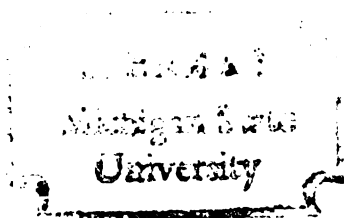


THE ORIGINS AND EDITORIAL POLICIES OF  
THE RICHMOND WHIG AND PUBLIC ADVERTISER,  
1824-1865

Thesis for the Degree of Ph. D.  
MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY  
ROBERT HUME TOMLINSON  
1971



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**This is to certify that the**

**thesis entitled**

**THE ORIGINS AND EDITORIAL POLICIES OF  
THE RICHMOND WHIG AND PUBLIC ADVERTISER, 1824-1865**

**presented by**

Robert Hume Tomlinson

**has been accepted towards fulfillment  
of the requirements for**

Ph.D. **degree in** History

Frederick D. Williams

Major professor

Date 3 June 1971

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## ABSTRACT

### THE ORIGINS AND EDITORIAL POLICIES OF THE RICHMOND WHIG AND PUBLIC ADVERTISER, 1824-1865

By

Robert Hume Tomlinson

John Hampden Pleasants founded the Richmond Whig on February 27, 1824. Within a decade he made the paper one of the important political organs in Virginia.

In its early years the Whig supported state rights principles and opposed protective tariffs and national banks. But by the mid-1830's it shifted position and embraced protection and the Second National Bank. On slavery the paper followed a moderate course favoring gradual emancipation, at least until public opinion in the South, aroused against northern abolitionists, forced the Whig to drop its anti-slavery program.

Throughout the period under study, the Whig sought a coalition of northern and southern conservatives to prevent a disruption of the Union. During debates over the annexation of Texas, the Whig warned southern politicians that disputes over territorial expansion and extension of slavery could only weaken bonds holding the nation together. Slavery, it explained, would set one section

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against the other. The free states, fearing a loss of political power, would oppose the creation of new slave states and therefore insist upon non-extension of slavery in the territories; on the other hand, the South would demand the addition of slave states and thus insist that the territories be open to slavery. After the threat of secession became critical in 1850, the Whig concentrated its editorials on benefits states reaped from the Union.

In 1860 the paper supported the creation of the Constitutional Union Party and endorsed John Bell as a presidential candidate. Yet the election of Lincoln did not induce the Whig to endorse drastic action by the South. Until the firing on Fort Sumter, the paper championed compromise in an attempt to settle the crisis peacefully. But when Lincoln issued his call for militia, the Whig changed editors and joined the ranks of secessionists.

While the paper professed approval of the Confederate government, it soon became a severe critic of Jefferson Davis' administration, and few cabinet members escaped the wrath of the Whig's editorials. As the South's military position deteriorated, the paper tried to maintain southern morale by ignoring or discounting the importance of northern battlefield successes. Even as General William T. Sherman marched through Georgia, the Whig confidently predicted victory!

Robert Hume Tomlinson

This study is based primarily on the Whig's editorials for the period, but use was also made of the editorials of the Raleigh Register, Knoxville Whig, Southern Patriot, and the New Orleans Bee, leading Whig papers whose views helped to place those of the Richmond paper in perspective. Diaries and numerous secondary works pertaining to southern journalism and journalists also proved beneficial. A bibliographical essay is included.

This work has eight chapters. The first five trace the development of the Whig as a major political press and explain its position on national issues; the last three pertain to the Civil War years.

THE ORIGINS AND EDITORIAL POLICIES OF  
THE RICHMOND WHIG AND PUBLIC ADVERTISER,  
1824-1865

By

Robert Hume Tomlinson

A THESIS

Submitted to  
Michigan State University  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of

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Department of History

1971

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1971

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I offer a sincere thank you to the many people who assisted me in preparing this thesis. To some I owe special notice. Dr. Frederick D. Williams, director of my doctoral committee, provided guidance, encouragement, and constructive criticism for which I express my lasting gratitude. But certainly my wife, Diane, deserves more credit than anyone for my completing this task. Her typing, proofreading, and more significantly her unshakeable confidence were invaluable. And finally to Mary Beth, a father's dream, I say thank you for the love and joy she generates in our home.

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## INTRODUCTION

From 1824 to 1846 John Hampden Pleasants, a native of Goochland County, edited the Constitutional Whig. After graduating from William and Mary College in 1817 he practiced law and in 1823 assumed the job of acting editor of the Lynchburg Virginian. He soon left for Richmond, the state's largest city, determined to inculcate a greater appreciation for Thomas Jefferson's Republican ideals. To accomplish this task he founded the Constitutional Whig on January 27, 1824,<sup>1</sup> and since his father, James, had served in the state legislature and now occupied the Governor's mansion, young Pleasants assumed his post with first-hand knowledge of Virginia politics.<sup>2</sup>

In a "Proposal" the Whig summed up its political creed by pledging to venerate the Constitution, oppose extension of the tariff system, oppose national improvements lacking authority of the people, and oppose all standing armies. While the Whig obviously intended to pursue a particular philosophy, the paper also promised to open its column to men of all political persuasions so that they could challenge or debate the paper's editorials; the Whig accused Ritchie of limiting space

in his paper to articles that confirmed his opinions. In a rather sarcastic tone the Whig expressed gratitude to Ritchie for his former advocacy of the Republican Party.

Because of the fierce competition between the two Richmond papers, some uncharacteristically harsh personal attacks filtered into the papers' editorials with each blaming the other for the lack of harmonious relations. After the Enquirer tried to ignore the Whig by refusing even to mention the paper or editor, the Whig belittled Ritchie by saying that his influence had resulted solely from the absence of any competition: clearly the Whig implied that Ritchie's competition would keep a check on him and report his inconsistencies to the public.

When the Whig began in 1824, it published two editions a week, but in 1828 the public support warranted the expansion of service to a daily. Primarily the daily edition served city residents while the semi-weekly and weekly Whig (also known as the Country Whig) went out to readers in the counties. By 1831 the Country Whig claimed subscribers in every county of the state and by 1833 the daily Whig ranked second only to the Enquirer in state-wide circulation. It was also in 1833 that the paper changed its name to the Richmond Whig and Public Advertiser. Finally in 1842 the Whig announced its long

sought after goal: possession of the state's largest subscription list.<sup>3</sup> Not until just before the Civil War did the Whig lose its number one position to the Richmond Penny Post.

Even though the Whig enjoyed a large circulation, the paper generally represented a minority opinion in the state and nation. Nevertheless, awareness of the Whig's views is important because they revealed a lack of unanimity in Virginia politics and on many occasions the Whig's analysis of the nation's problems proved to be more accurate than the editorials of its better known rival, the Enquirer. For more than three decades the paper served as the spokesman for the loyal opposition, and if southerners had pursued more often the Whig's alternatives they might have avoided much hardship.

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<sup>2</sup> Allen  
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## INTRODUCTION FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup>Joseph Butler owned half interest but in less than a year sold his interests to Pleasants.

<sup>2</sup>Allen Johnson and Dumas Malone, eds., The Dictionary of American Biography (20 vols.; New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1930), XV, 7-8. See also Richmond Whig, February 28, 1846, for Pleasants' obituary.

<sup>3</sup>See Richmond Whig, November 15, 1828; January 1, 1833; November 5, 1833.

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## CHAPTER I

### THE BEGINNING: SEARCH FOR A CAUSE

Between 1824 and 1829 the Whig worked for the election and re-election of John Quincy Adams and attempted to establish itself as a spokesman for Republican principles. The Whig in 1824 and 1828 endorsed Adams not as the ideal candidate but as a lesser evil than Andrew Jackson. Understandably then, the paper concentrated on attacking Jackson and the other candidates rather than extolling the virtues of Adams. Throughout the period the Whig desired primarily to offer Virginia a choice in future elections and to challenge Thomas Ritchie, editor of the Richmond Enquirer, who in 1824 espoused the cause of William H. Crawford of Georgia. Both papers said they embraced Jefferson's principles and both decried Andrew Jackson's militarism, but on little else did they agree.<sup>1</sup>

Unlike the 1820 election, the press had many candidates to choose from in 1824. Crawford, a huge handsome man, enjoyed popular support from Virginia's state rights advocates, who appreciated the Georgian's refusal to oppose Monroe's election in 1816.<sup>2</sup> Although

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John Randolph and other opponents of the tariff and national bank endorsed Crawford, the Georgian favored a moderate tariff and the rechartering of the Bank of the United States.<sup>3</sup> In 1823 he, with service in both Madison's and Monroe's cabinets, appeared to be a strong contender until a stroke paralyzed and blinded him.<sup>4</sup>

Henry Clay, another presidential candidate, was born in Hanover County, Virginia, but found little support for his campaign in the Old Dominion. Though he visited Richmond in 1822 and conferred with Thomas Ritchie, editor of the Enquirer, Clay could not persuade the voters to accept his American System.<sup>5</sup> At first Clay seemed to be the West's favorite, but prior to the election Jackson replaced Clay as that section's representative; and by November 1824 the Kentuckian had lost almost all his popularity in Virginia.<sup>6</sup>

Others also vied for Virginia's electoral votes, including John C. Calhoun. Long a national figure favoring what the Whig called "latitudinarian" policies to expand the role of the central government, Calhoun never aroused much support in Virginia. Though the South Carolinian possessed great intelligence, his austere and condescending attitude evoked little popular enthusiasm so necessary for him to achieve his lifetime goal, the White House. Calhoun's frustrations in the 1824 election marked the first of many he met in presidential

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sweepstakes. In appearance Calhoun was tall and gaunt. The most striking thing about him was his multicolored eyes, which seemed to bore through his opposition. With his long black hair (in a few years it turned gray and became an even more imposing sight) brushed back on his head, Calhoun became the symbol of the Old South's spokesman. Yet his political theories and closely reasoned papers failed in 1824 to stir the voters outside South Carolina.<sup>7</sup>

