "When I talk about being for the Union, I do not use senseless and meaningless terms. I mean just what I say." Following such statements the Texan usually developed the compact theory of states and the right of states to maintain sovereignty. In dealing with opponents, he projected a superior attitude. For instance, of Douglas' "great principle," he declared:

    Now let us see whether the Senator's specific, whether his sars-saparilla, will cure what is the difficulty. I have always understood that it was a well settled principle, long before the days of the Declaration of Independence, that Governments were instituted for the benefit of the governed; and that the purpose of organizing Governments was the protection of life, liberty, and property. That I have understood to be the case.22

Wigfall's sarcastic "I have understood" is the dominant theme through which the agitator claimed superiority.

Lowenthal and Guterman suggest a theme of the "bullet-proof martyr" which may apply to Wigfall: "Forces stronger and more imperious than his own will push him to leadership. Both because of his innate dynamism and because he has been singled out by the enemy, the mantle of

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22_Congressional Globe_, pp. 665-666.
leadership, like it or not, falls on his shoulders." Of his own determination to remain in the Senate, the Texan stated:

I have spoken thus plainly and explicitly because my colleague and myself are the last representatives of those States upon this floor. How long it will be before the office that we hold shall be abolished, I know not. I shall not resign my place while my State remains in the Union. While there is a Senatorship to be filled, I shall fill it. When she has repealed the law, when she has abolished the office, when it ceases to exist, I shall take my departure, and then you can call it a resignation if you wish.

A martyr who would stay by his post to the end, Wigfall wanted Texans, southerners in general, to take pride in a leader so bold.

To reassure his followers in border states that he was not responsible for dissolution, Wigfall asked:

Have I not, from the time that I came to this Congress until the present moment, said upon every occasion, that if propositions that were practical were introduced to be carried out in good faith, I would vote for them, and urge their adoption, and urge the people whom I represent that they should be satisfied with them?

He presented himself as the ideal statesman he pictured earlier. Only lack of opportunity had kept him from voting for propositions and then going back to Texas to convince his constituents that they should be satisfied with them. Thus Wigfall concluded the catalog of what he had done for southerners during his thirteen months as a Senator. He apparently wanted his supporters to rest assured that their champion would maintain his stand for freedom and liberty.

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Employing a tactic close to what Paul Brandes terms "pity-poor-me" theme or what Lowenthal and Guterman label "persecuted innocence." Wigfall built his image among southerners for whom he claimed to suffer. He complained that he was "taunted, falsely charged with opposing amendments, held up as a disunionist and odious to the country, and charged with conspiracy with Black Republicans to dissolve the Union." To the charge that he had voted with Republicans to defeat reconsideration of the Clark resolutions Wigfall explained:

I did not intend to make myself a party to the fraud; and therefore, when the question came up between the Crittenden and Clark resolutions, I, for one, forbode to vote. I knew that the Senators on that side of the Chamber had the majority. We had appealed to them; we had begged them, in God's mercy, and for the good of their own people, and for the peace of the country, to interpose, and to settle this question on some safe basis.

Instead of pleading guilty to the indictment that he conspired with Republicans to dissolve the Union, the Texan "turned the tables" to make himself appear superior in his understanding of the "real" situation. Through the term "fraud," Wigfall maligned Douglas who had accused him of collusion. Contending that he had begged Republicans to offer a solution for which he could in good conscience vote, the Texan shifted the blame away from himself to northerners.

To the accusation that he was "confederating with free-soilers in an endeavor to dissolve the Union," Wigfall answered that he would be willing to dissolve any government "in which I was not the equal of any other white man in the country." Again, he suggested that he was mis-


26 Lowenthal and Guterman, Prophets of Deceit, p. 126.
represented and abused by his enemies. The tactic worked well for Wigfall in Texas where partisan editors sometimes devoted large blocks of space explaining the "true" meanings of the Texan's words, especially when they had been reported in "abolition." or northern press.

Once more justifying his vote on the Clark resolutions which he claimed Douglas and other Union-savers merely wanted to use to raise false hopes about preserving the Union, the Texan exclaimed:

Because I do not choose to make a ninny of myself, because I do not choose to stultify myself, and vote for resolutions that mean nothing, in order that Senators may telegraph over the country that all is peace and quiet—because I do not choose to do that, or to be led by the nose as tenderly as asses are, I am charged with a conspiracy with the Black Republicans to dissolve the Union, to prevent any compromise.\(^{27}\)

Through all his claims of persecution for the cause and boasts of courageous action on behalf of the South, Wigfall contributed to his image in two ways: among northerners he increased his reputation as an uncouth, repugnant example of barbarous, slaveholding southerners; while among southerners he was applauded as the persistent, daring spokesman for a people who for too long had been patient with impertinent northerners.

**Effects.** The five strategies tend to culminate in Wigfall's overall, long-range goal of polarizing the two sections. When he degraded northern leaders, debunked sections or political parties, deliberately antagonized individuals and groups with whom he differed, extolled southerners virtues as opposed to northern deficiencies, and detailed his own accomplishments despite unfair attacks from his enemies, the Texan polarized the sections.

\(^{27}\)*Congressional Globe*, pp. 665-667.*
In addition to the strife which Wigfall created between Douglas and himself, the Texan also sparked a reaction from Edward Baker, the freshman Republican from Oregon for whom Wigfall's speech had been the first he had heard in the Senate. Reflecting the contempt which Wigfall's "solutions" drew from numerous senators, Baker stated the following:

He turned to us the other day and condescended to give us a list of the conditions upon which they would be graciously pleased to receive our capitulation. I do not remember it all. It was so speculative, fanciful, . . . he said to us: "You representative men: you Sewards and Sumners and Hales and Wilsons, go home and instruct your people to repeal your personal liberty bills; abolish your Abolition societies; stop your presses, and do various things kindred to these, and when you have done that, come back to us and tell us that you have done it, and we will think about it." Well now, sir, I think the whole mode of expression was extravagant. It was hardly what I had expected--it was the first speech I heard here--to hear in the Senate of the United States.28

Wigfall did many things which Baker and others would not have expected to observe in the Senate.

Perhaps because they were under threat of a motion to clear the galleries, spectators remained remarkably quiet during this segment. However, Wigfall's whole demeanor was distasteful to some listeners.

Mrs. Maria Lydig Daly, wife of a prominent New York Judge, wrote in her diary of the day:

I heard Wigfall, the Senator from Texas, pour forth an invective [no one could call it a speech]; it was half-crazy, a violent denunciation of what nobody had ever been guilty [of], full of foul language. Among other things he said was that he hoped to see this Union split into as many pieces as cannon could split glass. His manners whilst seated in his chair were such as would exile him from any drawing room and any other place except a barroom. He chewed and spat and sat with his heels on his desk and was so disgusting altogether that I should have hurled some-

28 Ibid., p. 241.
thing at him myself. I hope that someday he may meet with his deserts.29

Thus, Wigfall polarized the sections. Intent on using any means at his disposal to interfere with the legislative process, to thwart compromise effects, and to force confrontation, the Texan must have affected many people the same way he did the woman from New York.

SEGMENT TWO: FEBRUARY 7, 1861

Situation. From January 31, when the first segment occurred, until February 7, the date of the second, several events transpired to alter Washington's atmosphere and that of the country at large: Texas secession convention voted to withdraw on February 1; the Washington Peace Conference assembled on February 4, the same day representatives from the six seceded states met in Montgomery to form the new government; Louisiana senators John Slidell and Judah P. Benjamin resigned from the Senate, February 5; and on February 6 Governor Francis Pickens received President Buchanan's reply to South Carolina's demand for the surrender of Fort Sumter. During January and February Wigfall flooded the telegraph wires to Governor Pickens with reports of developments and rumors in Washington. Roy Nichols described the climate as follows: "Washington seethed with rumor and dread. There was talk of conspiracy, of secret drillings of organizations sworn to overthrow the government, to make impossible Lincoln's inaugural." Andrew Johnson of Tennessee and Wigfall both knew Tennessee had a referendum scheduled February 9


30Nichols, Disruption of American Democracy, p. 469.
Beginning February 5th and continuing February 6th, Andrew Johnson opposed secession in which he also rebuffed departed Senator Benjamin of Louisiana. The New York Tribune dubbed Johnson's effort "the strongest anti-secession speech in the Senate that has been delivered in that body. He exposed the bald inconsistencies of the secessionists."\(^{31}\)

Despite repeated efforts to answer Johnson, Wigfall did not obtain recognition until February 7.

**Strategies.** In the three-hour segment Wigfall agitated sectional strife to encourage border states' secession. With Johnson the object of his attack, the Texan employed four primary strategies:

1. Vilification of Johnson as a representative of southern traitors who kept the border states from seceding.
2. Legitimizing secession as a right of states acknowledged and supported by great men and documents of history.
3. Solidifying southerners through appeals to pride, fear, and claims of superiority compared to men like Johnson.
4. Building his own image as a self-less, consistent, forthright statesman who dared take a stand for what he believed.

As an overall strategy Wigfall attempted to further polarize northerners against southerners.

**Vilification of Johnson.** The more than eighty instances in which Wigfall attacked the Tennessee senator might be classified under four headings: Johnson's ignorance; Johnson, the politically ambitious; Johnson, the traitor to his section; and Johnson, the coward.

**Ignorance.** Of the four tactics, Wigfall apparently preferred to demonstrate Johnson's ignorance. A lowly trailer by trade, Johnson represented the westerner or pioneer spirit that believed a poor man

\(^{31}\)New York Tribune, February 6, 1861.
could grow up to be president. An aristocratic southerner in his thinking, Wigfall resented the fact that Johnson was not a lawyer and referred to the fact more than once to weaken the Tennessean's influence among southerners who tended to equate lawyers and statesmen. As a strategy, vilification ignores ideals such as the poor man making good and concentrates on creating such a fearful image of the person that potential followers reject him. In a sense vilifying is creating negative ethos. The more real or imagined distasteful details the agitator can reveal about the person vilified, the less likely he will be to retain his following. In other words, the agitator hopes for such as accumulation of negative impressions about the person that his followers reject him and his message. For example, Wigfall contended that Johnson:

Knows no facts; does not understand meanings of words; does not know the difference between nullification and secession; does not read the Constitution; has not the slightest concept of the form of government under which we are living; holds extraordinary doctrines which are thrown together incoherently, disjointly uttered, difficult to follow; misunderstands what he reads; has no common sense; thinks the people of Louisiana were bought as chattels; and admits he is not a lawyer.

Through multiplying the negative characteristics, Wigfall apparently sought to have southerners reject Johnson.

A few examples will serve to illustrate how the tactic of exposing Johnson's ignorance accomplished Wigfall's goal of vilification.

Of secession, Wigfall protested:

The Senator from Tennessee pretends that this is a movement on the part of politicians. Politicians! I would be glad if he would inform me of what he is, if not a politician--a statesman, he would hardly say. Politicians have done this thing! States have seceded from the Union, and it is the act of politicians! and he hazarded the assertion that if the ordinance of secession, in South
Carolina even, had been submitted to the popular vote, it would not have passed. Why, sir, it is extraordinary that men are so reckless of their reputation as to hazard the expressions of this sort, which they know will become public. Did not the Legislature of South Carolina appoint a day on which the people were to vote? Were not candidates brought out in every district and every parish? Were not the opinions of every candidate for that convention known? Did not the people vote for those who were in favor of immediate secession and against those who were opposed to it? Did they not elect their representatives in order that an ordinance of secession might be passed? Is this fact not known to the Senator from Tennessee?

Throughout the passage Wigfall emphasized his own knowledge of the South Carolina situation and at the same time exposed Johnson's lack of information. Several key phrases highlight Johnson's ignorance: he did not know the proper definition of the term politician, he hazarded assertions, and he was reckless of his reputation. However, in the closing sentence Wigfall channelized the strategy with the biting question: "Is this fact not known to the Senator from Tennessee?"

Later Wigfall discussed Johnson's "doctrines" or arguments. The reference to "Beau Brummel" takes on added poignancy when one realizes that Johnson was a tailor. "His doctrines are so extraordinary," the Texan began,

they are so disjointedly uttered, and so incoherently thrown together, that it is difficult to follow him. He complains that his great argument was not answered. Beau Brummel, I believe, on one occasion, was asked by a tailor how he liked a coat. He took it by the lappel [sic], and looking at it, asked the tailor if he called that thing a coat. His great argument! When and where did he make any great argument, or argument of any sort whatever? I have not heard it.

Because of his abilities to demonstrate the enemy's weaknesses, Wigfall improved his own image as the superior of the two. Note the words which tear down Johnson's ethos: "disjointedly uttered," "incoherently thrown together," and "argument of any sort whatever."
An additional instance shows how the agitator stalked Johnson like some helpless quarry. "There is a point which the Senator will not find very easy to get over," Wigfall boasted:

because it is recorded. He asserted and read from the record to prove that the people of Alabama, when they became a people, ceased to be a people; that when the inhabitants of the Territory of Alabama, by consent of the Federal Government, became a State, in the very act of becoming one of the sovereign States of this Union, they ceased to have the right of living under such a Government as they saw fit. He garbled the documents; he told the truth; but if he had been a lawyer, as he told us he was not, he would have known that when one is on the witness stand he is required not only to tell the truth and nothing but the truth, but he is also required to tell the whole truth, and that the Senator did not tell.

Even as Wigfall exhibited Johnson's ignorance, he wove in bits of the compact theory of states upon which he based secession. Suggesting Johnson's stupidity kept him from understanding the relationship between the Union and the people of Alabama, Wigfall tried to reduce the Tennessee senator's credibility. In context, Johnson did not need to be a lawyer to know the facts about which he was indicted, but Wigfall utilized the lack of legal training as a means for emotionalizing his ignorance.

The final illustration of ignorance as a tactic for vilifying appeared about half way through the segment. After explaining the differences between nullification and secession in an obvious oversimplification, the Texan rebuked the trailor on the basis of his evidence:

The Senator from Tennessee read with much approbation yesterday from an editorial of the Richmond Enquirer, as containing the true doctrine. It is the first time in my life that I have ever known any one on the floor of the Senate or elsewhere to take the editorial of a newspaper published nearly half a century ago, and bring it as a test of political orthodoxy or as a proper exposition of the doctrines of the party which he belongs or professes to belong, or as any authority in settling disputed constitutional points; and yet the Senator rose here with an air of triumph, and, somebody or other having furnished him with an old copy of the
Richmond Enquirer, he read it as orthodox. Would to God that he had the former numbers of that paper and would peruse them. Not only did Wigfall remind his listeners that Johnson thought nullification and secession were "synonymous terms," but the Texan also implied that had someone not given Johnson the paper he would not have had any evidence at all. Intimating in a superior attitude that he possessed the right authority for constitutional questions, Wigfall likewise suggested that he was quite familiar with the Richmond paper.

Politically Ambitious. A second tactic which Wigfall used to reduce Johnson's ethical appeal was the charge that his political ambitions had corrupted him. Suggesting that Johnson would not have complained about misrepresentation of his December 19 speech six weeks later if Tennessee's political winds had not sobered him up, the Texan indicated that Johnson conspired with Republicans, told lies, yielded principles, held doctrines of the Black Republican party, made himself agreeable to Free-Soilers and ingratiated himself to the worst sort of northern populace, all because he wanted to be President and his political life as a southerner was finished. "The Senator from Tennessee," Wigfall continued, "by way of making himself agreeable to his Free-Soil allies, and by way of keeping Tennessee from going with her sisters of the South, asserts that if the Union is going to be dissolved, he hopes the line will not be between the non-slaveholding and the slaveholding States. He would have Tennessee tacked on to the tail of a Black Republican Confederation." By implication, Wigfall revealed that Johnson was desperate enough for political office to allow himself to become a vassal of Black Republicans. Therefore, Tennessee residents had better look to such a one as Wigfall to lead them away from the prospect of
being "tacked on to the tail of a confederation" when she could choose to join her sisters of the South.

Declaring that during the 1860 campaign he [Wigfall] had always stressed the South's intention to withdraw if Lincoln was elected, the Texan contrasted his own open actions to Johnson's: "I know not how the Tennessee Senator discussed these matters, nor what he said. I know that in his own State, judging from the newspapers, he was regarded as a very lukewarm supporter of his own ticket." Contending that "his heart and sympathies were not with that party which seceded at Charleston, and which nominated a ticket at Baltimore," Wigfall cuttingly added, "it was too sound for him." Possibly to stir old political wars in Tennessee or perhaps kindle new ones through a revelation to Johnson's constituents, the Texan mocked:

Success, not principle, was the question with him. He would have supported anybody. If he did fight the good fight, and keep the faith; if he did enter that canvass earnestly and warmly, then his own party friends in Tennessee have much misrepresented him; the party press there have misrepresented him; his speech at Memphis has been misrepresented, and his whole course in that canvass.

Two aspects of Wigfall's word choice show how the strategy of vilification works: first, after the declaration that "success, not principle was the question with him." a cacophony of meaning results from the reference to Scripture, "fight the good fight." The readers in Tennessee were supposed to see Johnson as a political chameleon who would sacrifice his constituents for political gain. Second, because Johnson's "rambling harangue" grew out of his complaint that he has been "misrepresented," Wigfall played on the words to emphasize the charge that the Tennessean was attempting to mend his party fences
back home. To underscore his claim that Johnson was unreliable politically, the Texan sarcastically appended: "These are facts which are known to myself, as well as to everybody else who reads the newspapers."

In what persuasion texts term "turning the tables," Wigfall reversed Johnson's charge that secessionists were after political gain. Disclaiming all ambitions for higher office, Wigfall questioned:

Does the Senator from Tennessee suppose that everybody is blind but himself? Does he suppose that there is a man living south of Mason and Dixon's line who does not see what he is after? For years past he has been doing everything he could in order to ingratiate himself with and make himself acceptable to the very worst class of the northern populace. The homestead bill and other things of that sort, have been the measures he has been devoting himself to, and he has acquired some degree of popularity with that class.

For southerners supporting Johnson, Wigfall wanted to create suspicion—had they been blind to Johnson's activities? The agitator often chooses ambiguous words and phrases which hint at his meaning rather than openly accuse the enemy of a particular offense. If the listeners take the hint, the effect can be more destructive than direct attack. In this instance Wigfall selected: "what he is after," and "ingratiate himself with the worst class of northern populace," to suggest that there existed great differences between northerners and southerners. Few southerners had actually seen a northerner and if, according to Wigfall who had seen them, they are a "populace" rather than a people, those of the South might prefer to avoid contact. The only specific, the homestead bill, Wigfall dealt with the previous spring but "other things of that sort" left the listeners with plenty of room for imagination as to what Johnson might have been doing in consort with northerners. Consequently, Wigfall called for the trailer's rejection. As agitational
tactics the obscurity of the charges defies efforts to prove or disprove; therefore, the path of least resistance for auditors is to assume there is enough truth involved to condemn the accused. The final remark calls for polarization: since northerners were such loathsome creatures and since Johnson had "acquired some degree of popularity with that class," the safest course for Tennesseans—all southerners—would be to remove themselves from Johnson and northerners.