Another candidate, Andrew Jackson, also saw his hopes frustrated in 1824. By virtue of his military career, especially the Battle of New Orleans, he was well known and admired before his entry into national politics. Because of his Florida military activities in 1817, Virginians, especially the Whig editors, feared that Jackson was too much the military chieftain and unwilling to abide by Constitutional restraints.<sup>8</sup> Unfortunately for Jackson's hopes in 1824 and for Thomas Ritchie's aspirations for national influence, the Enquirer's editor, with the endorsement of other state rights advocates, called the old soldier a military despot too naive to be trusted with power.<sup>9</sup> Consequently in later years when Ritchie switched to support Jackson, the editor encountered a cold reception from his old foe; the editor, therefore, while in his most productive years, remained stranded in Virginia while men like Francis P. Blair

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Throughout the campaign, the Whig recognized that Crawford was probably the first choice of Virginia voters, but editorials also warned that the Georgian had no chance to win the Presidency, whereas Adams might win with Virginia's electoral vote. Why, asked the Whig, throw away the state's vote on Crawford and thus indirectly aid Andrew Jackson's chances of success? The paper maintained that Jackson was gaining strength in the nation and that Adams, while not the perfect candidate, was the lesser of the evils. Since the Enquirer spoke of Jackson as a military despot, the Whig hoped that Thomas Ritchie would drop Crawford in favor of Adams just to defeat Jackson.<sup>11</sup>

In response to the Whig, the Richmond Enquirer lamely stressed that Crawford was the choice of the Congressional caucus, a body that had in the past designated the best national candidate.<sup>12</sup> Crawford's supporters tried to secure Pennsylvania's endorsement by selecting Albert Gallatin, but the Pennsylvania legislature upset their plans by nominating Andrew Jackson. Since few attended the national caucus on February 14, most realized that the nomination in Washington gained few votes for Crawford.<sup>13</sup> In October Gallatin withdrew to allow Crawford's party the opportunity to offer Henry

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Clay the Vice-Presidential spot on the caucus ticket. But realizing the weakness of Crawford's candidacy, Clay scorned the proposal.

Wasting no time the Whig ridiculed the importance of the caucus nomination: since only sixty-six of the two hundred sixty members of Congress attended the meeting, the paper could justly say that the designation hardly represented a national consensus.<sup>14</sup> The sixty-six represented sixteen of the twenty-four states but four states (New York, Virginia, North Carolina, and Georgia) accounted for forty-eight of the total.<sup>15</sup> When it is realized that two hundred twenty Republicans were in Congress, the Whig's contention that the caucus revealed Crawford's weakness not his strength seems correct. The Whig feared that Crawford would only divide John C. Calhoun's "high-handed federalism."<sup>16</sup> But sensing that the Georgian's people in Virginia would not back out before November, the Whig suggested that the General Assembly clothe the electors with discretionary powers to allow them to vote for the candidate whom they thought had the best chance of defeating Andrew Jackson and Calhoun.<sup>17</sup>

Calhoun, who soon became the South's spokesman, still appeared to Virginia Republicans in 1824 to be an advocate of federal power: national bank and internal improvements.<sup>18</sup> Five years later the South Carolinian

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changed his image and formulated the nullification doctrines which eventually led to disruption of the federal union; ironically the man who became the symbol of state rights in 1832 could not in 1824 meet the test of the Whig which claimed to represent the state rights doctrines of 1798 and 1799. But a group's identification with the old Jefferson ideals was typical, because to win in Virginia most politicians embraced Jefferson's philosophy even though in practice they ignored his ideas.<sup>19</sup>

By spring Calhoun's cause was fading and Crawford's backers became disheartened when they heard of their candidate's illness.<sup>20</sup> Despite his managers' attempts to keep the severity of the stroke secret, rumors spread. The Whig surmised correctly that while Crawford would survive, he would be unable to assume high office; expecting Crawford to withdraw, the Whig invited the caucus candidate's followers to join the Adams movement.<sup>21</sup>

The Whig's editorials in the spring tried to explain away John Quincy Adams' federalist ideas of the past and to define his position on the tariff and internal improvements. While reporting on a tariff bill (it later became known as the Tariff of Abominations) in Congress, the Whig commented that Adams opposed the tariff but that Jackson, if President, would sign it into

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law.<sup>22</sup> It was inconceivable to the Whig that North Carolina and South Carolina would continue supporting Jackson since he favored a tariff.<sup>23</sup> The Richmond paper excused Adams' record as that of a federalist who had been following his father's policies. Since Crawford had also belonged to the federalist party, the Whig did not consider Adams' record damaging to his candidacy in Virginia; in the eyes of the Whig, John Quincy Adams now offered the best protection of the United States Constitution.<sup>24</sup> To support their case, the Whig's editors reminded readers that all but one congressman from Massachusetts opposed a new tariff in the last session of Congress (Virginia's representatives did no better than that).<sup>25</sup>

As the campaign progressed the Whig attempted to woo Crawford's voters to Adams' banner. When Ninian Edwards accused Crawford of wrong-doing while Secretary of Treasury for Monroe, the Whig denied the accuracy of Edwards' charges and reported that a congressional investigating committee had found no evidence against Crawford. The Whig emphasized that Adams did not support Edwards, and in fact had termed the charges ridiculous.<sup>26</sup> Regarding the tariff, the Whig conceded that Crawford's position was similar to Adams': both favored a tariff for revenue only.<sup>27</sup> The defense of Crawford against Edwards' accusations and the Whig's favorable words about

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Crawford on the tariff issue revealed the paper's attempts to please Crawford's men. If the election went to the House of Representatives, the Whig seemed to be banking on them switching to Adams to avoid the election of Clay, author of the American System.<sup>28</sup>

Just prior to election day the Whig concentrated on Crawford's poor health and stressed that votes for the caucus candidate indirectly aided Clay,<sup>29</sup> but the paper's efforts failed: Crawford easily carried Virginia with over eighty-four hundred votes to Adams' 3,189; Jackson's 2,861; and Clay's 416.<sup>30</sup>

Since no candidate received a majority of the electoral votes, the selection of the President depended upon the House of Representatives. Even though the House settled the election, the Congress stirred lasting controversy by choosing Adams who received fewer popular and electoral votes than Jackson. Under the Constitution each state has one vote for President when the election goes to the House; so in 1825 Adams won with thirteen votes while Jackson and Crawford followed with seven and four respectively. Jackson and his supporters cried that Congress had cheated them and began campaigning immediately for the 1828 contest.

Was Jackson cheated? On the surface Jackson's vote total appeared to make him the popular choice since he garnered forty-seven thousand more votes than his

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nearest competitor, Adams.<sup>31</sup> But no exact account of the popular vote is possible since all four candidates appeared on the ballot in only five states; three men in six states, and only two candidates in seven states; moreover, state legislators chose the electors for six other states.<sup>32</sup> Yet Jackson's people stored up a lot of political capital by labeling Adams' appointment of Clay as Secretary of State a "corrupt bargain" although they never produced hard evidence to support the charge.<sup>33</sup>

While the Whig had expected Congress to name Jackson president,<sup>34</sup> the November election was not too disappointing to the paper. It believed that Virginia voters had gotten a choice and although Crawford carried the state, he had done poorly in the nation. The Whig correctly surmised that the method of selecting candidates via caucus had received a death blow. With the election over the Whig claimed that it had never really expected Adams to carry Virginia; the important thing was that Virginia had an alternative.<sup>35</sup>

Gradually the Whig began to anticipate that Adams just might be able to beat out Jackson in the House. In January the Richmond daily said that Adams might win by picking up strength in Congress from Crawford's supporters,<sup>36</sup> and by the first of February, after Clay's endorsement of Adams surfaced, the Whig realized that the New Englander's chances were good. The opposition press

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had already accused Clay and Adams of a corrupt bargain,<sup>37</sup> whereby Adams was supposed to have obtained Clay's support by offering to appoint him Secretary of State.<sup>38</sup>

On the day before the balloting, the Whig predicted that Adams would win. It was to be a victory over Jackson, the candidate of the most "ignorant portion of our population," and the editorial stressed that those who favored law over force should be delighted with the outcome.<sup>39</sup> When Clay accepted his cabinet post the paper defended the new Secretary from the corrupt bargain charges by saying that he was the best man for the job and that his vote for Adams should not exclude Clay from office.<sup>40</sup>

If the corrupt bargain charge went unchallenged, the Whig anticipated that Jackson could use the accusation to Adams' detriment in 1828; for the sake of future elections the paper published for several months Clay's speeches defending his action. Yet the editors admitted that even though Clay convinced them of his sincerity and ability, they feared (and as events turned out, justifiably) that the people did not accept his explanation.<sup>41</sup> Clay, in a speech to his congressional district, explained that he had determined by the end of November to support Adams long before a cabinet post was offered. Because Adams was "learned" and "experienced" in domestic and foreign affairs, the Kentuckian concluded that of the

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three candidates the New Englander was clearly the best man. To conclude his address Clay said that Adams offered no new dangerous precedents (a reference to Jackson's military career and questionable actions in Florida) and promised to follow the ideals of Jefferson and Madison.

Although unsuccessful in convincing most Virginians of Clay's innocence, the Whig still took great delight in baiting the Enquirer's editor, Thomas Ritchie, about Crawford's defeat. After the election the Whig published an editorial entitled the "Death of Thomas Ritchie." The sarcastic and witty political obituary illustrated the fierce competition between the two papers and the anger of the Whig over Ritchie's attempts to ignore his newest competitor. According to the obituary the malady first appeared when Ritchie endorsed the caucus candidate, Crawford. The editor, said the Whig, had the "whimsical notion" that the Republic was in danger and would collapse unless the populace endorsed the Enquirer's choice; thus when Crawford failed to stir the voters, Ritchie became depressed and babbled that without him the nation could not continue.

Continuing the joke, the Whig described Ritchie's last moments:

For several days Mr. Ritchie was kept alive by the stimulus of anxiety. To hear from New York, North Carolina, and Ohio was his last wish. His friends

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began to hope that cheering news from these states might revive him, and even restore him to health again. Vain hope! and [sic] evanescence as vain. On Saturday night Mr. Van Buren wrote that all "except honor" and four electors were lost in New York. On Sunday night it was ascertained that North Carolina had abjured the Caucus. It seems that the spirit of Mr. Ritchie lingered to carry these disastrous tidings to Heaven. It fled immediately upon their annunciation, refusing like Patrick Coutts, to wait for the news from Ohio. . . .