"What motive has the Senator for his course?" the Texan wondered. Answering his own question Wigfall observed that if the Union were not dissolved, "I do not suppose it would require a prophet to foretell" that he would not get southern votes again. "But," the agitator continued as if revealing the details of a master conspiracy,

if Tennessee can be kept in the Union, and made the tail end of a Black Republican confederation, and Virginia and Maryland and North Carolina can be sloughed off with these other States, then if the Senator's amendments to the Constitution shall be adopted so that every alternate four years the candidate must be taken from the South, while he will be elected by the North, I think it not improbable the Senator might be President of the United States that were left. That is the way it looks; but if Tennessee goes out of this Union, "Othello's occupation is gone!" When the people of Tennessee pass that ordinance, if they shall confederate with these other States, that Senator will have sworn to support any constitution the last time during his natural life. He knows it. He feels it. His very life, therefore, depends upon keeping Tennessee in the Union.

What an odious picture for Tennesseans. Wigfall's innuendo smirked of disfranchisement if Johnson could be elected by the North. Tennessee, "the tail end of a Black Republican confederation," along with other border states "sloughed off" from the South would lose the power, prestige, and superiority which southern states had always enjoyed. Clearly

47Congressional Globe, pp. 782-789.
an either-or situation, Wigfall chose his words carefully. Aware that Tennesseans would vote on the secession question in just two days, he predicted the outcome, "when the people of Tennessee pass the ordinance." Instead of seeing themselves as an appendage to a "Black Republican" condeferacy, Wigfall emphasized sovereignty when he stated, "if they shall confederate with these other states." Consistent with Lowenthal and Guterman's conclusion that "the agitator proposes to view the world as split between two irreconcilable camps," for Tennesseans Wigfall stressed the importance of secession. Through "when" and "if" Wigfall appealed to southerners' pride in freedom of choice, alternatives which they would lose by staying in the Union. In other words, as Lowenthal and Guterman indicate of other agitators, Wigfall attempted to make southerners "feel that they are something special. They must be convinced that they belong to an elite even if the elite presumes to include a vast majority of the people." Rather than following Johnson's political corpse, Tennesseans had an opportunity to throw off the shackles of Unionism, declare their sovereignty in secession, and join other southerners in a confederacy where honor, truth, right, and freedom retained meaning.

Traitorous. Besides being ignorant and politically motivated, the Texan declared Johnson a traitor to his section. In nearly thirty instances Wigfall employed the tactic to suggest that Johnson:

Held up Andrew Jackson as an example of Black Republican nationalism, denied states rights of self-government, tyrannically talked of enforcing the laws, egged on Republicans to believe that Tennessee would submit to the iron rule of despotism, urged and advised that the Cotton States shall be crushed, published slander

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48 Lowenthal and Guterman, Prophets of Deceit, p. 107.
and sent it all over the country, tried to prejudice slaveholders against non-slaveholders and non-slaveholders against slaveholders, denounced Jefferson Davis as a disunionist, told lies, sneered at southerners, wanted equality for negroes, made speeches offensive to southerners, and was more unsound and treasonable than Helper.

To polarize the sections, Wigfall apparently wanted southerners to realize that when northerners, and in this case a "renegade southerner," talked of enforcing the laws," they really meant "coercion," and "war." For example, Wigfall said: "We are told by the Senator from Tennessee that he is only in favor of enforcing the laws, but is not for coercing the State. I say that that proposition is not only absurd, but it is cruel." Referring to South Carolina, the Texan explained, "coercion is war, nothing else." In emotional terms he described what "coercion" might mean to southerners:

You might plow her land with artillery, and trample it with cavalry; you might put the torch to the house of every private individual, you might sack their cities; you might destroy their property; you might blot the inhabitants from their soil of the State, but you would have to call it war, for it would be war. You could not tyrannically and hypocritically talk of enforcing the laws.

In an effort to solidify southerners, Wigfall painted a grim picture of "Yankees" coming into a "submissive" South coercing, trampling, plowing, burning, sacking, killing, destroying to keep them in the Union. Surely honorable men of intelligence would see through Johnson's lies. Addressing Johnson but implying southerners, Wigall demanded: "You must take one horn or the other of the dilemma. Talk of coercing a State, but not of enforcing the laws." The repeated "You" in the passage above suggests polarization for southerners who would know that "You" meant northerners.

Further highlighting the "traitor," Wigfall said Johnson could "follow the bloody banner if he desires," but not to pretend he was a
man of peace. As Johnson had cited a fable of AESop the previous day, Wigfall reminded him of another:

There was a certain man who, after the fighting was over, was taken prisoner. He asked to be treated with mercy. He said he had done nothing. They asked him what he was doing there? He said he was blowing a horn; he was a trumpeter; and they took him out and executed him. He had created all the confusion; he had been egging others on; but he had taken no part in it himself. Thus the Senator from Tennessee is egging on the Black Republicans, declaring that the people of Tennessee will submit to the iron rule of despotism; urging and advising that the cotton States shall be crushed, that blood shall flow, that our fields shall be enriched with human flesh and whitened with human bones. That is what he advises; and yet he is a peace man!49

For Tennesseans the message was clear: Johnson had sold out to the enemy and should lose his place in the state. In a general application, Wigfall wanted all southerners to believe that reconciliation was beyond hope. After all, with traitors such as Johnson "egging on the Black Republicans," southern states dared not hesitate in resisting the northern menace.

Part of the slaveholders malaise in 1861 resulted from the 1858 publication and subsequent distribution of Hinton Helper's book, The Impending Crisis of the South. "Addressed to the submerged white classes in the South," Roy Nichols suggests, "Democratic editorial batteries blazed forth the charge that John Brown's Raid was the direct result of revolutionary doctrines such as were preached in Helper's Impending Crisis. The nation would not be safe if those who preached such incendiary dogmas were in power."50 Capitalizing on southern fears, Wigfall refuted Johnson's charge that in the Confederacy, non-slaveholders

49 Congressional Globe, p. 785.
50 Nichols, Disruption of American Democracy, p. 273.
would be deprived of political power. "They talk about the Helper book," the Texan exclaimed:

they talk of sixty eight Black Republicans signing it. I have never read it; I have seen some extracts from it, and I apprehend they are the most offensive in it; but I will say this thing for Helper: that he never devised, he has never imagined, he has never written anything, that was more unsound and treasonable to the South, than the sentiments which the Senator of a slaveholding State has uttered upon this floor. [Applause in the galleries]51

In the claim that Johnson was worse than Helper, Wigfall attempted to settle forever any question about the Tennessean's continued influence in the South. The words "unsound," "treasonable," and "Helper" were high in emotional impact among southerners in those uncertain days.

Coward. The final tactic Wigfall chose to vilify Johnson was the charge that he was a coward. Through references like, "he refuses to allow himself to be interrupted, he lets others do his fighting, he excites prejudices, he waited until Benjamin and Davis and other senators left the Senate to attack them, and was busy 'electioneering' while brave southerners fought the Mexican War," Wigfall appealed to what Ralph Eubanks calls the second "in the mud-siller's hierarchy of values," honor.52 Enforced by the code duello, the South's regard for honor left no place for the coward. Wigfall inserted the indictment throughout the segment. However, a few instances show the vilification process. Early in the speech the Texan contrasted the careers of Joseph Lane of Oregon [whom Johnson had rebuked in a speech the previous day], "whose fealty has been written upon the battle field with his own

51 Congressional Globe, p. 788.

blood," to Johnson whom Wigfall imagined was "not on the battle-fields of Mexico," but "electioneering" in Tennessee.

In response to Johnson's attack on Jefferson Davis, Wigfall reminded listeners that the Mississippian was not there to resent it and perhaps issue a challenge to defend his honor. Comparing Davis to a lion, the Texan called Johnson a jackal: "Why, sir, of the four-footed beasts it is said that the jackal preys only upon the carcasses that his royal master has left. It belongs to our own species to feed upon the dead lion himself." In a similar manner of Johnson's rebuke of Judah Benjamin, Wigfall said: "The mousing owl will strike at the eagle in his towering flight without disturbing that proud bird; and I feel there is no occasion to defend the reputation of Mr. Benjamin."53 "Jackal," and "mousing owl" elicit negative connotations to reflect on Johnson as opposed to "lion" and "eagle" referring to "true" southerners. In keeping with what Mary McEdwards concluded of agitative rhetoric, Wigfall chose words "heavy with unpleasant connotation."54

Toward the end of the speech Wigfall reviewed Johnson's cowardly acts, "he waits until those senators have gone, and then gets up and assails their private character; and gets up furthermore, charges upon the southern-rights party the most unworthy motives in the course they have pursued."55 A despicable individual, the Texan would have Tennesseans and all southerners to turn him out of the state.

53 Congressional Globe, p. 789.
55 Congressional Globe, p. 788.
Thus, Wigfall called upon southerners to recognize Johnson the coward, Johnson the traitor, Johnson, the politically ambitious, and Johnson the ignorant. Through persistent repetition and restatement of these tactics, the Texan vilified Johnson as unworthy of any position in the South. In fact, as Lowenthal and Guterman suggest the agitator may, Wigfall evoked hostility in a manner he "conceived of as an act of self-defense. In this way the followers are reminded that although they are an elite today, they are in constant danger, and can retain their privileged status only by faithfully following the leader in hunt of the enemy." 56

Strategy of Legitimation. Although historians frequently refer to Wigfall's drunkenness and, indeed he was often "under the influence," he was, nevertheless, apparently a man of high intelligence and a quick mind. Given overnight to prepare his answer to Johnson, Wigfall came to the Senate February 7 sober and well prepared to debate. He brought an impressive number of documents [at least twenty from which he read and several others such as literature that he quoted from memory]. Because others recognized that the Texan was not particularly industrious in study unless he was engaged in controversy, Wigfall probably collected the mass of materials to contrast his sources with the one newspaper article Johnson had cited more than to argue a case. In other words, he brought the supporting documents as much for display as for proof. Be that as it may, for southerners among whom he sought to legitimize secession, the data likely enhanced his persuasiveness. Two tactics emerge from the segment: definitions of terms and argument from author-

56 Lowenthal and Guterman, Prophets of Deceit, p. 61.
ity. Justifying his approach, Wigfall commented: "Mr President, it is well to go back. It is sometimes well to open the volume of history, and see what it is that our ancestors have done."

**Definitions.** Primarily to exaggerate Johnson's ignorance, Wigfall defined eleven terms including land, territory, compact, resume, and politician. Wigfall apparently uttered the meanings of these terms in a sarcastic manner emphasizing Johnson's lack of understanding. On the other hand, Wigfall also legitimized secession through definitions of such words as nullification, secession, Union, and republicanism. In order to help establish his claims, he went into great detail to explain these terms. For instance, Wigfall explained:

The word "nullification" seems to have excited his [Johnson's] ire. He does not draw the distinction between nullification and secession. Those who read the Constitution, and understand it, know that there is a difference between the two remedies: nullification applying to the act of the agent, the Federal Government; and secession to the parties, the States, by separating from them when either they or their agent have violated the compact.

Besides reflecting Johnson's ignorance, Wigfall may have attempted to enlighten some southerners who read the speech.

As he did in practically every appearance on the floor, Wigfall defined the Union as a compact between thirteen separate and sovereign states "each feeling that it was not strong enough to protect itself against foreign aggression, entered with each other, and organized a Government to which they delegated certain powers. Wigfall extended the definition to help legitimize secession.

**Argument from Authority.** To strengthen his concept of the compact theory of the Union, Wigfall added: "This is not my opinion; it is the opinion of the father of the Democratic party. Thomas Jefferson said that the Union could be destroyed in two ways: first, by consolidation;
next, by disruption; and that of the two, he preferred disruption."
Akin to prestige appeals or mythication, Wigfall aligned his own ideas
with the revered Jefferson: "That was the doctrine of the man from
whose brain, Minerva-like, sprang the Democratic constitutional party.
As Minerva sprang, armed and equipped from the brain of Jove, so did
this great party spring from the brain of Jefferson, to rescue the
Constitution and to save the Union." In a sense Wigfall revealed his
own mission to "rescue the Constitution" whether he preserved the Union
or not. On the contrary the Texan called on the name of Jefferson to
support secession.

Because Johnson had "held up Andrew Jackson as an exemplar of the
Black Republican Party," and because "nationalism has been charged upon
Jackson," Wigfall determined to "remove that stain from his character."
To "remove the stain" Wigfall traced in detail the life and career of
Jackson whom the Texan contended acknowledged the right of states to
secede. Wigfall reminded his listeners that as a young man in South
Carolina Jackson "shed his blood in the defense of the right of states and
the right of the people to self-government." Note the similarity
between Wigfall's announced goals and the goals which he ascribed to
Jackson and other famous Americans. Moreover, as one of twelve who
voted against an address approving of Washington's administration,
Jackson favored Jefferson's Kentucky and Virginia Resolutions; in 1801
Jackson rejected Dr. William Dickson as a candidate for Congress when
after thorough interrogation the Tennessean decided Dickson was not a
true republican; in 1831 during the Indian Affairs controversy Jackson
reaffirmed the belief; and in his farewell address Jackson stated again
that the republican doctrine was secession and nullification. Because
Jackson was revered in Tennessee, Wigfall—who differed significantly with "old Hickory," the symbol of the common man—still saw a chance of influencing that border state toward secession in linking his cause to the Tennessean.

To compound the impression that many, if not most, famous Americans recognized the right of states to withdraw Wigfall named Revolutionary figures Nathaniel Macon of North Carolina and William B. Giles of Virginia; Robert Y. Hayne in the 1830 debate with Webster and subsequent endorsement of Hayne by Felix Grundy; James Madison in the Federalist papers; and Thomas H. Benton who stated that nullification and secession were Jackson's views. Among the documents Wigfall cited were the Virginia Constitution and the Democratic platforms of 1852, 1856, and 1860. Marshalling all of these names and documents Wigfall attempted to legitimize secession.

Solidification. Aware that Texas had recently voted in favor of secession and that Tennesseans were scheduled to vote in two days, Wigfall sought to solidify southerners in support of the action. Basically, in this segment, the strategy evolved antithetically to his attack on Johnson. For every negative characteristic with which Wigfall vilified Johnson, the Texan ascribed a positive opposite to himself or southerners as a group. Wigfall probably hoped the result would be that Deep South residents and border states southerners would hoist the flag of secession. The attributes which the Texan attached to southerners stood out in bold relief to the despicable descriptions of northerners and traitorous southerners.
Illustrative of the technique Wigfall asserted that southerners, State opinions clearly, strike for right, have history on their side, courageously take stands, prove conclusively from the record, determine neither to cheat or to be cheated, assert constitutional rights, believe that truth will prevail, will not tolerate demagogism, have limitless wealth, are decent, are perfectly competent to meet all issues, will not let our honor be reproached, feel sympathy with border states, hold sound doctrine, and redeem our pledge to dissolve the Union if Lincoln was elected."

Answering Johnson's charges that animosity existed between slaveholders and non-slaveholders, Wigfall attempted to solidify the groups with the following statement:

So far as my experience goes, I can say that throughout the broad limits of the southern country the soundest men I know are non-slaveholders. They feel and they know the facts as they are presented to them, and the issues as they now stand; and demagogism will not be able, except at the risk of its neck, to raise any such issue in any slaveholding State.

After complimenting non-slaveholders as "the soundest men" Wigfall, perhaps advisedly, praised slaveholders as "men of enlarged ideas, education, and of property; for no man who holds slaves owns slaves alone; he must own land, horses, and possessions, chattels of different kinds."

Stating that if the four and one-half million slaves were suddenly freed that the slaveholders would have the means to remove themselves leaving the non-slaveholders to deal with the Negro problem, Wigfall contended that as a consequence non-slaveholders were eager to cooperate with slaveholders to maintain slavery. Besides, the Texan added: "They [non-slaveholders] feel and know that they are citizens of their own State. They know they have the inalienable right of self-government and they intend to assert it." Inserting a fear appeal, Wigfall coined a phrase, "and when the question is presented to those men, of whether they will fight for the negroes now, or fight negroes hereafter, they will not be long in deciding the question." Through praise and fear
appeals the Texan attempted to unite slaveholders and non-slaveholders in a common cause. Helper's book, John Brown's raid in 1859, and the rumored slave insurrections of the previous summer made the argument more cogent.

In defense of Jefferson Davis, who in two days would be elected President of the Confederacy, Wigfall used Johnson's attack on the Mississippian as a basis for solidifying southerners:

But he [Johnson] rose here and denounced Jefferson Davis as a disunionist per se! That charge was made against that gallant soldier. He is absent. I feel that I can speak of him, because he is a friend, and because I know him to be worthy of the language which I shall use. A man who from his youth upwards has followed the flag of his country, and would follow it to the death as long as it was the flag of his country; who never deserted it; whose blood was shed in its defense; whose body would have been wrapped in its broad folds had he died in defending it— that man here denounced as a traitor, the ally of Abolitionists, the coadjutor of Phillips and Giddings, and men of that character!

Interrupted by confusion among some senators who sought to have gallery spectators removed for applauding, Wigfall resumed after approximately ten minutes delay. With the galleries cleared he continued: "I did feel, sir, deeply grieved," Wigfall pled in tones increasingly emotional, "not only

grieved, but indignant, when a man of his character is held up here to reprobation by a Senator from a southern State; a man who, more perfectly than any I have ever met, combines all the great qualities of Jackson and Calhoun. With the iron will, pure patriotism, and distinguished military abilities of the one, he combines in the most singular manner, the clearness of judgment, the wonderful sagacity, and the remarkable accuracy in his knowledge of the great constitutional questions that are agitating the country. I felt, therefore, an outrage that the Senator should wait here for six weeks, and make a casual remark of that Senator a subject of comment, and couple it with denunciation and charges of want and patriotism.\(^{57}\)

\(^{57}\)Congressional Globe, pp. 784-789.
very close to mythifying, this passage contains words that tended to
project the image of what all southerners might like to be and could
possibly be in the new confederacy: "Gallant soldier, friend, worthy,
follow the flag to the death, and revered." As he hoped other south-
erners would be, Wigfall was "grieved and indignant" because Davis, a
combination of Calhoun and Jackson [appeal to Tennessee], a man of
"iron will, distinguished military abilities, clear judgment, remark-
able knowledge, and wonderful sagacity" had been maligned by a pre-
tender southerner. The Texan repeated "denounced" three times in this
statement. Faced with the alternatives of living in a society led by
statesmen such as Davis or in a northern confederation, Wigfall likely
hoped he had removed all doubts about secession in the border states
and that they would unite with their southern brethren. Implying that
southerners wanted peace but would fight to resist tyranny and coer-
cision, the Texan appealed to southern pride to draw them together.

Image Building. Lowenthal and Guterman suggest that "the agitator
appeals to those elements of the contemporary malaise that involve a
rejection of traditional western values. His followers are to place
their faith in his person—a new, externalized, and brutal superego." Wigfall consistently projected an image of himself as an ideal south-
erner that his followers could trust. An evolving image, the Texan
contrasted his own virtues to those of the despicable Johnson. Appar-
ently to strengthen his ethos Wigfall contended he was denounced by
the northern press, "felt grief, revered history, defended departed
southerners, felt outrage toward Johnson, held correct interpretations

58 Lowenthal and Guterman, Prophets of Deceit, pp. 15-16.
of the Constitution, attended Senate sessions regularly, knew the facts, read from the record, and rescued the name of Jackson from slander."

In sharp contrast to Johnson who betrayed his region and engaged in all manner of questionable behavior reaching for the Presidency, Wigfall denied personal political ambition. "It is said," (of John Bunyan) the Texan began,

He lived, I believe, somewhere between Tyburn and the Fleet prison—that he was in the habit of sitting with a Bible in his lap, and as the carts containing convicts with ropes upon their necks, sitting on their coffins, to be hanged, would pass by, he would look up and say to himself, "But for the grace of God, John Bunyan might be in his place." [Laughter] When I look around here at some of the persons who have been candidates, and electioneering candidates, as if they were running for constables beats of different cities, I have frequently thought to myself, but for the grace of God, I might have been a candidate for the Presidency. [Laughter] The thing has got to be disreputable.

Disdaining the Presidency, Wigfall likely increased his image among southerners: surely they could trust a man who sought no higher office. The recorded laughter is difficult to interpret: among gallery spectators there were southerners who genuinely enjoyed Wigfall's coarse and often insulting language; the southern senators had about all departed; the Republicans and northerners may have engaged in a kind of nervous laughter. Since he had received audience response, Wigfall added another descriptive passage to reassure his followers that he had no desire to be President, to show the absurdity of Johnson's making a spectacle of himself over the office, and, possibly, to attract some press coverage. Reflecting on the recently completed campaign, he said:

. . . the thing has got down so low that men come out "upon their own hook," to use a vulgar phrase, run for the Presidency, and stump the country. Why, sir, I suppose if there was any prospect of my being ever elected, or even if I thought of it, I would speak with more hesitation about it; but before high heaven, as the matter has now got—I can speak of it with reference to myself because everybody knows that I am not in the safe line of
promotion—but as things are going and if this Union were to be preserved, I would rather my individual self be the keeper of a miserable railroad tavern, which is by far the meanest of all taverns that I have ever seen, and deal out uncooked bread and fried meat at twenty-five cents per passenger before sunrise in the morning, accompanied with Rio coffee, with brown sugar, and without milk, than to sit in that presidential chair [laughter] to dispense the offices that are sought here by a set of dishonest, trafficking, trading politicians, who, at the expiration of every four years flock to this place to claim as a right, as a thing they are entitled to, for services rendered to the party, the offices of this country. It is a most humiliating thing. If there was nothing else except the last political campaign that we have gone through to cause the States that are yet inhabited by a decent population to secede, that would be a sufficient ground for disrupting the country. [Laughter]

With no higher political aspirations, Wigfall promoted the image that he was his own man and could speak out of principle to defend the right cause. He carefully inserted at every opportunity the appeal for states to secede.

Following the long discourse on Jackson, Wigfall built his image as one who kept his word: "I pledged myself to rescue the name of that great man from slanders which have been uttered against it, and I have redeemed that pledge."

Aligning himself with James Madison, Wigfall quoted from the Federalist Papers complaining: "And, because I have said that, my face has been laughed in here time and again; because I have said there was no such nation as the people of America." Here Wigfall contributed to the southern view of him as one who would suffer on their behalf.

Restating his own freedom from political ambition and making one final appeal for "the American People" to reject Johnson, Wigfall concluded:

I say that, when these issues and facts are presented, the American people will not believe that I, and others who are acting with me, desire a dissolution of the Union to get office. I say, when it is
presented to them, I feel that the American people will come to the conclusion that the Senator from Tennessee does desire to keep Tennessee in the Union, as the last and only hope of future promotion.

Thus, through the four strategies: vilification of Johnson, legitimizing secession as a right of states, solidifying southerners, and building his own image, Wigfall pursued his overall goal to polarize the sections and to disrupt the nation.

Effects. Suggestive of the polarization which Wigfall promoted through this segment, about halfway through the speech spectators applauded one of the Texan's jibes, causing Republican Zachariah Chandler to move the clearing of the men's gallery. Perhaps because another Republican, Solomon Foot of Vermont occupied the Chair, the motion was granted and the Sergeant-at-Arms began his task. Democrat T. L. Clingman of North Carolina suggested reconsideration of the motion to clear the galleries but was rebuffed. Clingman then replied: "I am in favor of seeing order preserved generally; but I observe whenever a man speaks in favor of the Union and there is applause, no exception is taken to it."

At the end of Wigfall's speech Johnson, perhaps trying to mend the ill feelings he had caused in Joe Lane of Oregon, attempted to intervene to obtain the floor for Lane. The Oregon senator snapped: "I can get it without the Senator's help, if I get it at all."59

Through his attack, Wigfall probably reduced Johnson's effectiveness among some segments of the Democratic party. His solidification efforts may have encouraged hesitating southerners and his defense of

59 Congressional Globe, pp. 786-791.
Davis possibly helped the Mississippian's election as President of the Confederacy. However, he apparently did not reach the Tennessee voters, for on February 9, the people of Tennessee rejected the proposal to call a convention to consider secession.

Among southerners, especially Texans, Wigfall enhanced his image. The Texas Republican noted that Wigfall occupied the floor for four hours, was "extremely tart in his allusions to Mr. Johnson," "quoted Jackson's record," "argued at great length in defense of the Constitutional right of secession," and "defended Mr. Davis, of Mississippi, from the assaults of Mr. Johnson, made while Mr. Davis was absent."

Although the editor did not comment additionally, he reported a portion of Wigfall's speech as follows:

Mr. Wigfall declared that he did not care whether there was peace or war; cotton was a sure defense, and if a vessel, bearing the flag of thirty-three stars entered a Cotton State port, it would be fired on, because it claimed those stars which had been plucked from that banner. He said that the government had fallen into ruin. Men canvassed for the Presidency like they were running for constables. For himself he had rather keep a railroad hotel and sell unbaked bread, fried meat, and rye coffee at twenty five cents, than to be President of the United States.60

Thus, Wigfall propagated his message and enhanced his ethos.

Apparently as result of Wigfall's speech a rumor circulated that the Texan and Johnson would fight a duel. After some discussion of the matter in Texas newspapers, Loughery of the Texas Republican dismissed the idea as an "idle report" on February 23, weeks after the speech.61

Through every means possible, Wigfall kept his name before Texans among

60Texas Republican, February 9, 1861.

61Ibid., February 23, 1861.
whom he wanted to be regarded as a fearless fighter for truth and the rights of southerners.

SEGMENT THREE: MARCH 2, 1861

_Situation._ During the twenty-three days between the February 7 segment and March 2, peace efforts and secession seemed stalemated. The Confederacy was established February 8, the same day Arkansas troops seized the arsenal at Little Rock. Besides seizure of two more arsenals in Texas during February and Texans' ratification of the secession ordinance on March 2, there was little to encourage secessionists. Amidst rumor and anxiety in Washington Wigfall was linked to conspiracies to prevent Lincoln's inauguration, secret drillings of southern organizations sworn to overthrow the government, and transmitting War Department plans to Governor Pickens in South Carolina.62

On the conciliation side, while the Peace Conference floundered in near meaningless debate, Tennessee, Virginia, Missouri, and Arkansas in turn voted down secession convention petitions. To make matters more doubtful for secessionists, Pickens reassured Buchanan that he would not strike the first blow at Fort Sumter and the Confederate Congress postponed the use of force by appointing peace commissioners whom Buchanan agreed to meet in late February.

February 23, President-elect Lincoln arrived in Washington secretly by having been warned of an assassination plot in Baltimore.

With the beginning of the Peace Conference at Willard's Hotel February 4, congressional attempts at compromise virtually stopped. Instead as Nichols reports, "the withdrawal of southern Democrats had let

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down the bars to the Republicans, and many of them were galloping into
the green pastures seemingly unmindful of the crisis. Senator Latham
reported that the fact of secession seemed to them 'a grand joke.\textsuperscript{63}
Aided by northern Democrats, the Republicans organized the territories
of Colorado, Nevada, and Dakota with no Wilmot proviso or mention of
slavery and reopened the House tariff bill which became law March 2
largely because the deep South senators were no longer there to offer
opposition. Requested by Buchanan as early as January 8, at least two
"force bills" floated about the legislative halls despite Unionists,
moderate Republicans, and Lincoln's opposition.

As inauguration approached, sectional tensions in Washington
peaked. Persons poured into the Senate chamber in record numbers to
cheer their favorites. The crowds became so demonstrative that the
galleries had to be cleared often, prompting James Bayard, the
Delaware Democrat to complain: "The Senate of the United States is
literally turned into a theatre--nothing more, nothing less."

On March 2, the more than five hundred spectators that crowded the
galleries caused H. W. Rice, the Minnesota Democrat to remark, "the
Senate has been remiss in not having stationed persons at the doors to
see that no more were permitted to enter than could be comfortably
seated." Before compromisers could begin, other senators consumed
more than an hour in debate over whether or not to clear the galleries.
Reflecting the attitudinal divisions among the legislators, Bayard
questioned: "Shall it go down to history that the Senate of the
United States have permitted a habit to grow up of popular applause, as

\textsuperscript{63}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 467.
the gallery of a theatre, and they had not the character or the force to preserve the dignity by ordering the galleries to be cleared."\textsuperscript{64}

"Opponents of compromise were able to waste March 1," reports Nichols, but "the friends of compromise came on March 2, the last day of the session, confident of their position on the calendar."\textsuperscript{65} The compromisers hinged their hopes on Pennsylvania Democrat William Bigler's bill calling for a referendum on Crittenden's resolutions. However, optimism faded as the day began with a dispute over an error in the journal and then an afternoon-consuming heated exchange between Joseph Lane of Oregon and Andrew Johnson of Tennessee. When Johnson denounced secessionists as traitors he ignited a gallery demonstration that caused the \textit{Globe} reporter to note: "The applause was renewed, and was louder and more general than before. Hisses were succeeded by applause, and cheers were given and reiterated, with 'three cheers more for Johnson.'"\textsuperscript{66} Immediately Trusten Polk, Missouri Democrat, in the Chair, ordered the men's galleries cleared. As Nichols described the scene: "His ruling brought a number of Senators to their feet to cheer or denounce the galleries. Some pressed for adjournment—the noise was so great that no business could possibly be transacted. Some time was consumed in a parliamentary tangle resulting from efforts to take advantage of the confusion."\textsuperscript{67}

\textsuperscript{64} \textit{Congressional Globe,} pp. 1351-1352.

\textsuperscript{65} Nichols, \textit{Disruption of American Democracy,} p. 478.

\textsuperscript{66} \textit{Congressional Globe,} p. 1356.

\textsuperscript{67} Nichols, \textit{Disruption of American Democracy,} p. 478.
Finally Polk suspended his order and Johnson resumed, obviously playing to the balconies where the crowd's enthusiasm grew to a crescendo before Graham Fitch, the Democrat from Indiana who had replaced Polk in the Chair, cleared all the galleries and ordered the doors locked. By then it was six o'clock and nothing had been accomplished. Republicans and a few Democrats defeated Crittenden's move to adjourn until Sunday at eleven. Fighting off hunger, Bigler acted quickly to get his bill passed. Douglas joined the effort, recommending that the Senate consider the House amendment which he regarded as the shortest route to victory in the limited time. Business progressed briefly until Lane interposed, Nichols interprets, "as the champion of the fair sex." Lane consumed more time as he pled for the women who were forced to stand in the corridors among all those men when, in fact, the men were the actual offenders. The ladies' gallery was eventually reopened but not before George Pugh, the Ohio Democrat, maneuvered another delay quibbling over the grammar of the House amendment. When the amendment passed despite Pugh's protests, Pugh responded by introducing another proposal containing the same language as Crittenden's compromise. Pugh's move, in Nichols' term, "let loose a new flood of meaningless oratory." Following speeches by Crittenden of Kentucky, Clingman of North Carolina, Gwin of California, Baker of Oregon, and Wilkinson of Minnesota; Zachariah Chandler, the Michigan Republican attacked secessionists and referred to an earlier Wigfall speech in these words: "When traitorous States come here and say, unless you yield this or

68Ibid.
that established principle of right, we will dissolve the Union, I would answer, no concession, no compromise—ay, give us strife, even to blood—before yielding to the demands of traitorous insolence."^69

Through his taunts Wigfall had apparently polarized the sections to the point that Chandler and others were willing to express their hatred and determination to put down the rebellion by force. For more than a year, the Texan had agitated toward such a confrontation.

Strategies. At the end of his speech Wigfall admitted that he did not enter the debate to discuss the House resolution. Instead, taking Chandler's Republican declaration of war against seceded states as his premise, the Texan revealed an overall goal of escalation/confrontation. For his purpose, he used at least six strategies:

1. Vilification of Chandler, Rice, and Lincoln as representatives of a cowardly Republican party which would not face war.
2. Objectification of northerners as an assemblage of distasteful persons who spent their time unfairly judging southerners.
3. Calculated antagonism to provoke actual duels and open warfare between North and South.
4. Legitimation of the actions of southerners who had seized forts and withdrawn from the Union.
5. Solidification of southerners who needed to stand firm in the face of northern pressures and false hopes of conciliation.
6. Image building of Wigfall as an honest, steady, daring, and outspoken defender of states' rights.

Analysis of these strategies reveals Wigfall's determination to bring about conflict.

Vilification. Of vilification, Smith observes, "uncompromising statements and bitter denunciations are generally used to provoke the opposition into more open combat."^70 In this segment Wigfall singled

^69 Congressional Globe, p. 1372.

^70 Smith, Rhetoric of Black Revolution, p. 28.
out three prominent northerners: Zachariah Chandler, the Michigan Republican; Henry M. Wise, the Minnesota Democrat; and Abraham Lincoln, through whom he attempted to "provoke the opposition into more open combat."

Chandler. Wigfall spoke in response to Chandler's sword-rattling utterance in which he declared that as Secretary of War, discredited John Floyd of Virginia, had surrendered forts Moultrie and Pickney to South Carolina. Ex-governor Floyd resigned from Buchanan's cabinet in December under a storm of scandal growing from misappropriation of nearly a million dollars, the fact that he had armed the South after Lincoln's election, and his unclear communications leading to Major Anderson's decision to abandon the two forts in favor of Sumter. A confidant of Floyd, Wigfall was quick to defend the Virginian hoping to turn Chandler's accusations to southern advantage.

Reflecting upon Chandler's rabid delivery, Wigfall told a story of a Scotchman boasting of his parson that "he was a most po'orful preacher, for he had pounded three pulpits to pieces and danged the life out of five bibles [sic]." [Laughter] Sarcastically, the Texan added: "Of course, I do not mean it for anybody." Implying Chandler, Wigfall thought it most "extraordinary that Senators will use offensive language here, and say that they do not intend to be personal, and denounce Senators on this side for indulging in offensive remarks." In other words, Wigfall complained that Chandler used the same type language for which he rebuked southerners. Specifically, Wigfall accused Chandler of "applying wholesale epithets of robbers and thieves to the entire Democratic party." To defend the party, the Texan hinted that Chandler was too cowardly to back up his insults. By contrast, Wigfall
boasted: "Now, when I say to a man that he is a scoundrel, I mean what I say and I will hold myself personally responsible." Assuming the southern aristocratic planter's superior attitude, Wigfall challenged Chandler:

Now a gentleman from Virginia, Governor Floyd, had been denounced here to-night as a thief. I do not know how much the Governor stole, but I know that he has friends in this city who will go security to the full amount which he is charged with stealing; and that if a letter shall be addressed to him in these words: "Sir, I pronounce you to be a scoundrel, and acknowledge myself a gentleman," and it is signed "ZACHARIAH CHANDLER," Governor Floyd, or his friends, will pay in cash the amount that he is charged with stealing. I predict that no such letter will ever be sent.

Through the tactic of comparison-contrast, Wigfall referred to Floyd as a "gentleman" [after all, he was a southerner no matter how reprobate] with "friends who will go security." Because Floyd likely had few friends in Washington by then, certainly not enough to raise a million dollars, Wigfall apparently defended the Ex-Secretary of War as a tactic to discredit Chandler. Since he had already implied that Chandler was a "scoundrel," Wigfall contrasted that negative term with the positive "gentleman." Consistent with the code duello in which he believed, the Texan urged Chandler to send a letter to Floyd which the Virginian would regard as a challenge to duel. The Globe reporter indicated that Wigfall stressed Chandler's name. Underscoring his conviction that the Michigan Republican lacked courage, the Texan mocked: "I predict that no such letter will ever be sent."

A declaration which Chandler made earlier led Wigfall to impugn the Republican in these words: "The Senator says that, in certain contingencies, he will turn Camanche. God forbid! I hope not. They have suffered much from their contacts with whites." [Laughter] The author
of a "senseless charge of robbery," the Texan suggested that Chandler was not fit to live among savages. Moreover, within the context of evoking humorous response, Wigfall surely angered Chandler and other Republicans who would resent the implications.

**Rice.** Despite its brevity, Wigfall's exchange with Rice and a later reference to the Minnesota senator indicate that the Texan attacked northern Democrats as readily as Republicans when the tactic served his purpose. During Rice's strong declaration that the Mississippi, the Red River, or the great lakes would "never be impeded by anything but ice," meaning southerners would not block the rivers, Wigfall interrupted to quip: "That is true, and low water as well as ice. [Laughter] I will accept the statement of the Senator from Minnesota, if he will add low water." With that sarcastic intrusion, Wigfall attempted to make Rice appear foolish. Later the Texan rebuked Rice for "pretending" that southerners were just upset because they lost the election. Stating, "there are none so blind as those who will not see," Wigfall left the impression that Rice was ignorant, imperceptive, and an example of obnoxious northerners from whom the South was forced to separate.

**Lincoln.** Wigfall directed his most irritating attack toward the President-elect through whom he cast reflection on the whole Republican party. Just seven days before this segment occurred, Pinkerton agents had secretly escorted the disguised Lincoln to Washington. Likely fabricating the "Scotch cap and long military cloak," the Democratic presses made the most of the incident. But Wigfall delighted at the opportunity to recount the event, especially so near inauguration. With derision, he boasted: "I do not think a man who disguises himself
in a soldier's cloak and a Scotch cap [a more thorough disguise could not be assumed by such a man] and makes his entree between day and day, into the capital of the country that he is going to govern, I hardly think that he is going to look war sternly in the face." Reflecting his belief in southern military superiority, the Texan pictured Lincoln as an unmanly person who could not have a more thorough disguise than a soldier's cloak, and cowardly because he had to sneak into the capital of "the country he is going to govern." In all, the Texan hoped that southerners would enjoy the idea that the "Black Republican" President-elect was a weakling who would not face a fight with the South.

Through harsh attacks on Chandler, Rice, and Lincoln, Wigfall apparently sought to end the waiting game by forcing northerners and, indeed, the new administration to act on Fort Sumter. By calling the three cowards he sought to provoke retaliation against South Carolina, start the war, and unite the South.