. . . . .

For fifteen years he had ruled public opinion in Virginia, and in all that time he had never dissented from the majority. He was so good a Republican that he refused to express any opinion, to advocate any measure, before he had clearly discovered on whose side of the question public opinion was. His own sentiments were cheerfully sacrificed to those of the majority. Where is the man, living or dead, who has given stronger devotion than this to the "will of the people" or paid greater respect to the "omnipotence of public opinion"!<sup>43</sup>

The 1828 campaign had already begun. For the next four years Ritchie, far from being "dead," attacked Adams at every opportunity while the Whig defended the administration and tried to launch an offensive of its own against Calhoun and Jackson, two men sure to oppose Adams. Some unprincipled and unpatriotic Virginians, lamented the Whig, were plotting to oppose all administration actions without regard for their worth, because those in the conspiracy seek only to elevate Jackson to the presidency.<sup>44</sup>

In Virginia anti-administration forces were forming against Adams, and they gradually began to accept Jackson as the logical candidate to oppose him. Working closely with Martin Van Buren of New York, a strong

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Jackson man, Ritchie and other Virginia political leaders including L. W. Tazewell, Andrew Stevenson, John Randolph, John Floyd, and William C. Rives, organized to elect Jackson and secure for Virginia the spoils of office.<sup>45</sup>

Ritchie's full endorsement of Jackson (no surprise to the Whig) came in January 1827 when the editor reacted to an apparent defeat of his political faction.<sup>46</sup> In 1826 John Randolph's turn in the Senate expired (Randolph completed James Barbour's term when the latter resigned to join Adams' cabinet). The Adams-Clay faction wanted dearly to defeat the administration's most abusive critic who relished the opportunity given him in the Senate to expound for hours on the short-comings of his opponents.<sup>47</sup> During Jefferson's term, Randolph led the "Quids" in opposing the embargo and hence it was logical that he was in the forefront of another anti-administration faction. When Adams proposed to send delegates to the Panama Conference, Randolph led other southern state rights advocates in denouncing and then preventing Adams from sending his mission until the conference was almost over.<sup>48</sup>

By a vote of 115 to 110 on January 13, 1827, the Virginia Legislature elected John Tyler to replace John Randolph in the United States Senate.<sup>49</sup> Tyler, who had been Governor for little more than a year, was favored by the Adams' men, but the victory proved costly to them

when Tyler, after finding out that DeWitt Clinton of New York was not going to be a candidate, came out in support of Jackson for President in September 1827.<sup>50</sup> About the only consolation for the Adams men was that Tyler's manner of opposition would be more reasonable.<sup>51</sup>

Tyler's election was the final shove needed to push Ritchie into Jackson's corner. Although the editor had been moving towards the Old Hero, Ritchie had not openly endorsed Jackson, but in January 1827 the Enquirer did so and in fact became Jackson's strongest advocate in Virginia. Rather than discouraging the opposition's forces, the Adams-Clay faction helped unite them.<sup>52</sup>

Adams' first annual message, which outlined the President's plan for internal improvements (roads and harbors), also aroused strong objections and weakened the Whig's chances of maintaining an administrative party in Virginia. Because of the President's support of internal improvements, men like William B. Giles deserted Adams and joined Ritchie and the other anti-administration men. Giles championed resolutions in the Virginia Legislature denouncing the tariff and internal improvements, and while Governor from 1827 through 1830 he endorsed secession as a legitimate means of opposing federal encroachment.<sup>53</sup> Regretably for Giles, he allowed personal animosity to mar his political judgments, a trait making his career erratic.<sup>54</sup> But for the time being he and



other conservatives like William C. Rives and Andrew Stevenson swelled the ranks of Jackson.<sup>55</sup>

As the opposition grew, the Whig renewed its attack on Jackson's militarism, since, to the paper, he was "the most dangerous man in this confederacy."<sup>56</sup> After Jackson resigned from the United States Senate in October of 1825, the Whig pictured him as a man lacking the talent and ability necessary to function in the Senate; therefore he had remained "dumb" during the debates on the tariff and canals (internal improvements) and then fled the Senate to avoid unfavorable comparison to his able colleagues.<sup>57</sup>

To combat charges that Adams was not a Republican but a Federalist, the Whig countered by saying that Adams left the Federalists the day he supported President Thomas Jefferson's embargo.<sup>58</sup> Since most people now respected Adams as a Republican, the Whig questioned the logic and consistency of men like Giles and L. W. Tazewell of Virginia who denounced the President when he espoused moderate tariff policies and plans of internal improvements quite similar to those advocated by Jefferson and Adams.<sup>59</sup> When those two Republicans proposed a tariff or improvements, said the Whig, Giles and Tazewell "applauded."<sup>60</sup>

Another issue also stirred opposition in the Old Dominion to Adams' administration: the Panama Conference,

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designed to arrange commercial treaties, a unified policy towards Spain and the Holy Alliance, and "to cultivate union" among the sister Republics.<sup>61</sup> In Adams' annual message in December 1825, he announced his desire to accept an invitation to send to the conference American delegates. Since "language of the United States" had prevented Spanish intervention in Latin America, the Whig supported the President's attempt to deter Austria and Russia by showing continued United States interest in South America.<sup>62</sup> The Whig suggested that Albert Gallatin or Henry Clay be sent to represent the government. Gallatin was an experienced diplomat while Clay had been one of the first to call for the recognition of independence of the South American Republics.<sup>63</sup>

But administration critics disagreed with Adams and the Whig and made the proposed mission to Panama a major political issue.<sup>64</sup> While not directly attacking the goals of the conference, the opposition protested that Adams had accepted the invitation to send ministers without consulting the Senate. The Whig countered by saying that while Adams selected the ministers, he did not intend to send them until the Senate confirmed them.<sup>65</sup> As the opposition increased its attacks and appeared to make political capital out of the issue, the Whig tried to back away by implying that while the conference promised few benefits, no harm could result.

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The Senate conducted debates and committee meetings on the conference, and unfortunately for Clay and Adams, a number of Clay's enemies sat on the Foreign Relations Committee: Nathaniel Macon of North Carolina, the chairman; Littleton Waller Tazewell of Virginia; and Hugh L. White, the man who succeeded Andrew Jackson. Since John C. Calhoun, the Vice President, had helped name the committee members, the Whig charged him with stacking the committee to hinder Clay and therefore improve Calhoun's chances for the presidency in 1828.<sup>66</sup> Macon, a veteran of the Revolutionary War, took pride in opposing every appropriation bill. In 1825 he had voted against confirming Clay as Secretary of State and was generally known as a "local-minded" and opinionated person who seldom acted as a constructive force during his thirty-seven years in Congress.<sup>67</sup> As chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee he strongly opposed the Panama Mission.<sup>68</sup>

Tazewell led the effort to organize forces in Virginia against Adams. Although Tazewell wrote little of lasting value, some of his contemporaries, including John Marshall, Spencer Roane, and William Wirt, praised his intellect; but a lack of human sympathy and common sense deprived the Senator of broad popular support. He publicly opposed the celebration of George Washington's centenary because it savored too much of "man

worship"! Such a man could not be dissuaded from opposing the Panama Mission.<sup>69</sup>

The third foe of Clay on the Foreign Relations Committee was High L. White who had replaced Jackson when he resigned from the Senate. Being a firm supporter of Old Hickory, White never hesitated to make life difficult for Clay and Adams, especially on a matter of foreign policy.<sup>70</sup>

Both the Senate and the House refused to endorse the mission until Adams revealed more details about the conference. The Senate especially requested the privilege of seeing the letters that the Panama Conference and the administration had exchanged. In a message to Congress in March, the President rejected the Senate's request but explained the objectives of the mission to be (1) to abolish private war on the ocean, (2) to obtain South American concurrence in the Monroe Doctrine which prohibited further European colonization in the Western Hemisphere, (3) to coordinate efforts to suppress the African slave trade, (4) to consider the problem of Haiti, (5) to discuss the conditions in Spanish possessions of Cuba and Puerto Rico, and (6) to consider the religious rights of Americans while staying in South America.<sup>71</sup>

The Whig fully approved of Adams' objectives and said that they conformed to the goals of "peace, commerce, and honest friendship with all nations, entangling

alliances with none."<sup>72</sup> Gradually public opinion seemed to support Adams, but by the time the Senate and House acted favorably on the measure the conference was almost over.<sup>73</sup> Convinced that Adams' critics opposed him not on principle but for personal reasons, the Whig warned its readers that the Union was threatened.<sup>74</sup> The paper maintained that Ritchie, White, and the others strove only to elect Jackson. Therefore the Whig's adversaries were denouncing a government which "conformed to the practice of Government under all administrations," and the Whig argued that "never have the United States in the aggregate been more prosperous or flourishing at home or more respected and deferred to abroad."<sup>75</sup> These favorable conditions resulted, said the Whig, from filling diplomatic stations with good men and protecting the national Treasury.<sup>76</sup>

Even though the Whig praised Adams' strengths and accomplishments, the editorials also attempted to discredit Jackson and to prove Adams innocent of the corrupt bargain charge. Some, said the Whig, preferred Jackson because he was from a slave state, but if Adams was excluded because he was from Massachusetts, then what had happened to the equal rights of the states? To deny Adams support because he was from a free state was to deny the "spirit of the Constitution."<sup>77</sup> Some supporters of Old Hickory pointed to his military career as proof of

his ability to be president, but the Whig contended that military skill did not necessarily establish a person's fitness for political leadership. The paper reminded its readers of Julius Caesar and Napoleon Bonaparte, both of whom proved better generals than politicians. Jackson's boldness, said the Whig, would threaten the nation's security, because the General showed no respect for law: rather than carry out law, he preferred "originating" it.<sup>78</sup> Recognizing that much of the administration's opposition resulted from Clay's appointment as Secretary of State, the Whig often tried to assure the public that no corrupt bargain took place. Frequently the Whig defended Adams by pointing out that Thomas Jefferson acted similarly. In 1801 the presidential contest went to the House where Jefferson was elected President, and some of the congressmen who favored Jefferson later joined the cabinet as Attorney General and Secretary of the Treasury. But no one raised the question of a deal, and justly so said the Whig, because there was no wrongdoing just as there was none in 1825.<sup>79</sup>

As the campaign rhetoric became more heated, the Whig commenced to question the future of the nation. Since it was apparent to the Whig that those opposing Adams did so for patronage not principle, the paper correctly prophesied that if Jackson got into office many of his supporters would desert him. The "outs" would covet



the place of the "ins" but once the opposition achieved power they lacked the unity of principle to rule.<sup>80</sup> In fact it was clear to the Whig that Jackson served only as a "cat's paw" for hungry office seekers. According to the Whig only the re-election of Adams or a constitutional amendment restricting the presidential tenure to one term of six or seven years would prevent further development of factions. When a person got to the White House with a limitation of one term he would not have to spend his first four years trying to secure his re-election. The paper believed that if Adams defeated Jackson in 1828 then maybe principle would again return as the basis for criticism.<sup>81</sup>

In September 1827, the Whig endorsed the call for an anti-Jackson Convention to meet in Richmond and nominate an electoral ticket for 1828. The Whig assumed that a convention would prevent the legislative caucus from dictating to the people; since an "inequality, monstrous and unjust, exists in the representation," the paper mocked as insulting any caucus nomination.<sup>82</sup> To insure the convention's success, the Whig urged county leaders to hold local conventions to designate delegates to go to Richmond.<sup>83</sup> Because the paper believed that "the people have had no influence in the choice of President" the editorials depicted the convention as "an experiment to ascertain if the people of Virginia are . . . competent

. . . to nominate a President of the United States"--without the unasked for assistance of a legislative caucus.<sup>84</sup> The editorials claimed that people who valued the Union, now threatened by Jacksonianism, were going to unite in the convention behind Adams.<sup>85</sup>

On January 8, 1828, the Anti-Jackson Convention convened in Richmond with over two hundred delegates representing eighty of the one hundred five counties. The delegates promptly named an electoral ticket supporting John Quincy Adams and Benjamin Rush of Pennsylvania, and in an "Address to the People of Virginia" (much to the liking of the Whig) the convention vigorously attacked Jackson.<sup>86</sup> Because a man of "military reknown" threatened civilian control of government, Andrew Jackson was "altogether unfit for the Presidency."<sup>87</sup> The Address judged as unsatisfactory Jackson's service as a delegate to the Tennessee Constitutional Convention, as a Representative and Senator in Congress, and as a judge on Tennessee's Supreme Court. Alluding to Jackson's past reluctance to assume office, the convention reminded its readers that the Old Hero resigned from three of his positions and had acknowledged his unfitness for all offices.<sup>88</sup> Since the delegates wanted to use his military record as proof of his unfitness, they charged Jackson with having kept martial law in New Orleans two months after the enemy left and resurrected his execution of two British citizens during his Florida campaign.<sup>89</sup>

On the issues of the tariff and internal improvements, the delegates tried to sidestep by affirming the right of Congress "to regulate the tariff of duties, so as to give protection and encouragement to agriculture, manufactures, commerce, and navigation."<sup>90</sup> They asserted that Congress must apply that power to benefit the whole nation, not just one sector of the economy. While the Address acknowledged Virginia's opposition to federally funded internal improvements, the convention alleged that good arguments for and against improvements existed. The delegates contended that Adams' administration had done no more regarding improvements than Jackson would do.<sup>91</sup> From the Address it is obvious that the delegates hoped to carry Virginia for Adams by arousing the voters against Jackson rather than for Adams. There was little hope of initiating mass support for the President.<sup>92</sup>

On January 14, 1828, the Virginia Legislative Caucus (Thomas Ritchie, editor of the Enquirer, acted as Secretary) nominated Andrew Jackson for President and John C. Calhoun for Vice President. Again the Whig declared that the caucus could not represent the people, because of the unequal distribution of representatives in the legislature.<sup>93</sup> But the Whig confessed that Jackson was strong in Virginia and estimated that he then had about a three thousand vote majority of the sixty thousand freeholders.<sup>94</sup> When the editors calculated Adams'

strength nationally, they found things more to their liking. In March, the Whig published figures which gave Adams a five-vote edge in the electoral college.<sup>95</sup>

During the campaign the Whig stressed Jackson's weaknesses rather than trying to identify Adams' positive qualities.<sup>96</sup> To cast doubt on Jackson's loyalty, the paper tried to connect the General with Aaron Burr's conspiracy by reporting that Jackson urged a judge in Tennessee to join Burr.<sup>97</sup> No evidence was offered. Although the Whig said that Virginia had to put up with the slave trade because of the shortsightedness of statesmen, the paper doubted the wisdom of elevating to high office a man who was a slave trader himself.<sup>98</sup> Lamenting the rise of fraudulent voting practices, the Whig blamed Jackson and his followers for corrupting the country's democratic institutions.<sup>99</sup> But the threat of Jacksonianism as described by the Whig failed to turn the tide in Adams' favor.

In the nation and in Virginia, Jackson swept the election by carrying fifteen of the twenty-four states; he received 647,276 popular votes and 178 electoral votes to Adams' 508,064 popular votes and 82 in the electoral college. Similarly in the Old Dominion Jackson polled over 26,000 votes to his opponent's 12,000.<sup>100</sup> While Adams did well in the northwest counties, he was overwhelmed in the east and southwest.<sup>101</sup> For the Whig the

only bright spot was the good showing Adams made in metropolitan Richmond: Adams carried the city of Richmond and the counties of Chesterfield, Henrico, and Hanover by more than a two to one margin.<sup>102</sup>

Immediately after the election the Whig openly declared its intention of being an opposition press. Despite the promise of the Enquirer and other Jackson supporters to judge Adams fairly, they had attacked him during his term without reason and in spite of the fact that the country's affairs were "prosperous." Adams was "able" and had tried to do his duty, said the Whig, but his opponents preferred to level partisan attacks at him, even at the cost of national progress.<sup>103</sup> If the Whig believed its own editorials criticizing Jackson, the paper explained that it had no alternative except to confront the new administration at every opportunity. While the Enquirer had been "hypocritical," the Whig said that it was warning Jackson of what he could expect.<sup>104</sup>

Between 1824 and 1829, the Whig had moved from a paper supporting the state rights principles of the Virginia Resolutions to a paper determined to oppose Andrew Jackson and the Democrats. Initially the Whig opposed the tariff, as well as other measures that tended to strengthen the central government. But by the late 1820's and the early 1830's, the paper began to shift ground because the strongest candidate who could oppose

the "Old Hero" was Henry Clay, the architect of the American System. To accept Clay entailed endorsement of some form of the tariff and the Bank of the United States, neither policy being very popular in Virginia.

## CHAPTER I FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup>Charles Ambler, Thomas Ritchie, Study in Virginia Politics (Richmond: Bell, Book and Stationery Company, 1913), 89-91; Constitutional Whig, March 2 and June 11, 1824. All future references to the Constitutional Whig or Richmond Whig and Public Advertiser will be referred to as the Richmond Whig.

<sup>2</sup>Richmond Whig, February 20, February 24, March 2, April 24, June 11 and October 29, 1824.

<sup>3</sup>Dictionary of American Biography, IV, 527-530. When a friend of Monroe went to Crawford to determine if he would oppose Monroe, Crawford said no, that he favored Monroe. It was assumed that Crawford was young enough to be a candidate in 1824. By bowing out in 1816 Crawford won many Virginia supporters.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>Ambler, 87-88.

<sup>6</sup>Edward Stanwood, A History of the Presidency, 1788 to 1897 (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1898), 136.

<sup>7</sup>Dictionary of American Biography, III, 411-419. See also Charles Wiltse, John C. Calhoun (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1944), I. And see William M. Meigs, The Life of John Caldwell Calhoun (New York: G. E. Strechert and Company, 1917), I, 226-287.

<sup>8</sup>Ambler, 93-94.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., 109-110.

<sup>11</sup>Richmond Whig, February 20, February 24, March 2, April 2, April 24, June 11 and October 29, 1824.

<sup>12</sup>Ambler, 92.

<sup>13</sup>Stanwood, 130-131.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., 132.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., 130

<sup>16</sup>Richmond Whig, February 20, 1824.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., February 24 and March 2, 1824. Since the Virginia Legislature endorsed Crawford on February 24, by an overwhelming vote, it was not likely that the commitment could be weakened so soon.

<sup>18</sup>Meigs, 226-287.

<sup>19</sup>Richmond Whig, February 20, 1824. See also Henry H. Simms, The Rise of the Whigs in Virginia 1824-1840 (Virginia: The William Byrd Press, 1929), 22-23.

<sup>20</sup>Richmond Whig, June 11 and June 15, 1824.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid., May 4, 1824.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid., July 2, 1824.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid., July 16, 1824. Ninian Edwards accused Crawford of corruptly favoring certain banks in the Panic of 1819. A Congressional committee investigated and cleared Crawford, ruining Edwards' reputation. See Dictionary of American Biography, IV, 527-530.

<sup>27</sup>Richmond Whig, July 2, 1824.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid., July 2 and July 16, 1824.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid., October 29, 1824.

<sup>30</sup>Stanwood, 136.

<sup>31</sup>Ibid., 135.

<sup>32</sup>Ibid.

<sup>33</sup>Dictionary of American Biography, IV, 173-179; Clement Eaton, Henry Clay and the Art of Politics (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1957), 52-57, 60, and 177.

<sup>34</sup>Richmond Whig, November 5, 1824.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid., November 9, 1824.



<sup>36</sup>Ibid., January 21, 1824.

<sup>37</sup>Ambler, 99.

<sup>38</sup>Ibid., February 1, 1825.

<sup>39</sup>Ibid., February 8, 1825. On February 9, when the House voted, Adams received the vote of seven states which had given all or a majority of their electoral votes for either Jackson or Clay. See Stanwood, 140-141.

<sup>40</sup>Richmond Whig, February 25, 1825.

<sup>41</sup>Ibid., April 1, 1825.

<sup>42</sup>Ibid. Clay's entire speech is in this issue.

<sup>43</sup>Ibid.

<sup>44</sup>Ibid., May 13, 1825. Ambler, 98-117.

<sup>45</sup>Ambler, 110-111.

<sup>46</sup>Ibid., 106-107.