Objectification. Fearing that name calling might be insufficient to produce confrontation, Wigfall attacked northerners as a group responsible for the divided country. Similar to charges which he made against the North on other occasions, Wigfall may have expected repetition of the complaints to have a long-range effects on southerners. In this segment, the Texan used "they" to identify northerners. He claimed "they," call us thieves and robbers, indulge in bad temper, do not hold themselves responsible, render discourse unpleasant, make speeches to inflame the northwest, accuse us of planning to block the mouth of the Mississippi, despise southerners, and deny the right of secession."
A single extended example will serve to illustrate how Wigfall attempted to cause southerners to feel superior to northerners.

One of the complaints that we have against the North— I make it, of course, not against all Senators or all members of the House of Representatives— but, unfortunately some how or other, they will not send here at all times representatives who are either gentlemen or Christians, [laughter,] who will exercise that charity and good breeding which belongs to the Christian; or if they indulge their bad tempers, will hold themselves responsible. It renders our intercourse unpleasant.

Conforming to Lowenthal and Guterman's observation that agitators often present their themes "with a frivolous air," Wigfall wanted his followers to regard the insolent Yankees as lacking in Christian charity and good breeding. Moreover, suggesting the charge was only one of many which he might bring, the Texan led his listeners to believe that northerners were generally despicable persons who should be avoided.

**Calculated Antagonism.** In this short segment Wigfall devoted the bulk of his time to the strategy of calculated antagonism designed to provoke retaliation. Several examples reveal the tactic. The first resulted when Wigfall stated that he did not understand the "excitement that broke out on the other side of the Chamber to-night." (The reader should remember that the Senate had been in session for more than ten hours without a meal recess.) Answering the Texan's question, Lane caustically suggested it was a whisky insurrection. "The Senator says a whisky insurrection," [laughter] the Texan boomed:

I do not think so. I rather apprehend it is another fact. It has been bruited about to-day that there was some burglary, house-breaking, or robberies which took place here last night, and that a certain Abraham Lincoln has been kidnapped and taken from the Chicago platform. It may be that certain Senators have become excited, under the apprehension that, on Monday next, at the precise hour of twelve, the aforesaid Abraham is to swallow the Chicago platform, and go for peace. [Laughter]
In the biting sarcasm Wigfall meant that instead of coercing, the Republican president had decided to back down and let the South do as she pleased. He hoped Lincoln would react to prove him wrong.

Following the insinuations of Lincoln's cowardice, Wigfall returned to Chandler about whom he chided:

And if the Senator shall, in the morning, after having slept upon it, have the same determination as to-night, I fear that, be the detriment occasioned the Camanches as great as it may, they will have to endure it, for I look for nothing else than that the commissioners from the confederated States will be received here and recognized by Lincoln. [Laughter]

No doubt unhappy that Jefferson Davis had dispatched the peace commissioners from the Confederacy to call on Lincoln, the Texan sought to have the new President reject the emissaries or at least receive them coldly and prove Wigfall wrong. If the delegates from the Confederacy were rebuffed, Wigfall would regard that as an insult, an "overt action" to trigger the war.

Pressing the issue, the Texan prophesied:

I will now predict that this Republican party that is going to enforce the laws, preserve the Union, and collect revenue, will never attempt anything so silly; and that instead of taking the forts, the troops will be withdrawn from those which they now have. See if this does not turn out to be so in less than a week or ten days.

Even setting time limits, Wigfall revealed that he wanted action immediately. Referring to the Republicans' belief that they could enforce the laws or collect revenue—as "silly," Wigfall expected to create resentment. Of course, he knew that the two areas became important for northerners when South Carolina's senators did not return to Washington and he knew that the subjects were not regarded lightly.
Again recalling Chandler's speech, Wigfall observed: "It is very easy for men to bluster who know there is going to be no danger."

Stressing his superior attitude, Wigfall continued:

Four or five million people, living in a territory that extends from North Carolina down to the Rio Grande, who have exports to above three hundred million dollars, whose ports cannot be blockaded, but who can issue letters of marque and reprisal, and sweep your commerce from the seas, and who will do it, are not going to be trifled with by that sensible Yankee nation. Mark my words. I did think, at one time, there was going to be war; I do not think so now.

Choosing words such as "trifle," Wigfall taunted Republicans. Implying "that sensible Yankee nation," would dissolve in the face of southerners who held strategic locations and would fight, the Texan insinuated that northerners would not face up to battle. He wanted northerners to recoil from the arrogant picture of southern wealth and superiority.

To escalate the impact of his vitriolic outburst, Wigfall chose the delicate subject of the reinforcement ship that General Winfield Scott and members of Buchanan's cabinet sent to Charleston in early January. In mocked seriousness Wigfall referred to "the great military captain [Scott was practically senile and infirm] and his pliant secretary," and challenged: "The Star of the West swaggered into Charleston harbor, received a blow planted full in the face and swaggered out. Your flag has been insulted; redress it, if you dare. You have submitted to it for two months, and you will submit to it for ever." This is language of agitation: graphic, harsh, and sassy. He knew that "swaggered" and "received a blow planted full in the face" would recall unpleasant memories for northerners who had been trying to forget the administrative blunder that sent the ill-fated ship to Charleston. Moreover, through his shocking words, Wigfall castigated northern Democrats and
Republicans. There could be no doubting the direction of his slurs. He wanted Republicans to put pressure on Lincoln to confront the southerners at Fort Sumter.

But the Texan was not to be silenced. Likely determined to attract newspaper coverage, he proclaimed: "We have dissolved the Union; mend it if you can; cement it with blood," In retaliation for Chandler's declaration that he believed "it was necessary to have a little blood-letting, or the Union was not worth preserving," Wigfall insisted on bloodshed in no uncertain terms. Later he retorted: "you tell us you will keep us in the Union. Try the experiment."

Through the strategy of calculated antagonism Wigfall stressed that northerners were enemies and that he considered himself part of another confederacy. He wanted action: an attack on Fort Sumter, a challenge from another senator to duel, or a motion to expel him for his traitorous language. Regardless of the consequences, personally or otherwise, Louis Wigfall did not want the two sections to sit back and permit time to heal the troubles, the confederate delegates to work out terms for peace, or reconciliation--and possibly reunion--to occur.

Legitimation. Despite the severity of his attack on northerners, Wigfall did not forget the South. Since Chandler had referred to southern seizure of forts and arsenals as "robbery," Wigfall attempted to justify their actions. "Why are these terms of thieves and robbers and cut-throats applied to the people of the States that have seceded?" he asked. In answer to his own question, the Texan legitimized southerners advances in this language:
Because they have taken possession of the military posts. Why should they not have done it? Has reason fled to brutish beasts? Have those men eaten the insane roots? Were they to sit quietly down until the Lieutenant General and his pliant tool, the Secretary of War, should have filled those forts with Federal troops, and then declared their determination to establish a government, when their ports were in a condition to be blockaded and their towns to be shelled? Is this the way that freemen and men of sense act? Was this the way that the colonists acted when they intended to achieve their independence in 1776? If colonists could, without blemishing their characters, lay their hands upon the military stores of their sovereign, I ask why it is that the people of sovereign States cannot do the same as to munitions of war which belong to them in common with the people of the other States, and for the purchase of which they have paid their money without stint? All this sort of twaddle does no good.

Taking the offensive, instead of merely defending southerners activities the Texan feigned aggravation that any one would question seizing the forts. Implying that honorable men of the South would have been insane, or at least stupid, to sit back and watch Yankee soldiers fill up the state, the Texan declared that what South Carolina and other states did was only reasonable. Repeating, "the Lieutenant General and his pliant tool, the Secretary of War," Wigfall intended to irritate northerners. Linking the arsenal take-overs to the colonists in 1776, the Texan strengthened southerners beliefs that they had conducted themselves as "freemen and men of sense." Once more he insulted northerners as those who speak "twaddle."

In Rice's conclusion that "if Breckinridge had been elected, there would have been no dissolution of the Union," Wigfall discovered an ideal opportunity to legitimize secession. "Of course there would not," he exclaimed:

Mr. Breckinridge ran as a candidate for the Presidency upon a platform which declared explicitly that slaves were property, and, like all other property, were entitled to protection wherever the Federal flag floated, wherever the Federal Government had jurisdiction. Had that sentiment been indorsed, north and south, east and west, this Union would have been saved; but when you elected
a man upon a platform which declared in substance--I do not pre-
tend to quote it--that slaves were not property; and that, instead
of protection, it should meet confiscation wherever the flag
floated or this Government--our common Government--had jurisdic-
tion, we said to you, we would live under no such Government; and
we have made good our words.

Inferring southern honor and pride, Wigfall justified withdrawal as a
matter of keeping promises. Further, he told northerners, "what we are
willing to accord to you, we want to secure for ourselves--the right of
self-government." Indicating southerners had been cheated and would
be persecuted by the incoming Republican administration, the Texan in-
sisted that southerners had acted properly. In the same vein, he con-
tinued:

We invade not your soil in order to subvert your institutions.
We will not be invaded because you wish to subvert ours. We
assert that the right of self-government is the only right that
was established by the Revolution; that it is the only right that
is set forth in the Declaration of Independence; that it is a
right inalienable to freemen, and terrible to tyrants only.

In contrast to northern abolitionists, Wigfall pictured the South as
virtuous. Repeating often cited links of secession to the Revolution
and the Declaration of Independence, he sought to convince "freemen"
that their deeds were right. Wigfall likely chose the term "tyrants"
to impress upon southerners his contention that because tyrannical
Republicans were about to take the reins of government, the South men
had taken the only option open to them.

For southerners who had heard or read northerners' denunciations of
seizing forts and arsenals in states, Wigfall attempted to justify the
procedure through historical precedent, states' rights, and claims of
fairness.

Solidification. In addition to justifying the actions in which
other southerners engaged, Wigfall tried to reenforce his followers
beliefs that secession was correct and to persuade the border states residents to join the move. Drawing his disciples closer, the Texan claimed: "We are called robbers and thieves, we intend to aggress nobody, we are regarded as fools, we are despised, the solutions offered us are meaningless, and we have the right to live under any form of government we choose."

Although he did not expect the northwest to secede, Wigfall utilized references to the section and to departed southern senators to intensify pride among his supporters. "Speeches are made here for the purpose of inflaming the Northwest," he stated:

It has been said here, it has been officially announced in Louisiana, it has been officially announced at Montgomery, that the seceding States have no idea of blocking up the mouth of the Mississippi. They are not fools, if they are the thieves. Nobody accuses them of that. There was an immense amount of brains taken out of this Government when those first six States left, and withdrew their twelve Senators. There was an immense amount of statesmanship went out of this Chamber when those twelve Senators left.

Wigfall reminded border states of Davis and Benjamin and other "giants" with whom they could confederate through secession. With Republicans and northern Democrats "inflaming the Northwest," falsely accusing southerners of planning to "block up the mouth of the Mississippi," Wigfall called upon all southerners to unite in rejecting a "Black Republican" administration.

After declaring that because he was certain Texas had ratified the secession ordinance he did not intend to vote on the House resolution, Wigfall used Texas' exodus as the basis for one more appeal to the border states. "This resolution [House resolution] means nothing," he began,
it gives satisfaction to nobody; and it is obvious from the
debate that occurred here today, that the House itself means
nothing by it, except to enable adroit demagogues, through some
of the States in which the matter is still doubtful, to get up
what is called a Union party, that may keep those States in the
Union for a few months, possibly for a year, then to withdraw
and join their sister States of the Confederation.

Over and over Wigfall called for "doubtful" states to recognize the
impossibility of southerners to obtain "security" or "satisfaction" in
the Union. Striking out at men such as Johnson of Tennessee whom he
regarded as "adroit demagogues," Wigfall claimed that within a short
time the border states would withdraw. Accordingly, he urged the event
at the earliest possible time.

Implying that Unionizers deceived border states residents, Wigfall
announced: "It is better, then, to look this matter steadily and
honestly in the face, and see what is the grievance." Repeating his
claims that southerners wanted Constitutional amendments to affirm that
slaves were property and that each state had the right to secede, the
Texan declared that "nothing short of that would induce any one of the
confederated States again to secede from that confederation, and come
back into this." Still working on the border states, Wigfall continued:
"Now, whether what are called the Crittenden resolutions will produce
satisfaction in some of these border States or not, I am unaware; but
I feel perfectly sure they would not be entertained upon the Gulf."
Finally, "to make a clean breast of it," Wigfall dismissed the Peace
Conference proposals:

If those resolutions were adopted, and ratified by three fourths
of the States of this Union, and no other cause ever existed, I
make the assertion that the seven States now out of the Union
would go out upon that. The first proposition is to do what?
The Wilmot proviso north of 36° 30' north latitude, and a law­
suit south of it. The next is to give the Federal Government
the right to declare a free negro a citizen. Those two proposi-
tions would be enough of itself to dissolve the Union, if nothing else were offered.\footnote{Congressional Globe, p. 1373.}

Through a tactic similar to what some argumentation texts call "method of residues," Wigfall systematically demonstrated the futility of all the Union-savers efforts except the Constitutional amendment which northerners would prevent. With all compromise possibilities eliminated, the Texan hoped to solidify border states to secede and join the Confederacy.

Image Building. Describing an agitator's disciples, Lowenthal and Guterman conclude: "As they compare their lot to his, the followers cannot but feel that they are almost like safe spectators watching a battle between the forces of evil and their own champion of virtue."\footnote{Lowenthal and Guterman, Prophets of Deceit, p. 126.} Wigfall attempted to portray himself as a hero who risked his life for his constituents. Especially in this segment filled with taunts and dares of Republicans, Wigfall invited physical retaliation that would have made him a martyr. He revealed his image building strategy for this occasion clearly when he said: "I mean what I say and I will hold myself personally responsible."

Later he held himself up as an example of one who suffers for his beliefs. "I am myself getting a little impatient at this thing," he began:

Because I believe in the right of secession, and because I think an emergency has arisen which justifies it, I do not choose to be classed among thieves and robbers, cut-throats and pirates. I do not choose to hear the people among whom I live, and whom I in part represent, denounced as cut-throats and outlaws.

In this passage Wigfall attempted to enhance his ethos as a defender of
his followers against violent people that regarded southerners as inferior. As Lowenthal and Guterman suggest the agitator will claim "we have arrived at the hour when we must have two-fisted talking and real action," so Wigfall complained: "I am myself getting a little impatient with this thing." Texas states' righters had chosen Wigfall because they believed he would speak out for the section. He did not disappoint the radicals.

The six strategies in this segment build toward Wigfall's primary goal of escalation/confrontation. Determined to cause a fight, Wigfall abused individuals and groups through the strategies of vilification, objectification, and calculated antagonism. To justify his section and influence border states, he legitimized southerners actions in taking the forts, solidified his followers in their convictions that compromise was out of the question, and contributed to his own image as the only remaining sentinel of states' rights.

**Effects.** Suggesting Wigfall was succeeding in driving the sections toward conflict, Senator Henry Rice the Minnesota Democrat interrupted the Texan to express his concern:

> Mr. President, I regret the shape this discussion has assumed. I do not like to hear Senators on either side talking about force. It is unbecoming us as Senators and as brothers. I wish to say to the Senator, and to the Senate of the United States, that but a few weeks ago, my State, so far as I am advised, considered that the greatest calamity that could befall this country was secession; but I believe they now consider civil war to be a greater calamity than secession. We will do all that we honorably can to keep the southern States with us; but if they are determined to leave us, they must go in peace. We are a family of brothers; and if we cannot live together in peace, in the name of God, let us agree as brothers to separate in peace. I hope there will be nothing more said here about war. I do not like to hear it.\(^{73}\)

\(^{73}\)Congressional Globe, p. 1372.
Evidently because he knew northerners did not like to hear about war, Wigfall chose to magnify its horrors and to goad the Republican administration toward retaliation.

Revealing that the Texan had achieved disruption in the legislative process, of the March 2 segment the *New York Times* editor wrote, "the proceedings in the Senate, although protracted until near midnight, may be considered as absolutely worse than profitless." 74

During the March 3 segment, at least four speakers referred to Wigfall by name, others by inference suggesting determination to eliminate him from the Senate. Lyman Trumbull, the Illinois Republican was infuriated and stated clearly his contempt for Wigfall:

And the Senator from Texan, with a taste which I cannot admire, spoke in terms of derision of his country's flag, when it returned in disgrace -- 'struck in the face,' -- I think, was his expression--from Charleston harbor. I admit it was disgraceful; but I am sorry it should have afforded the Senator from Texas any pleasure that such a transaction should have occurred.

In exactly the type of response Wigfall wanted, the Illinois Republican later declared: "If the Senator from Texas wants to know my opinion, I tell him yes, I am for enforcing the laws." No longer talking of compromise, the Republicans were ready to openly discuss coercion and war.

Even Edward Baker, the freshman Republican from Oregon, spoke of Wigfall's "bad taste," and warned of possible consequences:

If those people in South Carolina, mad, furious, proud, attack Fort Sumter, and are defeated, who can tell the consequences? Shall we enforce it? Shall we abandon it? If we do, who can tell the shame? There are grave events upon either hand. But, instead of that blow which the gentleman from Texas spoke of so exultingly, yet, in my opinion, with such bad taste; if, instead of that blow staggering, it had felled us, who then could have told the consequences.

In the word "exultingly," Baker hints of the disgust which the Texan aroused in Republicans.

Answering Wigfall's assertion that the Republicans were responsible for secession, Benjamin Wade of Ohio observed:

He [Wigfall] said it was our free institutions, in our schools, in our love of liberty, and in our hatred of oppression. There lay the difficulty. It was not complimentary to his institutions, but it was exceedingly so to ours, in my judgment; but, nevertheless, this was what he described as the disease, and I think he was a shrewder philosopher than most who have spoken upon the subject.

Hardly complimentary to the Texan, Wade suggested that he viewed Wigfall as an irrational, outrageous person. For example, of the Texan's assertions on federal forts, Wade continued: "I know the Senator from Texas stood here and said those fortifications were built, not for the general defense, but for the defense of the States. Where did you find a doctrine like that? What jurist ever laid it down? The doctrine is monstrous and absurd." It is perhaps significant to note that in his violations of Senate traditions that usually limited personal references to "the Senator from," or "the gentleman from," Wigfall brought about unusual behavior from his opponents. Wade's question, "where did you find a doctrine like that," reveals some of the impact that Wigfall had on his colleagues. "Monstrous and absurd," imply that Wigfall accomplished at least in language, the retaliation which he sought.

Providing an impression which Wigfall's strong language and demands had produced among Republicans, Wade addressed himself to "gentlemen who are disposed to be candid and just." He questioned:

Would you pretend, sir, that the acts of these seceding States, if done by a foreign enemy, would not be war? Why, sir, it barely amounts to this: you have fired upon our flag; you have captured our fortifications; you have made prisoners of war of our soldiery; and yet you deprecate war and plead for peace. It
amounts to simply this; that a State planting herself upon her sovereign capacity, has the right to war upon the General Government; but the General Government has no right to defend herself. That is where you stand.  