<sup>47</sup>Simms, 22-23.

<sup>48</sup>Simms, 21-24; Dictionary of American Biography, XV, 363-365.

<sup>49</sup>Oliver Perry Chitwood, John Tyler, Champion of the Old South (New York: D. Appleton-Century Company, 1939), 78-80. Tyler had just been elected to a second term as Governor in December.

<sup>50</sup>Simms, 23-25. Chitwood, 78-85.

<sup>51</sup>Ibid.

<sup>52</sup>Ambler, 107.

<sup>53</sup>Herman V. Ames, ed., State Documents on Federal Relations (New York: DaCapo Press, 1970), 10-11.

<sup>54</sup>Dictionary of American Biography, VII, 283-284.

<sup>55</sup>Ibid.

<sup>56</sup>Richmond Whig, March 15, 1825.

<sup>57</sup>Ibid., November 1, 1825.

<sup>58</sup>Ibid., December 8, 1825; January 10, 1826.

<sup>59</sup>Ibid.

<sup>60</sup>Ibid.

<sup>61</sup>Ibid., December 13 and November 22, 1825.  
Adams announced his plans in his Annual Message to Congress.

<sup>62</sup>Ibid.

<sup>63</sup>Richmond Whig, November 22, 1825. Eaton, Clay, 40-42, 57-58, 181, and 195.

<sup>64</sup>Richmond Whig, January 14, 1826. Simms, 21.  
John Randolph led the opposition and accused the administration of trying to destroy slavery. The Whig ridiculed Randolph's attack and accused him of opposing the conference because of his dislike of Clay. Carl Schurz, Henry Clay (New York: Frederick Unger Publishing Company, 1968), I, 267-277. He offered a good account of the debates and the groups who opposed the mission.

<sup>65</sup>Richmond Whig, December 13, 1825; February 24, 1826.

<sup>66</sup>Ibid., January 10, 1826.

<sup>67</sup>Richmond Whig, January 10, 1826; Dictionary of American Biography, XII, 157-159.

<sup>68</sup>Ibid.

<sup>69</sup>Dictionary of American Biography, XVIII, 355-357.

<sup>70</sup>Richmond Whig, January 10, 1826.

<sup>71</sup>Ibid., March 21, 1826.

<sup>72</sup>Ibid.

<sup>73</sup>Ibid., April 28, 1826.

<sup>74</sup>Ibid., March 21, 1826.

<sup>75</sup>Ibid., March 16, 1827.

<sup>76</sup>Ibid.

<sup>77</sup>Ibid., June 20, 1826.

<sup>78</sup>Ibid.

<sup>79</sup>Ibid., July 11, July 14, July 18, July 21, July 25, August 1 and August 15, 1826.

<sup>80</sup>Ibid., March 27, 1827.

<sup>81</sup>Ibid.

<sup>82</sup>Ibid., September 1, 1827.

<sup>83</sup>Ibid., September 15, 1827.

<sup>84</sup>Ibid., October 6, 1827.

<sup>85</sup>Ibid., October 13, 1827.

<sup>86</sup>Ibid., January 12 and January 16, 1828.

<sup>87</sup>Ibid.

<sup>88</sup>Ibid., January 16, 1828.

<sup>89</sup>Ibid.

<sup>90</sup>Ibid.

<sup>91</sup>Ibid.

<sup>92</sup>Ibid.

<sup>93</sup>Ibid. In this editorial the Whig said that the East had secured control of the legislature because it had not been apportioned according to the white population.

<sup>94</sup>Ibid., February 20, 1828.

<sup>95</sup>Ibid., March 22, 1828.

<sup>96</sup>Ibid., August 2, August 9, October 8 and October 11, 1828.

<sup>97</sup>Ibid., August 2 and August 9, 1828.

<sup>98</sup>Ibid., October 11, 1828.

<sup>99</sup>Ibid., October 15, 1828.

<sup>100</sup>Stanwood, 148-149.

<sup>101</sup>Simms, 32-33.

<sup>102</sup>Richmond Whig, November 12, 1828.

<sup>103</sup>Ibid., November 19, 1828; March 6, 1829.

<sup>104</sup>Ibid., November 19, 1828.

## CHAPTER II

### A CAUSE: ORGANIZE TO OPPOSE JACKSON

During Jackson's term of office the Whig continually denounced his positions on the major national issues. As the Whig had hoped, many people became disenchanted with Jackson and aided the paper in forming an organized opposition: the Whig Party in Virginia. With the very first official act of Jackson, his inaugural, the Whig aimed its editorial guns and blasted away at the new administration.

Not only his address but the men around the President came under rebuke. Since in the inaugural Jackson stressed what he would not do, the Whig described the address as "a piece of still life," and sarcastically accused Jackson of "spitting upon the carcass of the dead Lion."<sup>1</sup> Nothing about the speech appealed to the Whig. Accusing Jackson of being a puppet, the Whig contended that men like Van Buren and Duff Green would decide what position Jackson's administration would endorse. Initially the Whig identified Van Buren, the Secretary of State, as the power behind the throne, but by mid-April

of 1829 the paper called Duff Green, editor of the United States Telegraph, "President de facto": no appointments, claimed the Whig, came without Green's approval. Since Jackson, in the paper's opinion, lacked a President's qualifications, the country had to expect other men in the administration besides the "Old Hero" to run the country.<sup>2</sup>

When Jackson began replacing men in government, the Whig strove to make the spoils system a major political issue. Although Thomas Jefferson removed some office holders after his election in 1800, Jefferson, explained the Whig, neither proscribed as many as Jackson nor ignored an employee's ability to do his job. But even more important Jefferson's victory resulted from a "contest of principles"; therefore, explained the Whig, some changes in office holders was to be expected. The election of 1828 involved "persons" not "principles," the Whig asserted, adding that Adams and Jackson generally agreed on Constitutional principles and that only the personality differences separated the men.<sup>3</sup> Because the Enquirer had opposed the appointment of Rufus King, a former Federalist, as Envoy to England in Adams' administration, the Whig took special delight in the appointment of Louis McLane as Envoy in 1829 forcing the Enquirer also to endorse a former Federalist. Of course the Whig charged its newspaper neighbor with hypocrisy.<sup>4</sup>

As more and more newspaper editors found their way on to government payrolls, the Whig sounded an alarm. While not denying the right of any man to hold office, the paper questioned whether editors should monopolize the offices.<sup>5</sup> Since the Enquirer had attacked Adams for appointing editors, the Whig wondered why the Jackson supporters failed to respond when one quarter of Jackson's appointments came from the press corps. Similarly, the Enquirer had opposed Adams' removal of the public printer but applauded the same action in 1829.<sup>6</sup> By mid-year the aggregate yearly salary of the newspaper men in office surpassed \$100,000 and yet they continued running their papers. Because freedom of the press was so necessary in a democratic society, the Whig admonished the administration for endangering the Republic: no matter how well-disguised, Jacksonianism stood for "DESPOTISM" and "Tyranny."<sup>7</sup>

When Jackson gave his annual message to Congress in December 1829, the Whig took exception to what the President said about the Indians, tariff, internal improvements, and the Bank of the United States. The Whig called Jackson's advising the Indians of Georgia and Alabama to move west of the Mississippi an "unauthorized invasion of human rights" and a "violation of the Constitution." If they refused to go, Jackson had warned them that they must obey the laws of Georgia; therefore said

the Whig the administration endorsed having the Indians under the authority of the people who were "seeking your [Indians'] destruction." This was like committing the "lamb to the wolf" for safe-keeping.<sup>8</sup>

The Whig criticized Jackson's statement on tariffs as inconsistent and confusing, because the message supported only a "modification" of the tariff, leaving in doubt whether Jackson planned to raise or lower the duties. Since no domestic producers competed with foreign imports, the Whig found it reasonable for the government to lower duties on tea and coffee, but how did Jackson hope to protect home industries without a "protective tariff"? While Jackson employed "smooth and conciliating phrases," the Whig doubted he could satisfy the anti-tariff forces in the South, and predicted that the tariff controversy would cost Jackson one base of support--the South.<sup>9</sup>

Other issues, the Bank of the United States, and internal improvements also troubled the paper. Jackson made it clear in his message that he opposed renewing the bank charter scheduled to expire in 1836. Since the charter had seven years to go, the Whig questioned the wisdom of broaching the subject so early, but what really disturbed the paper was the implication in the President's message that a National Exchequer under the immediate control of the government might replace the Bank. Fearful



of the motives of Jackson's administration, the Whig accused Secretary of State Van Buren of trying to discredit Calhoun who supported the Bank. Because the paper believed that the Bank of the United States provided a uniform and sound currency, the Whig cautioned against any drastic changes in the nation's monetary system. It asked its readers to remember that the exchange rates improved after the Bank was established so that remittances could be paid to any part of the Union with ease. Regarding internal improvements the Whig expressed dismay over what the paper described as Jackson's opposition to internal improvements financed by surplus revenues dispersed according to population.<sup>10</sup>

Actually, Jackson had not rejected distribution of federal funds in his message; he had in fact suggested that a distribution according to a state's representation in Congress seemed the best way to dispose of surplus revenue. If questions arose over the constitutionality of such a scheme, he had urged the states to consider a Constitutional amendment. It is true that he warned against "encroachments upon the legitimate sphere of State Sovereignty," but the overall tone of the message denoted approval of distributing money for improvements according to a state's representation.<sup>11</sup> The Whig, for presumably political reasons, simply ignored the implications of the President's message.