As he had attempted to do, Wigfall strengthened Republicans' will to resist southern demands. Through his persistent jibes and goadings of Republicans and northern Democrats, the Texan had built up resentment and polarized the sections to the point where many were not only willing to go to war, but eager.

Nichols referred to Wigfall's speech as an "alcoholic outburst."  

If true, that would have been even an additional factor in explaining the impression which he created among his opponents. Drunk or sober, the Texan angered Republicans sufficiently that they determined to take action against him and the southern confederacy.

SEGMENT FOUR: MARCH 3, 1861  

Situation. When a midnight motion to adjourn until Sunday at 7:00 p.m. finally halted Wigfall's March 2 tirade, the senators, according to Nichols, "got what rest and spiritual renewal they could. While some of the Republicans were in conference with Lincoln at Willard's [Hotel], the Democrats were somewhat at loose ends. Those who were ending their careers were packing."  

The crowds that poured into Washington for the inauguration overflowed the Senate Chamber as well causing the Globe reporter to note, "long before the Senate met, the galleries were densely filled with

75 Congressional Globe, pp. 1381-1394.  
76 Nichols, Disruption of American Democracy, p. 479.  
77 Ibid., p. 480.
spectators, and all available space on the floor of the Senate Chamber was filled with strangers." Though the Chairman, Indiana Democrat Jessie Bright ordered the floor cleared, visitors were so tightly jammed into the aisles that the Sergeant-at-Arms could not remove them. One man fainted because of the heat and a New York Times reporter described the noise as "like that of an immense beehive." Senators were furious as they waited for almost an hour before the crowds were reduced to approximately five hundred which the galleries could accommodate.

When the confusion subsided, John Crittenden, the aged Kentuckian made his final Senate speech, a long, passionate plea for some action to demonstrate to the American people that the senators had at least tried to compromise. Appraising the three-month exercise in futility, the wise old statesman said: "We have done nothing. The country is inflamed and nothing has been done to quench the destroying fire."

Upset that Crittenden appealed specifically to Republicans to vote for compromise, Lyman Trumbull of Illinois complained: "I have heard this charge against the people of the North, of a desire to usurp the whole of the common territories, till I am tired of the accusation. It has been refuted ten thousand times." In the comment Trumbull revealed part of the impact of Wigfall's persistent agitational efforts. Reflecting the fixed position many Republicans had assumed by then, Trumbull later said:

If you will arm the Government with sufficient authority to maintain its laws and give us an honest Executive, I think you will find the spread of secession soon checked; it will no longer be

78 Congressional Globe, p. 1374.

a holiday affair. But while we submit to the disgrace which is heaped upon us by those seceding States, while the President of the United States says, "you have no right to secede; but if you want to, you may, we cannot help it," you may expect secession to spread.

After describing secession as "mad and insane," Trumbull closed with an appeal for border states to wait until they heard the inaugural and until they had given Lincoln's administration a chance. Wigfall enjoyed the polarization which Trumbull's earlier attitude represented.

Edward Baker of Oregon took up Trumbull's reference to the border states and articulated his fears that the Senate's inaction would drive the border states to the southern confederacy. Listing Kentucky, Tennessee, Virginia, and North Carolina, Baker predicted:

How much of exultation will there be among the secession leaders when they are told we would not utter one word; that we would not condescend to notice the difficulty; that we would not pretend that we ever heard that there was secession South; and that we adjourned sullenly, coldly, disregarding not only all the confederation of the South, but all the discontent in the North.

Through his delaying strategies, Wigfall sought to accomplish precisely what Baker feared; an apparent indifference among northerners which would result in border states' secession.

Helping set the stage for Wigfall's entrance, Baker proclaimed:

I compromise nothing to treason. I yield to President Davis, sitting upon a throne which he has assumed, nothing; to the rebellion of South Carolina, nothing; but to the States yet loyal, yet fraternal, with all the loving blood of the Union still gushing through their veins, I will yield much, if it be required.

Joining the move to get action, Douglas requested that senators vote without debate, in turn, on each of the compromise measures that had been proposed by the Senate, the House, and the Peace Conference.

The Little Giant's plea went unheeded, however, as the speakers droned on through the night. James Mason, the Virginia Democrat protracted the
debate with the following observation:

Mr. President, there was a practice, I am told, among the early physicians, of giving to their patients what they called a placebo, a bread pill, something that was to quiet the patient by deluding him under the belief that he had taken salutary medicine, when in fact he had taken a pill containing the crumbs of bread. Sir, this resolution from the House of Representatives is that placebo.

Midnight passed and several senators awoke to offer various interpretations of the placebo illustration. Douglas unwisely offered an opinion that a bread pill, or compromise gesture, would be all right if it pacified the South; Justin Morrill, the Vermont Republican, declared that Republicans did not want bread pills but that they might help "the distempered minds of the South;" Mason pointed out that placebos did no good if the physician told the patient there was nothing but bread in it; and Benjamin Wade, the Ohio Republican complained that only quacks passed out bread pills because they either could not or would not locate the patient's illness. Not to be outdone, Wigfall could hardly wait his turn to declare that not even the best doctor could administer a bread pill "after death has literally come."

Enduring Wade's assertions that "the danger is idle," the "doctrine is absurd," and compromise would be inconsistent with "Northern honor," Wigfall stood up when the Ohio senator suggested that only "lunatics" suffered under the "fanciful disease of secession."

Strategies. Pursuing a general goal of escalation/confrontation, Wigfall used six major strategies:

1. Vilification of Wade, Lincoln, Seward, and Justice Story as representatives of cowardly, ignorant, or treacherous individuals responsible for the country's plight.
2. Objectification of Union-savers, persons in northern states, the Republican party, New Englanders, and "the Connecticut Reserve" as groups which southerners could blame for the divided nation.
3. Calculated antagonism directed against Lincoln, northerners, and Republicans.
4. Solidification of southerners' beliefs that hopes were passed for compromise and reconciliation.
5. Legitimation of secession and South Carolina's actions in the "Star of the West" incident in Charleston harbor.
6. Image building of Wigfall as a witty, sharp debater who knew history, understood the troublesome questions of the day, and suffered at the hands of northerners.

As was true in Segment Three, Wigfall relied heavily on "calculated antagonism" to bring the sections closer to confrontation.

Vilification. As he had on other occasions, Wigfall singled out several individuals toward whom he directed name-calling, insinuation, and accusations to reduce their ethical appeal.

Wade. During his speech earlier in the night, Wade had complained that Republicans were constantly accused of breaking up the Union when, in fact, the Democrats were to blame. Seizing the opportunity to shift the responsibility, Wigfall contended he was "utterly astonished" at Wade's words and went "back to the record," to prove the Ohio senator's long standing sentiment against slavery. Quoting a Wade speech of 1855 in which he was reported to have said "there was no freedom at the South for either white or black," and in which he called slavery a "blighting curse," the Texan retorted: "If that is not tolerably strong secession and disunion sentiment, I am suffering under the inability to understand the meaning of the English language." Wade interrupted to explain that what Wigfall quoted was a poor representation of what he had actually said, but the Texan worked the answer to his own advantage. "I never have seen any denial of the Senator," Wigfall responded.

I recollect, in the canvass of 1856, having used it very frequently in speeches in my own State, and supposing that Cluskey's text-book had everything in it which anybody wanted to have, I sent for the text-book; and looking under the title of "Abolitionists and Republicans," I found the very sentence which I was looking for.
Relishing the situation, Wigfall poked fun at northern textbooks and Wade as an abolitionist who had been "so understood throughout the entire limits of the southern country." Heavy with sarcasm Wigall sought to correct history about Wade. "Now, sir, a gross injustice has been done that Senator by the party which he so ably, and I will say so faithfully, represent upon this floor," the Texan stated:

He is, in fact, the real author of the irrepressibly-conflict doctrine. The Senator from New York, in 1858, dressed the idea in that phraseology, and got the credit for it. In 1860, it was understood that one Abraham Lincoln was the author; and persons in the northern States, and the Republican party not being so well informed, nor having so closely scrutinized their writings and speakings as we further south have done, were ignorant of the fact that there was a double plagiarism--first by the distinguished Senator from New York, who copied it from the Senator from Illinois; but the Senator from Illinois had stolen the thunder from the Senator from Ohio. He is the real irrepressibly conflict man; the genuine bona fide sarsaparilla Dr. Townsend. [Laughter]

Perhaps revealing that the Texan was intoxicated during the speech, he meant Lincoln when he said the senator from Illinois, but, as subsequent analysis reveals, Wigfall turned even his own mistakes to the strategy of vilification. In addition to questioning the characters of Wade, Seward, and Lincoln in the passage above, Wigfall polarized the North from the South with his insinuation that southerners were better informed than "ignorant" northerners.

Because Wade earlier unflatteringly dubbed Wigfall a "shrewd philosopher who discovered the difficulty lay in northerners love of liberty, and hatred of oppression," the Texan reversed the image to claim that coming from an abolitionist like Wade, he regarded the observation as praise: "Now, sir, the Senator from Ohio has paid me the compliment of saying that I am the only physician who has discovered the disease under which the body politic is suffering. I feel flattered by
the compliment, and will not deny the soft impeachment. [Laughter] I have been for some time laboring under that impression." Thus, at Wade's expense, the Texan built his own image as one who claimed to know the heart of the problem troubling the country.

Lincoln. When Douglas interrupted to point out the Texan's faux pas concerning Lincoln as a "Senator" from Illinois, Wigfall immediately responded: "The President-elect; he was not the Senator; no, he was not elected to the Senate." In the statement Wigfall sarcastically implied that Lincoln was not a successful candidate in his own state and had acquired the Presidency by Democratic default. Douglas answered saying that was the only correction he wanted to make, prompting the Texan to exclaim: "Certainly, I am glad to have made it. I did not allude to you, of course; I was speaking of Abraham." [Laughter]

Consistent with what McEdwards observed of agitative rhetoric, Wigfall's sassy "Abraham" instead of Mr. Lincoln or the President-elect, marks the language as agitative. It is perhaps significant to notice, also, that Wigfall did evoke laughter, however nervous it might have been, with the insulting manner in which he referred to the man who would in just a few hours take the oath of the Presidency.

Persistent in his efforts to discredit Lincoln, Wigfall assumed a superior attitude suggesting that the President-elect was ignorant:

Your President elect, a short time ago, in a speech, asked the question gravely, what is the difference between a State and a country? And he seemed to be really in quest of information. Now, I was not astonished at that, for I did not expect anything better of him. From a man who is taken up because he is an ex-rail splitter, an ex-grocery keeper, an ex-flatboat captain, and an ex-Abolition lecturer, and is run upon that question, I would not expect any great information as to the Government which he was to administer.
Powerful language of vilification, Wigfall not only suggested that Lincoln was ignorant, but through the derogatory words "ex-rail splitter, ex-grocery keeper, ex-Abolition lecturer," the Texan implied that Lincoln was unqualified to hold office, especially when compared to Jefferson Davis. To the delight of his followers in Texas, perhaps, Wigfall hinted that "Old Abe" became president because he could not hold down a steady job.

Possibly remembering the response to his implications of the previous day that Lincoln was a coward who had to sneak into town in a disguise, the Texan referred to the event again. Daring Republicans to go to war, he mocked:

If their President has recovered from that "artificial panic" under which he was laboring a short time ago, under the advice of the Lieutenant General and the Secretary of War—I believe they advised him to be frightened, so say the Republican papers in defense of him; it was done by the card; he goes by the platform—if they can recover him from that artificial fright under which he was laboring and get him to take the Chicago platform fair and square, we shall have a fight; otherwise, we shall not.

More than labeling Lincoln a coward, Wigfall implied that he was merely the puppet of his cabinet and unable to make any decision of his own except, possibly, to retreat. Through the attacks on the President-elect, the Texan expected to stir active resistance.

Seward. Beyond the stab at the New York senator through his attack on Wade, Wigfall referred to Seward only once more in this segment. However, because it was a repetition of former charges against the New Yorker, the Texan's statement warrants closer examination: "The Senator from New York, twelve years ago, declared that it was the duty of the people of the North to abolish slavery; he then said they must teach hatred in their schools, and preach it in their pulpits; they must teach
their people to hate slavery. He has accomplished that; and they now not only hate slavery, but they hate slaveholders." Therefore, Wigfall shifted the blame for dissolution to one man, Seward, and his odious doctrines. It is possible that Wigfall repeated the indictment in response to Wade's comment about the Texan's ability to find the problem with the country. At any rate, with his persistent attacks Wigfall engendered strife among northerners for himself and his section.

Story. In virtually every encounter Wigfall singled out one person whom he claimed contributed more, "according to his ability," to disruption than any other man. In this segment, Justice Joseph Story received the honor. Taking his cue from Wade, Wigfall chose scathing words as follows: "The Senator from Ohio to-night spoke of the Constitution as expounded by that 'eminent jurist, Judge Story,'" Wigfall began:

Judge Story was an eminent man in the way of making books. He made a great many of them. I am not going to detract from him, nor discuss his character here at this hour of the morning; but I will say, that if there was a man next to the Union-savers who is more responsible for a dissolution of the Union than every other man who ever lived, that man is Joseph Story.

Enjoying the audience response, perhaps, or working systematically to irritate northerners with his abuse of the jurist, Wigfall continued:

... and if I were going to propose a compromise by which this Union would be saved, I would just provide an amendment to the Constitution vesting in Congress the power to make an appropriation to buy up all the commentaries on the Constitution written by Joseph Story, and have them publicly burned, [laughter] and then, if you could eradicate from the minds of the American people the false doctrine, as to the form of Government under which they are living, that has been created by those miscalled commentaries on the Constitution, and eradicate from their minds the prejudices which have been taught under the teachings and advice of the Senator from New York, I would then consider the question as to whether, under existing circumstances, a reconstruction would be practical.
Throughly abusing and overlapping his attacks on famous northerners, Wigfall utilized the technique of vilification to increase the likelihood of confrontation. Unmitigating in his boldness, after uttering the vitriolic language against these four, especially Lincoln, the Texan joined the assembling thongs a few hours later to witness the inauguration and to hear the "ex-rail splitter" speak.

**Objectification.** Consistent with Smith's conclusion that "blame is apparently the overriding element in the dynamics of objectification," Wigfall indicted "that class of people who are called 'Union-savers.'" Keeping the category broad enough to include Republicans and northern Democrats, the Texan enumerated "union-savers" sins:

They have been dealing with people as though they had no sense; they have been getting up their quack medicines; they have been compromising, and couching their compromises in language which was not intended to be understood. They have made compromises and platforms which may be construed one way at the North and another way at the South; and while they have kept the word of promise to the ear, they have invariably broken it to the hope.

Within the context of the "bread pill" debate Wigfall spoke of "quack medicines" to sting or goad the opposition. Accumulating images of deceit, arrogance, treachery and hypocrisy, he intended his followers to blame dissolution on those who pretended to want peace and unity but, in reality, offended southerners until their only course was secession. "Couching," "broken promises," and "invariably" are emotional words Wigfall selected to increase distrust of northerners by southerners.

As the Texan prolonged his lecture on proper interpretations of the Declaration of Independence and the compact theory of states, he blamed "the people of the North" and "New Englanders" for the nation's woes until L. F. S. Foster, the Connecticut Republican interrupted. Making
light of Wigfall's attacks on New England, Foster wondered why, after
Wigfall had blamed the doctrine of the "irrepressible conflict" on Wade,
the Texan later attributed it to New England. Delighted that Foster pro­
vided the opening, Wigfall said:

Certainly I will explain it easily enough. You know the leader of
your party, the Senator from New York, said a short time ago, and
it is true, I believe, that the "Massachusetts school of politics"
has spread; and so far as Ohio is concerned, I believe that the
State from which the Senator who last interrupted me comes,
Connecticut, is responsible for the politics of Ohio. I have
heard something about "the Connecticut Reserve" in Ohio; and that,
I believe has been the hot-bed of all the fanaticism of that coun­
try. The mere expression of "the irrepressible conflict" was
credited first to Mr. Lincoln, and then to Mr. Seward, and then to
the Senator from Ohio; but this doctrine of perfectibility in the
people of the free States is of New England origin.

With sinister images such as the "Massachusetts school of politics,"
"the Connecticut Reserve," and "the hot-bed of fanaticism," Wigfall
created the impression that northerners or New Englanders were scheming,
conniving, insidious people whose political diseases "spread" all over
the North. Using language to develop such vague pictures of the South's
enemies, Wigfall objectified or blamed New Englanders as a group beyond
hope of reconciliation. Moreover, by providing the details of how
northern political circles evolved, Wigfall suggested to his followers
that he possessed unusual insight or inside information which he, as
their leader, shared with them.

Toward the close of his speech, the Texan objectified the Republican
party. "Our objection to living in this Union," he began,

and therefore the difficulty of reconstructing it, is not your
personal liberty bill, not the territorial question, but that you
utterly and wholly misapprehend the form of government. You deny
the sovereignty of the States; you deny the right of self-government
in the people; you insist upon negro equality; your people inter­
ferre impertinently with our institutions and attempt to subvert
them; you publish newspapers; you deliver lectures; you print pamph­
lets, and you send them among us, first, to excite our slaves to
insurrection against their masters, and next, to array one class of citizens against the other.

Repeating "you" or "your" ten times in the brief statement, Wigfall censured Republicans as a body which engaged in all manner of acts against the South. Words like "utterly, wholly, impertinently, interfere, subvert, excite, and array," the Texan intended as agitational devices to stir his opposition. For southerners already suspicious of abolitionists, Wigfall enlarged the object of their fears suggesting that all Republicans were dedicated to destroying southern institutions and the South's way of life.

Setting forth at least four ambiguous groups upon whom he placed the blame for dissolution—"Union-savers, northerners, Republicans, and New Englanders"—Wigfall provided his listeners with focus for hatred and disenchantment.

**Calculated Antagonism.** Determined to stimulate actual retaliation against himself or the South, Wigfall sarcastically stated: "I desire to pour oil on the waters, to produce harmony, peace, and quiet here."

In one of his most inflammatory statements and one for which he received considerable newspaper coverage, Wigfall distinguished between "free white States," and "free Negro States." Immediately irritating some of his listeners with a constrast of slave labor and "hireling" labor, the Texan likely chose the word "hireling" for its derogatory connotation. "There are no slave States," he continued,

there are some States in which negroes are held as slaves, and in which white men are held as freemen; some States in which negroes black boots and white men do not drive carriages. There are other States in which white men black boots and wear liveries, not the entire class, not the respectable class, not the farming class of the country, not the bone and sinew of the country; but those States may, with propriety, be called the hireling States of the Union; the others, the slave States, if you please; or, as in some
of the States, negroes are slaves and white men are free, and in others negroes are free and white men perform menial services, I suppose the better application would be "the free white States," and the "free negro States."

Loaded with reflections of southern aristocratic planters superiority attitude, Wigfall's language irritated northern listeners and delighted southern readers. Terms such as blacking boots, wearing liveries, hiring States, and "menial tasks," Wigfall intended to have negative impact on the North. Although the exaggerated reference was transparent, the Texan still unnerved northerners with the derogatory language.

Within the context of objectifying New Englanders for the "doctrine of perfectibility in the people of the free States, Wigfall utilized calculated antagonism as a strategy. "It [the doctrine] began before your Revolution," he suggested,

long before that. It began when Charles lost his throne. I think it began before his time. Old John Knox stated it and then it got down into England. They helped Cromwell to cut off their King's head. After that, better than even the Puritans, they were called Independents; they were called fifth-monarchy men; and then Cromwell had to run them out of England; and then they went over into Holland, and the Dutch let them alone, but would not let them persecute anybody else; and then they got on that ill-fated ship called the Mayflower, and landed on Plymouth Rock. [Laughter] And from that time to this they have been kicking up a dust generally, and making a muss whenever they could put their fingers in the pie. [Laughter] They confederated with the other States in order to save themselves from the power of old King George III; and no sooner had they got rid of him then they turned in to persecuting their neighbors. Having got rid of the Indians, and witches, Baptists and Quakers in their country; after selling us our negroes for the love of gold, they began stealing them back for the love of God. [Laughter] That is the history as well as I understand it.®0

To emphasize the polarization of North and South, Wigfall spoke of "your Revolution." Conforming to Lowenthal and Guterman's conclusion that agitators work "from inside the audience, stirring up what lies dormant

®0 Congressional Globe, pp. 1378-1400.
there," Wigfall manipulated southern fear of slave insurrection to continue to drive the sections apart. More significant, in this segment, the Texan utilized his own knowledge of history to degrade New England. As Lowenthal and Guterman indicate persuaders will do, Wigfall presented his themes with a frivolous air. He evoked laughter but he stiffened the North's will to resist southern impudence. In that short passage Wigfall managed to offend virtually every northern political, social, historical, and religious tradition.

Apparently pleased with response to his earlier references to Lincoln's cowardice, Wigfall continued:

But as things are, it is useless, I am satisfied, to talk about a reconstruction. This Federal Government is dead. The only question is, whether we will give it a decent, peaceable, Protestant burial, or whether we shall have an Irish wake at the grave. [Laughter] Now, I am opposed to fighting, and would prefer a peaceable burial; but if the Republican Senators insist on fighting, and they can get the backbone again put into their President elect, and can get Mr. Chase reinstated in the Cabinet, from which he has been expelled, I do not know but that we shall have a fight. If their President has recovered from that "artificial panic" under which he was laboring a short time ago, under the advice of the Lieutenant General and the Secretary of War—I believe they advised him to be frightened, so say the Republican papers in defense of him; if they can recover him from that artificial fright under which he was laboring, and get him to take the Chicago platform fair and square, we shall have a fight; otherwise we shall not.

By revealing inside information about the President-elect's problems in selecting a cabinet, Wigfall further angered Republicans who resented the exposure. Restateing his contention that Lincoln was a cowardly puppet of the Republican party, the Texan strengthened the incoming administration's determination to prove itself to the South. In the

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81 Lowenthal and Guterman, Prophets of Deceit, p. 5.
derision which he directed toward Lincoln and the Republicans, Wigfall moved the sections closer to confrontation.

To remind northerns that southerners had seized arsenals and forts, Wigfall referred to Napoleon:

Napoleon Bonaparte, who was a wise man, once said that he trusted in Providence, but he said that he found that Providence always took sides with the artillery. We have taken the forts and guns, which you complain of, because we think Providence again will take sides with the artillery; and we have been securing a good deal of it. [Laughter]

In a superior attitude, Wigfall dared northerners or the Republican administration to retaliate against the South for her actions in taking the forts. Even on the sensitive subject of property seizure, Wigfall evoked what was possibly a nervous laughter from some senators and spectators. Continuing in a humorous vein Wigfall discussed President Davis's commissioners destined to arrive in Washington. Suggesting that Davis would probably overlook the "irregularity" that in Washington existed by then only a revolutionary government, Wigfall suddenly turned serious as he warned:

Turn your backs upon these commissioners, attempt to reinforce the forts and retake those which we now have; attempt to collect the revenues, or do any other manner or matter of thing that denies to the free white men, living in those seven sovereign States, the right which they have asserted of self-government, and you will have war, and it will be war in all its stern realities. I say this not in bravado, but I say it because I know it and you know it.

Casting the issues in the form of an ultimatum, Wigfall stressed the possibility of war "in all its stern realities." Perhaps believing that the North would never fight, the Texan stated the propositions in ways that effectively eliminated hope for compromise or peaceful reunion.
Disallowing a motion for recess, Wigfall referred to the March 2 segment when he insulted the United States flag. "The Senator from Illinois [Trumbull] seems to be shocked at my speaking with a feeling of gratification at the flag of what he chooses to call my country being insulted," the Texan began,

It is not the flag of my country, I hope and believe; but I have no official information on that point. That flag was never insulted with impunity until it floated over a cargo of Black Republican hirelings, sent to one of the sovereign States of this Union to coerce them to obedience to a Government that was distasteful to them.

Thus he spoke the words upon which a motion to expel him was based.

With words like "Black Republican hirelings," Wigfall intended to antagonize his opponents. Daring his enemies to act, Wigfall continued:

The State to which I owe my allegiance has withdrawn and cut loose from all connection with a Government that allows its flag to be insulted. She has plucked her bright star from a bunting that can be fired at with impunity. If your President elect has recovered from that artificial fright, see if you cannot induce him to try and wipe out the insult; but I predicted last night that he would not; and I predict again that he will not. You fear to pass your force bills; you abandon them in both Houses. If you can get a Cabinet properly organized, with fire-eaters enough in it, the Cabinet may precipitate the country into war, and then call upon what is denominated the conservative elements of your party to sustain the country in a war which you have already involved it; but I know, and you know, that those men whom you represent are not in favor of war, and that their representatives here, a large number of them, fear it. What will be the result, I do not know; and to be very frank, I do not care.82

Consistent with Lowenthal and Guterman's observations concerning agitators, Wigfall bellowed "defiance of established powers without regard to consequences."83 Repeatedly, he contended that Republicans, Lincoln, and northerners in general were afraid of war. Not only did he insult

82Congressional Globe, p. 1399.
83Lowenthal and Guterman, Prophets of Deceit, p. 41.
the incoming administration as cowardly, the Texan also suggested that Republicans were disorganized and divided. Shifting the blame he emphasized that "you" Republicans had already involved the country in war.

Returning to the flag, Wigfall said:

The country is composed of States; and when that Government which was established by those States, and that flag which bears upon its broad folds the stars representing those States, is used for the purpose of making war upon some of those States, I say that it has already been degraded, and that it ought to be fired at, and it should be torn down and trampled upon. These are my feelings upon the subject; and "if this be treason, make the most of it."

The Texan wanted the incoming administration or the northern senators to take some action against him. As he said, he did not care about the results of his words.

Still concerned about the border states, Wigfall increased the intensity of his abuse as he castigated the Republican party:

If the leaders of your party have any common sense left; if they have not become drunk with fanaticism, and are not now suffering from delirium tremens, as I believe most of them are; if you have one particle of sense left, you will set about immediately seeing how this dissolution that has already taken place can be stopped from going further; how you can save some of these border States still to tax, and levy revenue and tribute from them; how you may find somebody that you can persecute with impunity; begin hatching up some sort of compromise that will pay southern traitors for misrepresenting facts to their constituents. Do these things, and you may keep some of those border States still in.

According to Wigfall, if Republicans spent their time looking for somebody to persecute, southerners should feel no regret at withdrawing; and if Republicans had to rely on "southern traitors" to keep the border states in, those states should wake up and join the secession movement.

With one closing insult Wigfall stated, "having made these few, little, consiliatory, peace-preserving remarks, I am not disposed to take up more time."
Through taunts and jibes hurled at Republicans, Wigfall used calculated antagonism to attempt to force the new administration to take action soon after Lincoln's inauguration.

Solidification. Ever concerned that his followers remain strong in their convictions about secession and united in opposition to the North, Wigfall reminded southerners that "we are denounced, we are charged with disruption, northerners hate slavery and slaveholders, Union-saving is impractical, and we are wiser than our fathers."

Recalling for his supporters that the Declaration of Independence charged King George with inciting slaves to insurrection, Wigfall added:

Another great misapprehension is, that the men who drafted that Declaration of Independence had any peculiar fancy for one form of government rather than another. They were not fighting to establish a democracy in this country; they were not fighting to establish a republican form of government. Nothing was further from their intention. Alexander Hamilton, after he had fought for seven years, declared that the British form of government was the best that the ingenuity of man had ever devised; and when John Adams said to him, "without its corruptions;" "why," said he, "its corruptions are its greatest excellence; without its corruptions, it would be nothing."

Since the men who drafted the Declaration of Independence had no particular form of government in mind when they formed the United States, southerners could feel comfortable with the new confederacy. Emphasizing his contention that the founding fathers could have as easily formed a monarchy, Wigfall added that he was not recommending one: "I do not advocate it now; for we are wiser than our fathers, and our children will be wiser than we are. We understand our affairs better than those who preceded us one hundred years." Assured that they had every right to withdraw and form their own confederacy, Wigfall wanted to strengthen the unity of the seven states already out and encourage border states to follow.
Legitimation. Closely aligned with solidification, especially in this segment, Wigfall sought to justify South Carolina's actions in the "Star of the West" incident in Charleston harbor and to reinforce the belief that secession was necessary. To defend the state's firing on the ship Wigfall reminded the Senate that the vessel went into the harbor without President Buchanan's knowledge, in the dead of night originally, found the harbor blockaded and had to wait until the next day to try to enter in broad daylight before it was fired upon. Depicting the plan to "sneak into the harbor" of a sovereign state with "a vessel containing armed men," the Texan claimed South Carolina did the only thing a state could do in that circumstance. Proving he was correct in the interpretation, Wigfall observed that the United States had never dared resent the injury and insult to its flag being fired upon.

Further justifying the South's right to secede, Wigfall employed an analogy of two neighbors. "That the people of the North shall consider themselves as more blessed than we," he began, more civilized, and happier, is not a matter at which we would complain at all, if they would only content themselves with believing that to be the fact; but when they come and attempt to propagandize, and insist that we shall be as perfect as they imagine themselves to be, then it is that their good opinion of themselves becomes offensive to us. Let my neighbor believe that his wife is an angel and his children cherubs, I care not, though I may know he is mistaken; but when he comes impertinently poking his nose into my door every morning, and telling me that my wife is a shrew and my children brats, then the neighborhood becomes uncomfortable, and if I cannot remove him, I will remove myself; and if he says to me, "you shall not move, but you shall stay here, and you shall, day after day, hear the demerits of your wife and children discussed," then I begin to feel a little restive, and possibly might assert that great original right of pursuing whatever may conduce to my happiness, though it might be kicking him out of my door. If New England would only be content with the
blessings which she imagines she has, we would not disturb her in her happiness.  

With northerners guilty of such revolting behavior, Wigfall rationalized secession. The passage dripping with sarcasm, Wigfall wanted southerners to resent the idea that northerners might consider themselves better than southerners and that impertinent "people of the North" attempted to impose their perfection on the South. Through the analogy suggesting abolitionists' activities in the South, Wigfall appealed to a growing condition of malaise, or what Lowenthal and Guterman term "a psychological symptom of an oppressive situation." Craven describes the atmosphere in the South as follows:

Republican victory in 1860 was not just a temporary slip. The South had fallen steadily behind the North in population and was losing political equity as well. The Republican threat to a way of life was bad enough. To lose all hope of an equal voice in national affairs was even worse.

Aware of the growing unrest among slaveholders, Wigfall used the mood to legitimize secession.

*Image Building.* Continuing to remind his supporters of his virtues as their spokesman, Wigfall persistently inserted phrases or words to enhance his ethos. In this segment he indicated that he spoke truth, trusted, answered frankly, opposed quack medicines, owed his allegiance to his state, read what distinguished men said, explained, thought for himself, and had been misquoted." Although he often introduced a few words in the context of some other strategy, there were instances in

84 Congressional Globe, pp. 1398-1400.

85 Lowenthal and Guterman, Prophets of Deceit, p. 15.

86 Avery O. Craven, "Why the Southern States Seceded," in Knowles, Crisis of the Union, p. 61.
in which the Texan elaborated to bolster his personal image among the voters. Once, he said, "I am not in the confidence of the last Cabinet, and I suspect will not be in the new one." In the statement Wigfall reminded his followers that he had been his own man, had spoken out against inequities or mistreatment of southerners wherever he saw it. The Texan wanted to portray just such an image. To reenforce the concept, after Wade had noted unflatteringly that Wigfall might have discovered the disease under which the body politic was suffering, the Texan thanked him in these words: "I feel flattered by the compliment."

For his supporters in Texas, Wigfall suggested that an attack by his enemies was proof that he was a bold champion of states' rights.

Throughout the segment Wigfall referred to his own knowledge of history, the Declaration of Independence, and the activities of not only Buchanan's administration but Lincoln's efforts to form a cabinet. Quoting exact dates and names, he sought to strengthen the faith of his constituents in him as one who knew the facts about which they wished to be informed. After reading from the Declaration of Independence, he remarked: "Now I ask any plain common sense man what was the meaning of that?" Because he knew the meanings of the signs of the times, and because he was a man of common sense as well as boldness of character, Wigfall asked southerners to believe in him and secession.

Effects. Single-minded in his determination to force a confrontation between himself and Republicans, Wigfall spoke language of vilification of important representatives of that party including Lincoln; he objectified numerous northern groups which he blamed for the condition

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87Congressional Globe, pp. 1397-1399.
in the country that required the South to withdraw; he used the strat­
egy of calculated antagonism directed against northerners and Republi­
cans; he solidified southerners belief in the madness of Republicans and
their interpretation of the Declaration of Independence; he legitimized
secession and the blockade of the Charleston harbor; and he built his
own image as a fearless champion of secession.

Revealing his impact on northerners who read of the speech in the
newspapers--probably Wigfall's real audience--the Washington Evening
Star editorialized:

Messrs. Hemphill and Wigfall, we hear, leave Washington this
evening to assume seats in the Montgomery congress, as repre­
sentatives of Texas in that body. In view of the remarkable
speech delivered by the latter on Sunday night, in the Senate
of the United States, it is eminently proper that he should thus
translate himself to that latitude. It is hoped that the Globe
will preserve his remarkable speech --- which out Wigfall-ed all
his previous so characteristic senatorial oratory --- verbatim et
lite verbatim, without crossing a t, dotting an i, or mincing the
peculiarities of the grammar. Above all, its morals should be
preserved for all times, as evidence of the tendency of disunion
sentiments; for no other such warning against them can possibly
be kept before the eyes of a patriotic people.88

That the editor repeated "remarkable speech" twice provides some indi­
cation of the influence which the Texan’s efforts produced in the North.
Suggesting the speech "out Wigfall-ed all of his previous so character­
istic senatorial oratory," the writer revealed that the fire-eater had
established a reputation and perhaps a following in the North. And, the
reference to his disunion sentiments implied that Wigfall had accom­
plished his goals of escalation/confrontation.

A reporter from Harper’s Weekly who was present for the speech said
of Wigfall: "His wit and repartee overwhelmed his Northern opponents,

even in the opinion of Northern hearers; though on the main questions at issue between them he was obviously wrong and they were right. So much for a good delivery and well-chosen language." The reporter suggested that through his powerful delivery and abrasive words, Wigfall tended to intimidate his opponents. Surely very few other persons engaged in similar obnoxious personal behavior or were as persistent in demanding the floor and holding it for extended periods of time.

In April the Texas Republican editor summarized the Harper's article saying, "considering this debate as an exhibition of forensic talent, the editor does not hesitate to award the palm to Mr. Wigfall." Such was the reputation which Wigfall sought to acquire for himself in the South.

SUMMARY

Although seven states had withdrawn and formed the Confederacy, Wigfall knew that time was on the side of Republicans who believed Lincoln's inauguration and subsequent administration of the government would keep the border states in the Union and, ultimately, result in peaceful reunion with the Deep South. Therefore, the Texan resisted inactivity and attempted to spark confrontation. Dividing his time between Republicans and northern Democrats, Wigfall named individuals whom he pronounced responsible for the conditions of the country that demanded secession. It is significant, perhaps, that only in this segment Wigfall attacked President Buchanan whose plan for compromise remained in Congress. Although he probably did not regard Buchanan's

89 *Harpers' Weekly*, March 8, 1861.

90 *Texas Republican*, April 11, 1861.
proposal as a serious possibility to resolve the nation's troubles, Wigfall still devoted enough time to the old Pennsylvania Democrat to further alienate southerners from the North. Articulating the likelihood of war breaking out at Charleston, the Texan blamed northerners for "idly and listlessly gazing on" while the country drifted toward war.

In a seemingly desperate effort to provoke confrontation Wigfall accused northerners of unburying George Washington and Massachusetts of hypocritically opposing slavery, discussed inter-racial marriage, and claimed northerners equated slavery and polygamy. Wigfall aroused northern resentment when he called Douglas back into the Chamber as the Illinois senator was leaving. In the breach of senatorial courtesy Wigfall probably agitated strife.

To unify southerners in opposition to the Washington Peace Conference Wigfall recalled Virginia's Lees, Masons, Pendletons, Randolphs, and Washingtons to protest the state's overtures to conciliation. Rationalizing secession, the Texan contended that because northerners had already changed the government, the South could feel free to withdraw and form a new confederacy.

In an effort to bolster his own image Wigfall catalogued his virtues and the wrongs he had suffered at the hands of northerners.

Just six days later the Texan again pursued the goal of polarization through four specific strategies. In the first—an attack against Johnson—Wigfall described the Tennessean as ignorant, cowardly, politically ambitious, and a traitor to the South. When he indicted Johnson, Wigfall in a sense downgraded an American ideal of the poor man made good. Expecting the move to alienate northerners, he apparently counted
on aristocratic thinking southerners to support his appeals. Through persistent strikes against Douglas, Wigfall undermined the Illinois senator's influence.

In the second segment, apparently primarily for display and the only time during his senatorial career, Wigfall took numerous supporting documents with him to the Chamber. For his constituents the Texan contended for secession as a right acknowledged by Jackson and other famous names in history. The segment also contains one of the few passages in which Wigfall used fear appeals to solidify southerners. In this instance he attempted to cause non-slaveholders to see the calamity that would result for them if slaves were set free. Wigfall asserted that in the event of emancipation the slaveholders would leave the country forcing non-slaveholders to cope with the problem of four and one-half million freed slaves.

Drawing upon the disenchantment of southerners in the wake of Lincoln's election, Wigfall built his own image by belittling the Presidency. Moreover, he further weakened Johnson's ethos by debunking the office that the Tennessee senator coveted. As a net effect Wigfall improved his own image among southerners for whom he presented himself as an honest man who sought no higher office.