After Jackson's Second Annual Message, the Whig again misrepresented his position on the internal improvements, but the paper acknowledged that the administration finally had taken a stand on the tariff by endorsing it. Because the President opposed federally financed internal improvements, the Whig predicted that Jackson would lose Pennsylvania in 1832, and that the President's embracing of the tariff was sure to alienate Virginia's voters.<sup>12</sup> Looking forward to the approaching presidential canvass, the paper predicted that Jackson's "logic" would cost him the election.<sup>13</sup>

To rally the anti-Jackson forces, the Whig continued a barrage of editorials on the Bank, tariff, government expenditures, internal improvements, and Jackson himself. While Jackson's men in the South contended that the "Old Hero" opposed protective tariffs, the Whig countered by reminding readers that, as a Senator, Jackson voted for tariffs. It labeled the President's attacks on the Bank, long before the expiration of its charter, inappropriate and injurious to the economy. Since Jackson had once favored one term for chief executives, the Whig derided him for doing what he criticized other Presidents for pursuing: a second term.<sup>14</sup> During the election of 1828 Jackson had pledged to cut government expenses, but the Whig could prove he had failed to do that. The paper doubted whether he

sincerely sought retrenchment, since he had sent ambassadors to little strife-torn countries with few ports like Guatemala.<sup>15</sup>

After Van Buren received the Vice-Presidential nomination, the Whig perceived that the New Yorker was Jackson's choice for president in 1836. Consequently, the defeat of Jackson in 1832 was important not only to end his influence over government for the next four years, but to protect the nation from having Van Buren succeed Jackson in 1837, or sooner if the Old Hero died in office. The possibility of Jackson not surviving the next four years appeared likely to the Whig, which described the President as "tottering on the brink of the grave" and losing his mental capacity.<sup>16</sup>

By the time the nominating conventions met to select candidates, the Whig's choice, Henry Clay, was the popular choice of the anti-Jackson groups. State elections of 1830 in Kentucky, Pennsylvania, Indiana, Illinois, and Missouri encouraged the Whig which pictured Clay as a man possessing a "powerful mind" and the only man whom it could truthfully call great. Even though the Whig had not favored Clay for the presidency in 1824, the modification of his tariff policy and apparent willingness to compromise convinced the paper that he was the best candidate to unite the anti-Jackson voters and rid the nation of its "greatest curse."<sup>17</sup>

On December 12, 1831, delegates from seventeen states met in Baltimore to name a ticket for the National Republican Party. In a voice vote the convention selected Clay to head the ticket and John Sergeant of Pennsylvania as the Vice-Presidential candidate. The convention adopted resolutions criticizing (1) the administration's corruption, (2) hostility to internal improvements, (3) treachery on the tariff issue, (4) attack on the Bank, and (5) the humiliating surrender to Georgia in the Cherokee Indian case.<sup>18</sup> Despite the danger in Virginia of endorsing a tariff advocate, the Whig greeted Clay's nomination with enthusiasm and launched a campaign offensive.<sup>19</sup>

In mid-summer of the election year, Jackson vetoed a bill to give Virginia \$21,000 for the improvement of the James River, an action that provided the Whig with ammunition for campaign literature. Because Jackson had signed bills for internal improvement, including some for the Cumberland River in his home state, the Whig labeled Jackson's veto "flagrantly and atrociously inconsistent." The President explained his position by saying that the project was not "national in character," but the Richmond paper made good use of the veto to strengthen Clay forces in the counties along the James River.<sup>20</sup>

By late 1831 a new political faction offered another opponent to Jackson when a Baltimore Convention

of Anti-Masons nominated William Wirt, formerly an Attorney General for the United States, as their candidate for President. Although not all National Republicans (Clay's supporters) were Anti-Masons, the paper believed that most Anti-Masons were National Republicans; thus the Whig viewed the new party as an asset. During the campaign some National Republican state organizations like the one in New York endorsed Wirt in an unsuccessful bid to prevent Jackson from cornering that state's electoral votes.<sup>21</sup>

Clay's hopes for Virginia's support received a boost when some Democrats refused to accept Van Buren as Jackson's running mate and began to arrange a Jackson-P. P. Barbour ticket. Men like Thomas W. Gilmer of Albemarle County and William B. Preston of Montgomery County feared that Jackson would not survive a full term; hence they envisioned that Van Buren would succeed Jackson and since the former had an unsatisfactory record on slavery and the tariff, Gilmer and other Barbour men tried to substitute a southerner for Van Buren.<sup>22</sup>

Unfortunately for the Whig and its candidate neither the Bank veto nor the selection of Van Buren as Vice President weakened Jackson's hold on many voters. Politicians who favored rechartering the Bank and who voted for the bill in Congress and voted to override the veto still favored Jackson in the election.<sup>23</sup> Thomas

Ritchie reminded his readers that Jackson's party supported expansion of the suffrage while many of Clay's advocates had opposed a larger electorate. Since Jackson's veto of internal improvements had aroused the western section of the state, the Enquirer deemed it wise to remind West Virginians of the paper's past support for their reform measures. Besides rejuvenating old loyalties, the Enquirer successfully connected Clay with Calhoun and the latter's advocacy of nullification: while acknowledging the inequity of the tariff, Ritchie emphasized that there were better ways than nullification to bring about change. When election day came, Jackson retained his old support in the mountains and valley.<sup>24</sup>

In fact, Jackson smashed his opponents in Virginia. Out of over 45,000 votes cast, Jackson received more than 33,500, and even in the Whig's stronghold, Richmond, Jackson won by 40 votes. Of the more than 100 counties, Clay carried only half a dozen. In December William C. Rives, an administration supporter, was re-elected to the Senate.<sup>25</sup> But the defeat for the opposition party in the national elections was washed away by the nullification crisis which began to reach a climax one month after the election.

For some time trouble had lurked just under the surface; the tariff, especially in South Carolina, was a cutting issue that threatened to sever loyalty to the

Union. When the 1832 tariff passed Congress with most of the objectionable duties still intact, a state convention met in Charleston on November 19, 1832, and passed resolutions of nullification which prevented the collection of tariffs at South Carolina's ports. In the opinion of most Virginians, nullification, the product of Calhoun's fertile mind, appeared to be too drastic a remedy.

But more important than Virginia's reaction was President Jackson's response to South Carolina's challenge of national authority. At first the President appeared to assume a moderate attitude towards the ordinances. In his annual message to Congress on December 4 the President briefly referred to South Carolina's convention but indicated that he expected the Congress to resolve the difficulty. He wrote that he favored the reduction of duties on many articles which did not threaten domestic production.

A few days later the President dispelled all conjectures that he would be lenient, as he had been with Georgia over the Cherokee Indian affair. In a Proclamation on December 10 and in a special message on January 16 Jackson explained that he now perceived that South Carolina was not going to try to settle her problems; therefore the President believed he was compelled by the oath he gave at his inauguration to suppress South Carolina's "extraordinary defiance." Aggression, state

authorized resistance to revenue collection, would not go unchallenged in Jackson's administration.<sup>26</sup>

It was clear to Jackson that the government in South Carolina intended to ignore the Executive, Congress, and public opinion. If not, why, asked the President, had South Carolina organized her militia and created a "State Guard" consisting of 2,000 men from Charleston and 10,000 men from across the state? Rather than strive for a settlement of the tariff question, the state demanded submission to her position. She intended, continued Jackson, to void a law passed by Congress or secede from the Union, but he refused to acknowledge any such power and argued that no state had the right to ignore its responsibilities and obligations.<sup>27</sup>

After surveying South Carolina's recent actions and messages to him, Jackson explained why he thought the compact theory of government offered no grounds for a state to nullify a federal law. While many supported Jackson's resolve to maintain the Union, his attack on the compact theory frightened and angered not only the Whig but some politicians who considered themselves friends of the President. He emphasized that the Constitution provided for checks against unjust acts: power of Congress to legislate, President's powers of veto, and the judiciary's authority to declare laws unconstitutional. These checks in addition to the force of public



opinion and the possibility of constitutional amendments were "the solutary limitation upon the powers of the whole [federal government]." Before a state could break the compact, all methods open to remedy a wrong had to be explored and then only causes justifying revolution warranted disruption of the Union. Until a state pursued all channels, Jackson declared, "the measures of the [federal] Government are . . . valid and consequently supreme."<sup>28</sup>

The obvious prosperity in the United States and the increase of free men testified, said Jackson, to the usefulness of the tariff. People had accepted the tariff for some time since in all revenue matters the "people's representatives" approved the duties. To strengthen his argument that the tariff had not precipitated economic disaster in the United States or South Carolina, Jackson quoted the state's Governor, James Hamilton, who in a report to his legislature in 1832 declared that the state had a "happy economic future" and enjoyed social tranquility. How, asked Jackson, could any state in such good condition justify revolution and dissolution? Answering his own question the President concluded that there was "no sufficient cause for the acts of South Carolina."<sup>29</sup>

No matter how painful the task, Jackson pledged "to spare no effort to discharge" his duty of upholding

the law of the land. With only a few modifications of the Militia Act of 1795, he believed he could act to resist a state's unwillingness to conform to the law.<sup>30</sup> Because the friends of civil liberty all over the world depended on the United States to provide an example for others to follow, Jackson declared that he must uphold the Constitution. "The Constitution and the laws are supreme and the Union indissoluble."<sup>31</sup>

Not only the Whig but even Thomas Ritchie's Enquirer warned South Carolina that precipitous action promised more harm than benefits, and although many Virginians opposed the tariff, they also wanted to maintain the Union. On December 13 Governor John Floyd presented South Carolina's nullification ordinance to the Virginia legislature which immediately began debating what role the Old Dominion should assume.<sup>32</sup> By a vote of 73 to 59 the legislature adopted resolutions requesting that (1) Virginia's senators and representatives in Congress support reduction of the tariff, (2) South Carolina suspend her ordinance until the present session of Congress was over.<sup>33</sup> In addition, the legislature denied that Virginia's Resolutions of 1798 and 1799 sanctioned nullification. To convey these resolutions, the legislature selected Benjamin W. Leigh as its commissioner. Leigh, a representative of pro-slavery Tidewater Virginia and soon to be United States Senator, was well received in

Charleston.<sup>34</sup> In order to appear sympathetic to the anti-tariff forces, the legislature also denounced Jackson's Proclamation because he seemed to base his powers on a theory of national government and not a confederate government; hence to Virginia's legislature the Proclamation constituted a threat to state sovereignty.