In the third segment of this encounter Wigfall, for the first time, revealed a long-range goal of escalation/confrontation. Distressed by inactivity on every hand, the Texan deliberately attempted to provoke conflict among senators or between the sections.

More bold than ever, Wigfall clearly intimated that he would back up his insults and attacks with the pistols he wore. By contrast he did not expect comparable behavior from northerners such as Chandler, Rice,
and Lincoln whom he regarded as cowards. Blaming northerners for the country's woes, Wigfall set about to engender reactions toward himself and determination among northerners to resist peaceful secession. Probably to anger northerners, the Texan assumed a superior air in reminding his listeners of the unavenged blow struck by South Carolinians against a federal ship in the Charleston harbor. It was a sore point which the Texan aggravated. Wigfall alternately alienated northerners and solidified the South in the propriety of secession. To prove that he was a fair person, Wigfall contended that southerners were willing to offer what they demanded, the right of self-government. By eliminating one by one the peace proposals of northerners, Wigfall hoped to cause the South to conclude that secession was the only choice.

The following day Wigfall obtained the floor at approximately four a.m. apparently to continue attempting to provoke confrontation with the North. Attacking Wade, the Texan created quite a stir when he claimed that history had not properly honored the Ohio senator who was the real author of the "irrepressible conflict" doctrine. Suggesting northerners were as eager for secession as southerners, the Texan likely irritated his opponents and encouraged southerners. Hours before Lincoln was to be inaugurated, Wigfall verbally attacked him in the Senate. Besides vilifying Seward and Justice Story, the Texan shifted blame for disruption to New England and northerners whom he claimed "excite our slaves to insurrection against their masters, and array one class of citizens against the other." Classifying "union-savers, northerners, Republicans, and New Englanders," Wigfall created a group upon whom his followers could focus.
Perhaps deliberately provoking northerners, Wigfall referred to their labor system as "hireling;" mentioned New England's practice of "selling us our negroes for the love of gold, and stealing them back for the love of God;" reminded the North that southerners had seized the forts and guns; and dared the Republicans to rebuff the commissioners shortly to arrive from the Confederacy. Republicans he accused of being "drunk with fanaticism and suffering from delirium tremens."

Strengthening southerners' conviction about secession, Wigfall stressed that they had been mistreated in the Union by northerners who were not content with their imagined happiness but had to interfere in the lives of southerners. As usual, he also inserted materials to build his own ethos and to cause southerners to follow his lead toward secession.
CHAPTER IX

ENCOUNTER SIX: THE LAST STAND MARCH 7, 1861

Situation. In the days prior to Lincoln's inauguration, Wigfall worked feverishly to advance the South's interests. According to Roy Nichols, the Texan,

... was busy collecting and sending South any information which his position enabled him to secure. He had been doing this since New Year's and now was taking on a new function, actually organizing a recruiting service for the Confederacy, while still on the Senate payroll. He had an office in Baltimore which he frequented, and he worked in the District. He was busy arranging for the induction of the National Volunteers, the old Breckinridge and Lane Club, who now, under the stimulus of L. Q. Washington of the Knights of the Golden Circle, were seeking to go South.¹

Moreover, Wigfall and Texas Ranger Captain Ben McCullough bought a thousand Colt revolvers and a thousand Morse rifles for Texas Confederates.² By his own admission, prior to the inaugural, Wigfall did not sleep "for some forty-eight hours, except when I could take a nap now and then."³ In character, the Texan on March 4 telegraphed the governor of South Carolina: "Inauguration means war. There is strong

³ Congressional Globe, p. 1442.
belief that re-enforcements will be speedily sent. Be vigilant."  

Despite the prospects for conflict, Wigfall experienced frustration over Republican "masterly inactivity" which continued after Lincoln took office. Considering the build-up toward Lincoln's inauguration, Wigfall expected immediate action of some kind.

During the special session of the Senate on March 5, Wigfall observed Stephen Douglas's continuing political courtship of Lincoln. Therefore, on March 7, in response to Douglas who—according to James G. Blaine—"with the characteristic boldness of a leader and with a patriotism which did him honor, defended the Inaugural address," the Texan delivered his last speech to the United States Senate. Obviously angry because Douglas supported Lincoln, Wigfall attacked both men and legitimized secession. Possibly hoping his speech would be reprinted for future reference, he apparently envisioned himself in history as an expounder of the Constitution and states' rights. As King points out, "whether it was coincidental or satirically staged by Wigfall, he countered all of the nationalistic and pacifistic principles of Daniel Webster's great 'Seventh of March speech' on its eleventh anniversary." Providing a clue to his purpose for speaking, Wigfall

4 Nichols, Disruption of American Democracy, p. 488.
5 Ibid., Nichols provides a complete account of Douglas' friendship with the President-elect; consultations on the inaugural address; and cordial social relations between the families. See Chapter 26, pp. 483-501.
7 Congressional Globe, pp. 1441-1442.
stated, "as the Senator from Illinois [Douglas] took occasion to discuss
the meaning of the inaugural, and to give a commentary upon it, I deem
it not impertinent that my views, whatever they may be worth, and my
construction, should also be given to the country."  

Strategies. With an overriding goal of escalation/confrontation,
Wigfall utilized at least five other strategies:

1. Vilification of Douglas for his support of Lincoln.
2. Objectification of Republicans for failing to support
   Crittenden's compromise proposals.
3. Solidification of southerners' belief in secession.
4. Legitimizing southern military policy.
5. Calculated antagonism of Republicans, northern Democrats, and
   Lincoln's administration to force action.

Vilification. Because he deemed Douglas a confidant of Lincoln's,
Wigfall pressed him "to say explicitly whether he would advise the
with-drawl of the troops from Fort Sumter and Fort Pickens, the removal
of the flag of the United States from the borders of the confederate
States, and that no effort should be made to levy tribute upon a foreign
people? I hope he will answer." Explaining that "it would hardly be
good policy to reveal our policy to one who may so soon be in the coun­
sels of the enemy," Douglas drew laughter and applause from the gal­
leries. When the Vice-President called for order, Wigfall, aroused
and probably angry, appealed for the galleries not to be interrupted.
Attacking Douglas for a stump speech the Illinois senator made previ­
ously in Virginia which seemed to contradict his statement in the
Senate, Wigfall asked for a "new revelation." He roared: "There was
a revelation delivered upon Mount Sinai, amid the mutterings of thunder

\footnote{King, \textit{Louis T. Wigfall}, pp. 111-112.}
and flashings of lightning, and that revelation recognized slaves and slavery. Unless the Senator wants to go on, I will make a brief comment on that now. I see he assents, and I do it for the benefit of the other side of the Chamber." [Laughter] As Wigfall continued playing to the gallery audiences, Douglas interrupted motivating the Texan to refer again to the Illinois' senator's Norfolk speech and innocently state: "I desired to know whether he would sustain and back Abraham should he withdraw the troops from Fort Sumter and from Fort Pickens." Sarcastically, he added,"and I have no doubt it would strengthen very much the backbone of the present Administration should they know that, in withdrawing the troops, they will be sustained by the Senator from Illinois." 10 Revealing his contempt for Wigfall, Douglas took the Texan's bait and attempted to explain that in the Norfolk speech he had said that if Lincoln was elected he [Douglas] would support him, but if Lincoln should ever be found guilty of a crime warranting hanging that he would be in favor of hanging. After several exchanges in which Wigfall seemed to distort everything Douglas said, the Illinois Democrat finally called for "by-gones to be by-gones," and repeated his appeal for reunion of the withdrawn states. In turn Wigfall persisted in his efforts to weaken Douglas' efforts to avert war and restore the Union.

Objectification. Although he had done nothing to promote peace and certainly never spoke in favor of Crittenden's resolutions, Wigfall, on March 7, blamed Republicans for failing to pass the resolutions

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10 Congressional Globe, p. 1442.
and, ultimately, permitting secession to occur. He stated: "A few months ago the adoption of the Crittenden resolutions might possibly have prevented the secession of any State. Even after secession was a fact accomplished, the Senate of the United States gave nineteen votes, all told, and I one of them, for the Crittenden resolutions."\(^{11}\) Suggesting secession was the fault of Republicans, Wigfall indicated that he had voted for the compromise measures. Among his followers he could claim that he had done his part for peace while his opponents sat back and watched the country drift toward war.

Solidification. Utilizing Douglas's "by-gones" theme, Wigfall absolved the South of responsibility for peace:

> It is not for us to say whether it shall be by the sword or by treaty; but what I wanted to say when I rose this morning was, that I did not desire that the State I still represented here should be put in a false position--of making war when we were not doing it. Explaining to the Senate what I understood to be the real issue, . . . explaining fully and explicitly what would be the result of its action, and the Senator from Illinois having explained himself, by-gones between himself and me are by-gones.\(^{12}\)

Wigfall sought through emotional language to create a fearful image of war for his southern supporters and for border state representatatives who might be on the verge of secession. Throughout the speech he appealed to the "persecuted innocence" theme and returned to the plea in his final statement. He placed blame on others and reassured his supporters that he was not a war maker.

Legitimation. Quoting from Douglas, Wigfall reiterated the compact theory of states to justify secession. Given his premise, the

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\(^{11}\)Congressional Globe, p. 1440.

\(^{12}\)Ibid., p. 1443.
Texan argued logically. In this instance, and indeed for a substantial part of the speech in question, Wigfall conformed to H. Hardy Perritt's view of the fire-eaters whose "speeches and writings were highly logical in tone and format, with strong emotional overtones."¹³ Wigfall contended: "The platform of the Democratic party declares that the Constitution of the United States is a compact; that each State acceded to it as a State. The premise being admitted, the conclusion follows; and sophism and logic both combined, if it were possible, could not avoid the conclusion."¹⁴ Romanticizing the South through association with revered names and events, Wigfall discussed the compact theory in terms of the Constitutional Convention, Oliver Ellsworth, and John Randolph, all of which supposedly supported the theory. Aligning his cause with the historical greats, Wigfall reasoned that the South was justified in secession.

Legitimizing southern intentions to fire upon United States ships that might come into the Charleston harbor, Wigfall questioned: "Why sir, if the President of the United States were to send a fleet to Liverpool and attempt there to enforce the laws of the United States and that fleet were fired at, would anybody say that the British Government was responsible for the blood that might follow?" Therefore, Wigfall claimed that the South should not be blamed for the bloodshed if the North tried to collect taxes in the South. Using the persecuted innocence theme, the Texan concluded, "and because we are

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¹⁴Congressional Globe, p. 1440.
not willing to pay tribute, and acknowledge a foreign—under the cir-
cumstances hostile—flag, it is said that we make war." Then, like
Lowenthal and Guterman's agitator who claims superiority, Wigfall
declared: "You may amuse women and children with arguments of this
sort, but men will otherwise understand them." Indicating what the
North would have to do to enforce the laws in the seceded states, he
contended, "you have to put down, subvert, root up, turn over, exter-
minate, annihilate that Federal Government of theirs [the Confed­
ercy].

Calculated Antagonism. Playing on the anxiety existing in the
country, Wigfall blamed Republicans and Lincoln's adminis­tration for
the delays in reaching decisions about recognizing Confederate repres­
sentatives, re-enforcing Fort Sumter, and secession. As Lowenthal
and Guterman suggest, when the agitator "takes advantage of the anx­ietyes and fears of his listeners, he is playing on very real anx­ietyes and fears . . . when he calls upon them to depend on him, he
capitalizes on both their revolt against the restraints of civiliza­
tion and their longing for some new symbol of authority." Depicting
northern Democrats, Lincoln, and Republicans as hestitating, weak
leaders, Wigfall called for action, straight talk, and facts. Suggest­
ing "patience is not always a virtue," the Texan told his listeners
that he "waited to see whether any on those who were in contemplation

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15 Ibid., p. 1441.

16 Leo Lowenthal and Norbert Guterman, Prophets of Deceit: A
Study of the Techniques of the American Agitator (New York: Harper
and Brothers, 1949), p. 139.

17 Ibid., p. 115.
of the law, authorized to speak for this Administration, indorsed or
dissent ed from his [Douglas's] construction; but on the other side of
the Chamber silence prevailed." Indicating to his listeners that
the Republicans were sitting idly by while the two sections drifted
toward war, Wigfall claimed superiority as one who was concerned.

Expanding the compact theory to include the right of "Seven of
these high contracting parties" to withdraw from the Union, Wigfall
switched abruptly from formal language to colorful, figurative analogy;

What is a remedy in one stage of a disease is no remedy in another.
A blue-mass pill and a cup of coffee next morning will relieve the
liver and prevent one from having fever, very frequently; but when
the disease is on you, blistering and blood-letting may sometimes
be necessary; and when the patient is dead, then it is necessary
to have a coffin, a grave digger, funeral services, and things of
that sort; and, as I said the other night, the only question is,
whether we shall have a decent, peaceable, quiet funeral after the
Protestant form, or whether we shall have an Irish wake at the
grave? The Union is dead; it has got to be buried; if you want
an Irish wake, you can get it. If you want a Protestant funeral,
we have not the slightest objection.

Taunting senators who still considered the seven states part of the
Union, Wigfall asked how they would deal with practical questions like
collecting taxes. He asked:

... but who are you going to send there? We will admit that it
is very expedient to bell the cat; but which of you, Senators, or
which of your constituents, is going to undertake that safe opera-
tion of putting the bell on the cat? Whom are you going to send
to New Orleans, to Mobile, to Charleston, to Savannah? Who will
go there as your custom-house officer? You may know the man; I
do not, and I doubt if you can find him.

Primarily for the benefit of his southern supporters who would read the
newspaper accounts, Wigfall sought to irritate and enrage northerners
through questions such as above.

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18 Congressional Globe, p. 1439.
Returning to Douglas and Lincoln, Wigfall attacked them through threats and warnings:

... and the Senator says that he [Lincoln] has left himself the alternative of determining whether it will be more likely to lead to peace and take Fort Moultrie or abandon Fort Sumter; but Mr. Lincoln will have a very brief period in which to decide this question. If he supposes it will lead to peace to reinforce Fort Sumter, he can make the experiment. One or the other he must do, and that very promptly.19

Daring his opponents to act, Wigfall exposed Douglas and Lincoln as weak-willed, indecisive leaders. By contrast, Wigfall implied that he knew precisely how to act and he gave the impression that he would not hesitate if the decision were his.

Spurred on by a response from Douglas, Wigfall declared that secession had established a new nation which would be sending emissaries to work out a "fair arrangement for the distribution of public property, and the assessment of the public debt." He asked, "will you do that? Or will you set stupidly and idly gazing on, until there shall be a conflict of arms, because you cannot 'compromise with traitors'--because you cannot recognize the independence of States that were States before the Government had existence?" His anger at the "masterly inactivity" surfacing, Wigfall referred to Republicans who "stupidly" and "idly" sat by. In addition to the tone and word choice irritating his opponents, Wigfall probably gained southern followers who would object to being labeled "traitors." Whether peace through compromise or, preferrably, secession and possibly war, Wigfall wanted to have some part in causing action.

19Congressional Globe, p. 1440.
Calling for the United States to recognize Confederate representatives coming to town to divide the property, Wigfall probably angered northerners. Perhaps sensing their reactions he continued:

Senators, what is the meaning of this declaration? It is that if we acknowledge ourselves to be slaves; if we abandon the right of self-government; withdraw your troops; yield us the right of collecting our own revenues; divide fairly the public property; give us our pro rata share of the Army—we want two, three, or four of the regiments; turn them over to us; give us our share of public domain—do these things, and we will, pro tempore, enter into with you a treaty of commerce, of peace, and amity; and if you will reorganize your own Government, and form such a one as suits us, we may again confederate with you, and enter into a compact of common defense and general welfare. Refuse it, and we will settle this question by the sword.20

As few had dared, Wigfall detailed for the Senate and those who read the accounts the process of peaceful separation. For the senators who refused to recognize the seceded states, Wigfall served as a distasteful reminder that they had to reach a decision soon.

Lowenthal and Guterman suggest that an either-or dichotomy "is basic to the agitator's world outlook."21 Pressing his opponents, Wigfall presented such a dilemma frequently. "There is no dodging these issues," he contended, "you need not attempt it; if you want peace, we are anxious for it; but the time is passed for party platforms; the time is passed for demagogism to adopt compromises which mean nothing. These are plain, palpable issues; and they have to be met." Claiming superior insight, the Texan exclaimed: "The President of the United States and the Senator from Illinois both misapprehend, utterly and wholly, the issues that are before the country."

20 Ibid., p. 1441.
21 Lowenthal and Guterman, Prophets of Deceit, p. 93.
Romanticizing about secession, Wigfall traced the history of the colonies through the Dutch who settled New York; the English in Virginia; Roman Catholics in Maryland; Huguenots in South Carolina; and the Quakers in Pennsylvania. Linking the American Revolution to secession, Wigfall completed the story with, "just before the thirty-fourth State was admitted into the Union, seven of the States withdrew from it." Again posing the dilemma, he continued, "now what are the remaining States going to do? Preserve the Union you cannot; for it is dissolved. Conquer those States and hold them as conquered provinces, you may. Is the play worth the candle? Treat them as a separate confederacy, and you have peace. Treat them as States of the Union, and you have war." Sarcastically, he added: "Mr. Abraham Lincoln has to remove those troops from Fort Pickens and from Fort Sumter, or they will be removed for him."  

Returning to Douglas, Wigfall said: "His speech was calculated to produce the impression that Mr. Lincoln meant to do nothing. Masterly inactivity is the policy that cannot now prevail. Action! action! action! as the great Athenian orator said, is now necessary." Much stronger in his appeal, Wigfall forced the issue:

You must withdraw your troops; take your flag out of our country; allow us the right of self-government; enter into treaties with us afterwards or not, as you see fit; but you must do that, or you must make up your minds to have war—war in its sternest aspect, with all its consequences. You must make no attempt to levy tribute upon us; you must take your flag from beyond our borders; you must withdraw your troops from our forts, or we will remove them.

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22 Congressional Globe, p. 1441.
Attempting to defend himself, Douglas stated that he did not speak for the President but the two merely agreed on most issues. Reminding his listeners that Wigfall considered himself a foreigner to the Senate, Douglas tried to reduce the force of Wigfall's attack. Stimulated by the interruption, the Texan explained again why he continued to occupy his seat in the Senate. Turning the tables on Douglas, Wigfall pointed out that "if you shall continue to call my name, I will answer, probably, if it suits my convenience, and if I am called on to vote, I shall probably give my reasons for voting; and regarding this as a very respectable public meeting, continue my connection with it in that way." When the presiding officer called for order on the floor and in the galleries, Wigfall commented: "I trust the galleries will be let alone. You will be fortunate, Mr. President, if the galleries do not clear the Senate before long." [Laughter] Clearly disruptive in his conduct, Wigfall wanted the other senators to take action against him which would let him appear as a martyr for secession.

Effects. The New York Times described Wigfall's speech as follows:

The resolution to print the usual number of the President's Inaugural then came up, and Mr. Wigfall, of Texas, made a speech in answer to that of Douglas, delivered on Wednesday. He insisted that the Address [Lincoln's] was a declaration of war against the seceded States, and asserted that if Forts Sumter and Pickens were not immediately surrendered by the Administration they would be taken. He was more than usually violent and Wigfall-ish.24 Judging from the term "Wigfall-ish" applied to him, Wigfall apparently

23Congressional Globe, p. 1442.
added to his existing reputation for a violent temper, abrasive language, and rough conduct. In other words, he was known as an agitator.

A few days after the speech an unnamed "public man" said of Wigfall, "his bearing for the last day or two has been rather better than it was on the day of his collision with Mr. Douglas, when he really looked like a tiger, and acted not unlike one."  

Revealing Wigfall's reputation in Washington, James Blaine called the March 7 encounter, "a vast gain to the Union that Douglas spoke so boldly in defense of Mr. Lincoln; and it was significant that Wigfall received imputations upon his honor without threats of a duel." Evidently the Texan had established himself as an agitator whom some men feared.

King says, "Wigfall's 'seventh of March speech' aroused new rounds of criticism of him in the North and excited some of the Republican senators to an effort to get rid of him through the most stringent parliamentary action open to them." Indeed, the following day, L. F. S. Foster, one of those "silent" Republicans, offered a resolution to expel Wigfall from the Senate. Because Wigfall was absent the motion lay over, but March 9, T. L. Clingman amended the motion and, March 11, the motion was the first order of business. After a spirited debate involving numerous senators, the Senate voted to go into Executive

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26 Blaine, Twenty Years of Congress, p. 288.

27 King, Louis T. Wigfall, p. 113.
Session without voting on the motion to expel. Blaine suggested "the Republicans did not press the issue because they were persuaded that Wigfall's presence was helping rather than harming the Union cause." In achieving his goal to agitate secession, Wigfall made certain that neither his friends or enemies ignored him.

Southern newspapers reported Wigfall's speech quoting phrases such as the "blue pill at night and a cup of coffee next morning may relieve the liver . . ." "bayonets and not words must settle the question," "the masterly inactivity policy cannot prevail," "you cannot serve God and mannon," "Action! Action! Action!" "you will be fortunate if the galleries do not clear the Senate before long," and "let by-gones be by-gones." As he probably planned, Wigfall caught the attention of his followers who read of his activities in the newspapers. Concerning the speech, the Texas Republican editor wrote: "Senators Hemphill and Wigfall have determined to wait for official notification of the secession of their state before leaving Washington. It is thought that their continued presence here will be useful to the cause of the South."

The speech improved Wigfall's image in Texas. One Texas editor dubbed him "one of the most prudent, calm, deliberate, at the same time, one of the bravest in the world, and well fitted for the

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28 Congressional Globe, pp. 1447-1451.
29 Blaine, Twenty Years of Congress, pp. 288-289.
30 Richmond Enquirer, March 9, 1861.
31 Texas Republican, March 16, 1861.
'commander-in-chief,' should a war arise between the Confederate States and any other nation."\(^{32}\)

According to King, Wigfall "helped to assure war by stiffening the northern will to resist southern secession and by strengthening southern resistance to peaceful negotiation."\(^{33}\) If the judgment is true, Wigfall succeeded as an agitator. Wigfall used the occasion to legitimize secession and to vilify Douglas and Lincoln. Through agitative language, he irritated Republicans and northern Democrats to the point that they were willing to expel him.

**SUMMARY**

Aware that this speech was likely his last utterance on the floor of the Senate, in addition to his general goal of escalation/confrontations, Wigfall apparently attempted to provide a statement of his beliefs which would endure. As result, possibly because he refuted Webster's "Seventh of March" speech, at least portions of Wigfall's comments seemed well organized and cogent. In a sense the segment represents a review of his agitational efforts over the previous fifteen months. He attacked Douglas for his support of Lincoln; he placed blame on the Republicans for not supporting Crittenden's resolutions; he reassured southerners that they were falsely accused of making war; he justified secession as an act sanctioned by history, law, and precedent; and he deliberately irritated northerners. Using colorful language by which he hoped to be remembered, Wigfall declared the

\(^{32}\) *Dallas Herald*, March 13, 1861.

Union dead and offered the North a choice of an Irish wake or a Protestant funeral. He defied the Republican administration to find a man brave enough to attempt to collect taxes in the South and dared Lincoln to try to reenforce Fort Sumter. In a superior attitude he demanded that the North give the South "our pro rata share" of the military men, supplies, and public lands. Thoroughly enjoying himself in the exchanges with Douglas, the Texan closed his agitational career in the United States Senate "more than usually violent and Wigfall-ish."

He succeeded in arousing his opponents to the point of offering a motion to expel him from the Senate and caused southern newspaper editors to praise him.
CHAPTER X

ESTIMATE OF WIGFALL'S INFLUENCE AS A SECESSION AGITATOR

When John Brown's raid on Harper's Ferry and a United States Senate vacancy in Texas coincided, Wigfall was catapulted into the national forum. In Washington he used the opportunity to establish himself as a major force in helping bring about secession.

From his activities and speeches during 1860-1861, at least six conclusions can be drawn. First, he established a national reputation. Unknown in Washington prior to his arrival in January of 1860, the Texan quickly attracted the attention of his fellow senators, gallery spectators, and newspaper reporters with a defense of Texas and an attack on Daniel Webster. In the abuse of Webster, Wigfall revealed his goal of creating an image as an irritating southerner who contended for states' rights. The New York Times editor suggested a reputation that Wigfall cultivated in the North:

We regret to announce to our northern readers that the South refuses to accord even this poor boon to this wretched section of our country. We are to have no respite. Our idols are all overthrown. The work of iconoclasm is to go on with remorseless energy, until not a wreck will remain of all we once worshipped and admired. In short—we may as well state it at once—Senator Wigfall, of Texas, has taken Daniel Webster in hand, and is treating him precisely the same way that Mr. O'Conor [sic] treated Lord Mansfield. Mr. O'Conor proved that Mansfield knew nothing about the law; Wigfall is now making manifest to a startled world that Daniel Webster did not understand the Constitution of the United States. The proud title of expounder of the Constitution has passed away from the New England statesman, and a Wigfall of Texas has taken his place. . . . the smash-
ing up of Socrates and Mansfield and Brougham is, after all, a trivial thing while we retain O'Conor at the head of that venerable body, the New York bar; and the consigning of Webster's memory to oblivion is not of much consequence, as long as Mr. Wigfall's tongue can wag new wisdom forth upon the astonished land.¹

In the sarcastic remark, "a Wigfall from Texas," the editor suggested the contempt with which he held the Texan. Thus, early in his senatorial career, Wigfall had achieved, at least partially, his intention to establish a reputation. From that time on, the New York Times' reporters and those from other newspapers scrutinized Wigfall's actions and utterances in order to ridicule him and to offset the impact of his agitation. Throughout his stay in Washington Wigfall worked toward stirring northern hatred of himself as a representative of the South and the admiration of southerners. Virtually all of his appearances on the floor of the Senate included language or behavior designed to accomplish his aims in image building. In addition to Webster he attacked Lincoln, Pugh, Douglas, Fessenden, Andrew Johnson, and any other person through whom he could arouse hatred or sympathy.

Secondly, he drove the North and South further apart. Almost from his first utterance in the Senate, Wigfall divided the sections. He accused northerners of sectional prejudice in defeating his appropriation request and leaving women and children to die from Mexican and Indian attacks. He called for Texans and other southerners to see the disregard which northerners displayed concerning the Lone Star state. Wigfall employed often northern indifference and hostility toward the South as themes to heighten the polarity of the sections. Disdaining

¹New York Times, February 8, 1860.
senatorial courtesies, Wigfall succeeded in stirring animosity among senators and spectators alike. He employed unorthodox methods and unusual interpretations of issues such as the homestead bill. For instance, on one occasion, he hinted that slavery might be reopened if the homestead bill passed. Wigfall occasionally took the floor and kept it over the protests of other senators who preferred to get on with the business of Congress. Often he goaded fellow senators into quarrels among themselves.

Thirdly, Wigfall systematically worked to defeat Douglas' chances to obtain the presidential nomination of the Democratic party. Using the Illinois Democrat's ambitions as a basis for dividing the party, Wigfall relentlessly attacked Douglas during May of 1860 prior to the Baltimore convention. The Texan savored the limelight while Jefferson Davis and other southerners encouraged attempts to destroy Douglas's position in the party. No doubt Wigfall was influential in dividing the Democratic party and the subsequent election of a Republican. Indeed, for one bent on secession, Lincoln's election was a convenient provocation. Along with other southerners, Wigfall warned that secession would follow a Republican's election. In defeating Douglas's candidacy, Wigfall helped create the confrontation.

Fourthly, after Lincoln's election, Wigfall urged secession. In fact, he was distressed much of the winter of 1861 because the southern states did not withdraw more rapidly. Efforts at compromise, such as Powell's resolutions, Wigfall used as examples of the futility of union-saving plans. Even as he thwarted peacemaking moves, the Texan blamed northerners for failing to provide the guarantees that would keep slave-holding states in the Union. When pressed for the conditions upon which
the South would stay, Wigfall set forth unacceptable terms which he expected his opponents to reject. When his conditions were declined, Wigfall boasted that he had offered the olive branch which northerners refused.

Fifthly, Wigfall exerted his influence to delay compromise efforts. Aware that hopes for peace kept border states and some deep South states from withdrawing, Wigfall blocked compromise overtures whenever he could. He demonstrated the impracticality of House measures, Powell's resolutions, and President Buchanan's peace recommendations to the Senate. Encouraged by South Carolina's withdrawal and the other states which followed early in 1861, Wigfall expanded his general goal from polarization to escalation/confrontation, or actually provoking warfare in the Charleston harbor. He pressured Buchanan and, later, Lincoln to redress South Carolina for firing on a federal ship.

Finally, Wigfall justified secession in the minds of many southerners. In addition to building his image, the Texan sought to solidify his supporters toward separation and formation of a new confederacy. Particularly in his last speech, March 7, 1861, Wigfall attempted to rationalize the compact theory of states and secession. He sought to leave a statement that would read well concerning his part in the disruption of the country.

Wigfall's audiences included those who read the newspaper accounts of his actions. He toyed with senators who debated the issues as if they were pawns in a chess game. He maneuvered and manipulated in ways that angered or frustrated them, always with a view of gaining sympathy from the South or causing attacks from the North. An observation from
one northern woman who visited Washington helps explain why Wigfall regarded as his audiences those who read the speeches:

Whilst in Washington we passed our time in the Senate, where we heard one of Douglas' most able debates. Nothing ever interested me so much although I was astonished to see the apathy with which the Senators generally listened and wrote or read their papers whilst such vital subjects were discussed and their government and integrity of the United States hung upon their vote and upon their appreciation of what was proposed, accepted or rejected.2

With apathy reigning among many senators, Wigfall found an ideal atmosphere for agitating sectional strife and secession in the newspapers across the country. Other senators' disinterest helps explain how Wigfall attracted extensive newspaper coverage for his antics.

Providing evidence for the extent to which Wigfall influenced northerners, in response to the Texan's protests against the admission of Kansas, the New York Times editorialized as follows:

Mr. Wigfall objects to the admission of Kansas on the account of "its bad moral character." He says he is unwilling that "Texas should associate with such a State." We must say that this is an objection worth considering. If Mr. Wigfall can show that the morality of Kansas is at so low an ebb that Texas would be corrupted by merely remaining in the same federation with her, Kansas ought to be kept out at any cost.3

Northerners hated the insolent Wigfall and the superior attitude which his taunts represented. The Times editor reflected northern resentment in the sarcastic treatment of the Texans' public utterances.

During the election campaign of 1860, a reporter of the Dallas Herald indicated the extent of Wigfall's reputation in the South:


Several able and powerful speeches have been delivered during the present canvass to the Democracy at Memphis, but the speech by the distinguished Senator from Texas, last night, was one of the most interesting discussions we have heard upon the great and vital issues that now agitate the public mind. Senator Wigfall came among us with a reputation as a fire-eater—an erratic, impractical Disunionist—but his speech was a calm, philosophical argument, and a review of the great principles of State's Rights Democracy, a speech addressed to thinking men and better suited for quiet reading at home than as a stimulant for the tumultuous crowd which generally attend public discussions. He thoroughly understands the States Rights doctrine, and showed that it was the foundation of our free institutions, and that it was alone by these principles of liberty and justice that the Government could be perpetuated.  

Apparently Wigfall attempted to project a somewhat different image while he was in the South than that which he cultivated in Washington. At home he wanted to be regarded as a calm, reasonable, philosophical man rather than the agitator in the Senate. Nevertheless, the reporter in Memphis provided a near synopsis of Wigfall's career to that point: he had established an image in the North as an "erratic impractical Disunionist" but southerners viewed him as a great "State's Rights" Democrat who appealed to "thinking men." Surely the Texan sought to be remembered as a man of action who understood states' rights doctrines and the real principles of liberty and justice.

By late March of 1861 secession was an accomplished fact; Wigfall had departed from the Senate; and war was imminent. Wigfall had accomplished most of his goals: he had established a national reputation; disrupted the legislative process; helped to split the Democratic party; and delayed compromise efforts so that secession resulted in the Confederacy. In northern thinking the Texan became a historical pivot. The New York Times editor indicated the Texan's influence:

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4 Dallas Herald, October 31, 1860.
Our southern friends break up the old Union because they say that it has been a means of oppression and impoverishment to their "section" from the beginning. But catch one of them in the "Ercles vein," and he will swear to the world, and well nigh prove it, if he has the faculty of knowing history, that the "South" has ruled the Federal Union from the days of Washington to the days of—well, to the days of Wigfall. The South, by Southern authority, has ruled to its own ruin.5

Evidently "Washington to Wigfall" represented an era of the nation's history which ended with the attack on Fort Sumter. At any rate, it is noteworthy that in just over a year Wigfall agitated secession to the point that northerners thought of him as the end of the Union.

The Dallas Herald editor provided insight into Wigfall's place in Texas:

We call attention to the humorous poem on the front page of today's paper. It is significant of one fact, that when men, such as Wigfall, Yancey, Rhett and Davis are used as bugaboos to scare children, and become household words, their greatness has become a fixed fact. When men are poetised, dramatised and lionised from one end of the country to the other, it is evident that they are not mere ciphers in the world, non-entities or drones, but are heroes, destined to leave their mark on the history and literature of the country.6

The poem, entitled "A Lullaby for the Times," included a verse that read: "Don't you hear that dreadful Wigfall, Breaking everything to smash; Eating fire, and eating babies, Hush! my darling baby, hush."

As he had hoped, Wigfall caused his name to become a household word, denounced in the North, praised in the South.

Upon his return from England where he lived for nine years following the war, Wigfall sparked controversy. Suggesting his influence in Texas was still strong, the McKinney, Texas Enquirer disapproved of

6 Dallas Herald, January 23, 1861.
Wigfall's reappearance. As always, the Dallas Herald editor defended him. Because it recounts Wigfall's impact upon the nation, a portion of the editorial warrants reproduction:

Louis T. Wigfall was a true and devoted Confederate from the beginning to the end of the war. In its most trying period, Texas made him one of her Senators in the Confederate Congress. There he was when the war closed. Up to that time he was honored as a true and brave man, though by many regarded as too rash and extreme in his views of political right and wrong. This latter characteristic, however, he had to bear from utterances in his younger days, dating back chiefly to his youthful speeches in 1848, when he had opposed the too moderate position of General Sam Houston in voting for the Wilmot Proviso in the Oregon bill. The mere fact that Wigfall, a young man, dared to dispute the position of the venerable hero of San Jacinto, on a political issue, was sufficient at that day to stamp him, in the minds of many, as a rash and firey Hotspur. But afterwards he rose above that prejudice, and as a Senator in the Legislature, then as a Senator of the United States, and lastly as a Senator from Texas in the Confederate Congress, he outlived the older prejudice and stamped his impression on the great events transpiring in the country as a man of learning, genius and great independence. There he stood when the war closed--admired by the South--detested by the North.7

The last sentence suggests the rhetorical objectives which Wigfall pursued. Through his agitational activities in Washington he secured a reputation that had not diminished in nine years.

Upon his death additional estimates of his influence appeared. Reviewing his life and career, the Dallas Herald editor wrote:

General Wigfall was one of those remarkable men so often overrated by friends and underrated by enemies. His habits were in part excellent--in part unfortunate. His independence of character approached rashness. In strife, political or military, he was a lion. In domestic and social life he was a lamb. Among his most decided political enemies, he had the most devoted personal friends.8

7Ibid., January 24, 1874.
8Ibid., February 28, 1874.
The Galveston News provided the following observations:

His style of oratory, though brilliant and full of imagery, was eminently analytical, and Mr. Calhoun himself . . . at whose feet he sat . . . was not more thorough and searching in his analysis. His powers of repartee were unequalled, and all his conferees hesitated before drawing the fire of his withering sarcasm and pungent wit. . . . the most accomplished belles-lettre scholar in the U. S. Senate. He was thoroughly versed in ancient and modern classics and fully conversant with the history of the country and the course of current events.®

In Texas Wigfall retained followers who remembered his agitational activities in the United States Senate and enthusiastically praised him.

Although few historians dwell at length on the Texan, numerous writers refer to his senatorial utterances, his drinking, his taunts, his discourtesy in the Senate, or his clandestine activities after hours in Washington which helped hasten secession and civil war. It is hoped that this study explains, at least partially, the deliberateness with which Wigfall pursued rhetorical objectives calculated to bring him fame and to precipitate disruption of the country. At a time when the nation needed calm voices to counsel compromise, Wigfall agitated the sectional tensions that lead to war.

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®Galveston News, February 19, 1874.
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Figure 1. Louis T. Wigfall
Figure 2. The Senate Chamber -- first occupied, January 4, 1859
INDEX TO THE DIAGRAM OF THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES*

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Figure 3. Seating Chart for Senate Chamber, 1860
Figure 4. Diagram of the Senate of the United States for the first session of the Thirty-Sixth Congress.
AUTOBIOGRAPHY

Donald Travis Garnett was born March 2, 1939, in Draw, Texas. He attended elementary school at Brownfield, Texas and graduated from Lamesa High School in 1957. In 1962 he received the B. A. degree from Harding College. Between 1962 and 1964, he served as a graduate assistant in the Department of Speech, Texas Tech University, and received the M. A. in 1964. From 1964 through 1967 he was Instructor of Speech at the University of Central Arkansas. Between 1967 and 1970 he was a graduate assistant in the Department of Speech, Louisiana State University. Since 1970 he has been Associate Professor and Chairman of the Department of Speech and Drama at Henderson State University.
EXAMINATION AND THESIS REPORT

Candidate: Donald Travis Garnett

Major Field: Speech

Title of Thesis: SENATORIAL SPEAKING OF LOUIS T. WIGFALL 1860-1861: A STUDY OF AGITATIONAL RHETORIC

Approved:

[Signature]
Major Professor and Chairman

[Signature]
Dean of the Graduate School

EXAMINING COMMITTEE:

[Signature]

[Signature]

[Signature]

Date of Examination:

December 1, 1975