While the Whig opposed nullification, the paper accused Jackson of reviving the Federalists with his Proclamation. Again the Whig made use of its earlier accusations by maintaining that the General had no concern for the Constitution or limits by it on the President. Rather than depend on military might to secure the Union, the Whig urged compromise in Congress on the tariff rates. By February the paper believed that Clay, the natural mediator, would persuade the Congress to accept a reduction of the tariff and allow South Carolina to withdraw her ordinance of nullification.<sup>35</sup>

Throughout the tariff and nullification crisis which began in 1828, the Whig made clear the paper's desire to maintain the Union. In June, 1828, the Whig's editorials expressed a concern that some politicians seriously contemplated separation of the states even though most people in the past viewed dissolution as a "holy terror." While the number favoring disunion was small, there were enough to make every man who regarded the Union as the only "bulwark of our peace and liberties"

set his face against the abettors of dissolution, against such men as William Giles of Virginia, Dr. Cooper, and James Hamilton of South Carolina who conspired with the secessionists. The Whig surmised that southerners would have to choose one day between the Union and South Carolina's schemes of secession, and warned that since an attack on the Federal Union must lead to "blood and desolation" and end in "despotism," there was no prospect of a peaceful separation. After the United States had been divided and weakened the Whig wondered who would provide protection against foreign advancements.<sup>36</sup>

A month later the Whig became encouraged by public reaction which disagreed with South Carolina's politicians. The paper confidently expected the "furious advocates of resistance and disunion" to quail before the United States and even from some quarters in South Carolina. Confidently, the Whig informed the fire-eaters that a majority of the people preferred Union to dollars and cents.<sup>37</sup>

When Senator Daniel Webster and Senator Robert Y. Hayne of South Carolina debated in January 1830, the Whig endorsed the arguments of Webster by supporting the contention that states had a right to secede but only when revolution was justified. To the paper, Webster's words meant "moderation and justice" and called for a "healing" of the country's wounds, but on the other hand Hayne's

talk of nullification revealed, said the Whig, the "bullying spirit" of the fire-eaters who seem to think they can dictate their wishes to the other twenty-three states.<sup>38</sup> These men hoped for a "republic south of the Potomac" but the Whig ridiculed such a calculation as absurd, chimerical, and stupid.<sup>39</sup>

What would secession entail? First "civil war" in its unrelenting form would follow secession, with the North and the West retaining the United States Treasury and the Navy, except for two ships of the line in Hampton Roads and one frigate in Charleston. Virginia, located on the border, would have to absorb the heat of battle as well as the hardships, including (1) a destruction of the tobacco economy, (2) the secession of Western Virginia, and (3) the end of slavery in Virginia. The Whig concluded that the whole scheme was "treasonable," "ruinous," and "silly."<sup>40</sup>

In September 1831 the Whig published and endorsed an article, signed "ONE OF THE PEOPLE," challenging Calhoun's theory of state sovereignty. Calhoun's idea, contended the author, allowed one state to annul a law unless three-fourths of the states were willing to overturn the decision of the state that nullified the law. With each state legislature acting as a supreme court, only chaos could result. If a law passed by Congress and signed by the President was unconstitutional, it was up

to the Supreme Court, not a state, to declare the law unconstitutional; and since the Constitution allowed amendments, grievances could be handled in a legal manner.<sup>41</sup> But if the federal government gave in to South Carolina, the Whig declared, agreeing with the writer, the power to destroy the government would be in the hands of each state. Obviously a middle course was needed, and the Whig counted on men like Henry Clay in Congress to arrange a satisfactory compromise.<sup>42</sup>

Compromise was slow to come. As Congress began debating the tariff bill in the Spring of 1832, South Carolina shifted her demand from ending protective duties to the abolition of all tariffs. The apparent determination of South Carolina to precipitate a clash with the federal government shocked the Whig. At the moment that a modification of tariffs was near, the Governor of South Carolina traveled across his state stirring up emotions and making new demands.<sup>43</sup> Realizing that continued South Carolinian intransigence imperiled the chances of compromise, the paper cautioned the fire-eaters that the right of levying duties had to be recognized before significant reduction of rates was possible.<sup>44</sup>

In the late summer and winter of 1832 the crisis deepened. As hope for a reduction of rates faded, South Carolina moved towards convening a state convention to nullify officially a federal tariff law. If such a thing

occurred the Whig advised that the government use no force "until nullification is enforced." The paper feared that violence would only complicate the difficulty.<sup>45</sup> Yet the Whig recognized the disadvantages of the other alternatives: to acquiesce and repeal the tariff would endanger the integrity of the Union and invite other states to follow South Carolina's example, and to allow South Carolina to repeal the tariff and also remain in the Union was impractical. Again the Whig called on the Congress to try to settle the tariff problem peacefully. If Congress failed to respond, the Whig anticipated that Jackson, despising Calhoun and other leaders in the nullification drive, would provoke a bloody war.<sup>46</sup>

To the Whig's disappointment, Jackson acted first with his Proclamation on December 10. His repudiation of nullification and secession and denial of the sovereignty of states provoked bitter editorials from the Whig, which maintained that if the President was correct then Virginia belonged to a "Consolidated Empire" ruled by the majorities in Ohio, Pennsylvania, and New York. Since Jackson's message to Congress on December 4 had been reasonable and friendly toward South Carolina, the President's new tough attitude puzzled the Whig. After the Proclamation the paper began to espouse a line more favorable to the nullifiers. The President's assault on

state rights theories compelled the paper to rally anti-administration forces: "the friends of State Rights must make a last stand for their existence."<sup>47</sup>

Jackson's Proclamation and the Whig's response to him placed the paper in an uncomfortable position. While the Whig renunciated nullification of the tariff, the paper also stressed that when a government became oppressive (as Jackson threatened in his Proclamation), nullification became preferable to secession or revolution; consequently the Whig advised Virginians to disclaim South Carolina's mode of resistance but not the principle of state sovereignty.<sup>48</sup> Other papers, such as the Kanawha Banner, understandably confused by the Whig's turnabout, accused the paper of inconsistency. Admitting a change of position, the Whig justified the switch by saying that "the fruit of further inquiry and additional information " necessitated a new policy. Conscience, editorialized the Whig, required no less.<sup>49</sup> What the paper did not mention was that Jackson's Proclamation angered many conservative Eastern Virginia politicians who might join the emerging Whig Party to defeat Andrew Jackson. In other words, the Whig wanted the Union, but balked at applying the force necessary to preserve it if such action might weaken the prospect of defeating Jackson.

The Whig defended its new posture by pointing out the comparative strengths and weaknesses of the North and



South. Because of slavery the South's interests were different from other sections and its population inferior in numbers; consequently political power and control of the national government would move North. If the North tried to oppress the South with the new power, explained the Whig, then the states needed an escape, nullification and secession.<sup>50</sup>

A compromise tariff finally emerged from Congress and the crisis subsided, but in late February and March of 1833 the Whig refused to credit Jackson with having anything to do with South Carolina's retreat. He merely intensified emotions, said the paper, which asserted that Clay, though long a supporter of a protective tariff, was the hero, for he placed the tariff on "the altar of peace" when it imperiled the Union.<sup>51</sup>

After the storm of political activity receded, the Whig generalized on the exercise of political power in the United States, Great Britain, and France, and came to some disturbing conclusions. Despite the fact that the three countries considered themselves friends of liberal principles, they had recently "oppressed" their people. The French overthrew Charles X expecting Louis Phillipe to secure republican rule, but instead he had adhered to policies similar to Charles'; in England the Whigs came to power after promising reform of Parliament, but they embraced despotism more firmly than the Tories;

and Andrew Jackson assumed office in 1829 promising to retrieve liberty, but instead he revived the principles of the "reign of terror" and consolidated power in his hands. These sad accounts convinced the Whig that "power . . . seeks extension and enlargement." Ambitious men out of power pledge anything to gain it, but forfeit all their pledges and desert their principles to retain and increase their authority; thus "the price of liberty, is eternal and sleepless vigilance and jealousy of those who are entrusted with power."<sup>52</sup>

The Whig disapproved of abusing those who supported nullification because they loved the Union and attempted to save it by forcing the nation to rectify grievances.<sup>53</sup> The alternative to nullification was revolution which would permanently destroy the country's bonds. How anyone such as Thomas Ritchie would support the right of revolution and then claim to be a better Union man than the nullifiers mystified the Whig. At least the nullifiers tried to end oppression in an orderly and peaceful manner, and indeed they succeeded in 1798 and 1833 by bringing about changes without destroying the Union.<sup>54</sup>

The Whig saw in 1833 a greater requirement than ever for political parties. Since parties kept alive the "vestal flame of liberty," Monroe erred in attempting to merge the Federalist and Republican Parties. In the long

run, said the Whig, Jackson's Proclamation might prove a blessing since it betrayed the true beliefs of the Federalists and their love of centralized power; consequently, the South must either rally to the principles of 1798 or "submit like recreants and dogs" to northern aggression.<sup>55</sup>

As the Whig had anticipated, the tariff and the nullification crisis disrupted Jackson's supporters in Virginia. A few such as Thomas Ritchie remained loyal to "Old Hickory," but many former followers broke openly with the President in the winter of 1833, including John Tyler, John Randolph, L. W. Tazewell, and Benjamin Watkins Leigh. Quickly an opposition party grew, counting in its ranks advocates and opponents of the tariff, national bank, federally financed internal improvements, and distribution of the public land proceeds.<sup>56</sup>

This unlikely coalition held together because the different elements all feared the growing power of Jackson and the federal government. Governor John Floyd, always in contact with the emerging Whig party in Virginia, yet an admirer of John C. Calhoun, sent South Carolina's ordinances to the Virginia legislature and told that body that Jackson's Proclamation was the act of a tyrant and intimated that Virginia should stand by her sister state, South Carolina. Recognizing the prospects of a confrontation between federal and state forces, Floyd confided in his diary that he could not expect to

survive a civil war but "a republic and constitutional liberty I will have or I will perish in the struggle."<sup>57</sup>

Throughout 1833 the Virginia Opposition Party gathered strength so that by the winter of 1833-34, it could, with some hope of success, predict that the opposition would carry the legislature in the approaching state spring elections. L. W. Tazewell succeeded Floyd as Governor and B. W. Leigh replaced W. C. Rives in the Senate after the latter antagonized the legislature by endorsing Jackson's Force Bill. To make matters worse for Jackson's men, he reacted strongly to the Senate's censure of him for removing federal deposits from the Bank of the United States.<sup>58</sup>

On March 28, 1834, the United States Senate censured Jackson in the following words:

Resolved, that the President, in the late Executive proceeding in relation to the public revenue, has assumed upon himself authority and power not conferred by the Constitution and laws, but in derogation of both.<sup>59</sup>

The President defended his actions in a "Protest" sent to Congress on April 15 and accused the Senate of assuming the role prescribed for the House of Representatives. If what the Upper House said was true, then the President reasoned that impeachment was the proper action and the initiation of any such action had to be in the House, not the Senate. The latter, said Jackson, had voted for conviction before he was accused.<sup>60</sup>

Jackson's new controversy with Congressional critics merely added credulity to the arguments of his opponents in Virginia who campaigned on the platform that the executive had to be restrained to prevent him from continuing what the Whig called "consolidation."<sup>61</sup> After the "Protest" became known, Ritchie despaired of winning the state elections in May, and when the votes came in, the opposition controlled seventy-nine seats to the administration's fifty-five in Virginia's Lower House. Although the Senate, with its staggered elections remained in the hands of the administration forces, the opposition possessed enough votes to control the joint ballots used to select United States Senators and Governors.<sup>62</sup>

As opposition forces across the nation gained strength, the question of a name for the new party arose. In New York at an anti-administration meeting on April 1, 1834, it was suggested that perhaps the appellations "Whig" or "Tory" might be appropriate. The Richmond Whig reacted favorably to "Whig" because the word represented groups who prefer "liberty to tyranny" and "privilege against prerogative," but because of the bitterness generally attached to the term "Tory" the paper opposed that name. Beginning in April 1834, most of the anti-administration groups accepted the title Whig.<sup>63</sup>

The new party quickly flexed its power in Virginia. Within a few months it carried the state

legislature, elected a governor, forced the resignation of United States Senator William C. Rives, and replaced him with Benjamin Watkins Leigh, also a Whig. But the successes provided a poor basis for predicting the future, since the main adhesive needed to hold the Whig coalition disappeared when Jackson left office in 1836. With all the differences the Whigs had with each other, they could only combine to oppose Jackson's reach for what they termed unconstitutional power or as the Whig phrased it, "Executive encroachment and Executive pretensions to absolute power."<sup>64</sup>

Slavery soon became a troublesome issue for the Whigs. Many Whig leaders, including the editors of the Richmond Whig and Samuel McDowell Moore of Rockbridge, looked forward to the end of slavery in Virginia, but others such as B. W. Leigh and John Tyler defended the institution. The State Constitutional Convention of 1829-1830 and Nat Turner's Rebellion in 1831 had enlivened debate on the peculiar institution and, in retrospect, had revealed the potential threat to the solidarity of Virginia's Whigs.

But as of 1834, Virginia had a strong Whig party containing men of different philosophies. For ten years this group had been developing; at first the presidential elections provided the impetus for the opposition and finally the issues of the tariff and the role of the

president combined to fashion a formal party organization. Between 1824 and 1834, the Richmond Whig had encouraged and supported the anti-administration coalition in the state. Also in 1834 it became the principal newspaper and leading vehicle for articulating the position and views of Virginia Whigs.<sup>65</sup>

## CHAPTER II FOOTNOTES

- <sup>1</sup>Richmond Whig, March 6, 1829.
1829. <sup>2</sup>Ibid., April 3 and April 17, 1829; October 1,
- <sup>3</sup>Ibid., May 1, 1829.
- <sup>4</sup>Ibid., April 24, 1829.
- <sup>5</sup>Ibid., June 16, 1829.
- <sup>6</sup>Ibid., May 19, 1829.
- <sup>7</sup>Ibid., June 23, 1829; July 24, 1829.
- <sup>8</sup>Ibid., December 12, 1829.
- <sup>9</sup>Ibid., December 14, 1829.
- <sup>10</sup>Ibid., December 14 and December 15, 1829.
- <sup>11</sup>Richardson, ed., II, 442-462.
- <sup>12</sup>Richmond Whig, December 14 and December 21, 1830.
- <sup>13</sup>Ibid., December 11, 1830.
- <sup>14</sup>Ibid., August 11, 1831.
- <sup>15</sup>Ibid., April 17, 1832.
- <sup>16</sup>Ibid., February 24, 1832.
- 1830; <sup>17</sup>Ibid., April 30, 1830; July 17, 1829; August 26,  
November 7, 1831; September 11, 1832.
- <sup>18</sup>Stanwood, 156-157.
- <sup>19</sup>Richmond Whig, December 30, 1831.
- <sup>20</sup>Ibid., July 19, 1832; July 24, 1832.
- August 17 <sup>21</sup>Ibid., November 14, 1831; February 11, 1832;  
and August 21, 1832.



<sup>22</sup>Simms, 79-80; Ambler, Ritchie, 146-147. Those backing the Barbour movement in Virginia and North Carolina hoped to throw the election into the Senate where they expected Calhoun to beat Van Buren.

<sup>23</sup>Stanwood, 162.

<sup>24</sup>Ambler, Ritchie, 119-154.

<sup>25</sup>Simms, 62; Stanwood, 163.

<sup>26</sup>Richardson, II, 611-632 and 640-656.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid., 611-632.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid.

<sup>30</sup>What Jackson wanted and got was the so-called "Force Bill" which strengthened his hand militarily. See Winfred A. Harbison and Alfred H. Kelly, The American Constitution, Its Origins and Development (4th edition; New York: W. W. Norton and Company, Inc., 1970), 314.

<sup>31</sup>Richardson, II, 611-632 and 640-656.

<sup>32</sup>Simms, 65. See also Charles H. Ambler (ed.), The Life and Diary of John Floyd (Richmond: Richmond Press, 1918), for that date.

<sup>33</sup>Ibid., 67

<sup>34</sup>Ibid., 68-71.

<sup>35</sup>Richmond Whig, February 15, 1833.

<sup>36</sup>Ibid., June 21 and June 28, 1828.

<sup>37</sup>Ibid., July 19, 1828.

<sup>38</sup>Ibid., February 2 and February 8, 1830; July 16, 1830.

<sup>39</sup>Ibid., July 16, 1830.

<sup>40</sup>Ibid.

<sup>41</sup>Ibid., September 12, 1831.

<sup>42</sup>Ibid., November 24, 1831.

<sup>43</sup>Ibid., April 20, 1832.

- <sup>44</sup>Ibid., June 22, 1832.
- <sup>45</sup>Ibid., August 10, 1832.
- <sup>46</sup>Ibid., November 30, 1832.
- <sup>47</sup>Ibid., December 14, 1832; December 18, 1832.
- <sup>48</sup>Ibid., January 11, 1833.
- <sup>49</sup>Ibid., January 31, 1833.
- <sup>50</sup>Ibid., March 12, 1833.
- <sup>51</sup>Ibid., February 28, 1833.
- <sup>52</sup>Ibid., July 9, 1833.
- <sup>53</sup>Ibid., August 2, 1833. The Whig was referring to critical editorials in the Norfolk Herald and the Richmond Enquirer.
- <sup>54</sup>Ibid., August 2 and August 23, 1833.
- <sup>55</sup>Ibid., August 9, 1833.
- <sup>56</sup>Simms, 76-87.
- <sup>57</sup>Ambler, Diary, 203.
- <sup>58</sup>Ambler, Ritchie, 156-160.
- <sup>59</sup>Richardson, II, 69.
- <sup>60</sup>Ibid., 69-94.
- <sup>61</sup>Richmond Whig, April 19, 1834.
- <sup>62</sup>Ambler, Ritchie, 159-160; Simms, 85-86.
- <sup>63</sup>Richmond Whig, April 8, 1834.
- <sup>64</sup>Ibid., May 13, 1834.
- <sup>65</sup>According to the June 30, 1831, Whig, the paper had a weekly edition going to every county in Virginia. As of November 15, 1828 the Whig published a daily for its Richmond city readers.

### CHAPTER III

#### TROUBLESOME AND DIVISIVE ISSUES: SLAVERY AND CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM

The problem of slavery and the related questions of suffrage and representation confronted the Whig for thirty-five years. Not only the northern and southern states but Eastern Virginia and Western Virginia also eventually split over the question. When the Whig began publishing in 1824, it actively sought an end to the peculiar institution.

Since the Whig believed that slavery retarded Virginia's economic growth and contributed to political divisiveness, the paper naturally encouraged emancipation schemes. When Monroe's administration in 1824 requested that the Senate ratify a treaty with Great Britain outlawing maritime slave trade, the Whig approved and credited the proposed agreement to John Q. Adams. Others, however, objected to the provisions of the treaty allowing British sailors to search American vessels while enforcing the prohibition. The Whig responded to the critics by arguing that the United States would yield

"not a tittle of right or principle to Great Britain, which she had not mutually conceded to us." In vain the Whig contended that no other course could accomplish so "holy a purpose."<sup>1</sup>

In early 1825, when Rufus King of New York proposed a bill in the Senate to finance an emancipation scheme, the Whig quickly endorsed his plan. According to King the net proceeds from the sale of United States public lands would be sufficient to pay for the removal of slaves and "free persons of color"; the federal government, however, would not interfere with any state laws that prohibited emancipation. The Whig said that King was offering the South an opportunity to rid itself of an "evil" which was "wasting" the section's happiness and strength. Because of the "blighting curse" the North had developed a superior economy and if the South wished to match the North's economic growth, the South had to accept some form of abolition.<sup>2</sup>

Unfortunately for the Whig, not many southerners agreed with the paper's assessment of King's bill. By August the Whig itself, under pressure, shifted its position and said that the New York Senator's plan was too tardy and slow. Since not enough funds would be available, the idea was impractical, "ill-advised and visionary." Comments about King's "disloyalty" during the war of 1812 revealed that southern opposition was concentrating

less on the Senator's scheme than on his former federalist leaning.<sup>3</sup>

While the Whig pursued an end to slavery, the editorials showed a preference for the projects of the American Colonization Society rather than federally directed actions envisioned in King's plan. Since slavery was "intimately blended with our polity," the Whig feared that a sudden disappearance of the "evil . . . might jeopardize the prosperity and perhaps the well-being of society." Beneficial efforts would follow emancipation which the "intelligent portions of the population" realized, and they would someday persuade the public to sanction emancipation. Most of the Colonization Society's opposition, claimed the Whig, came from President J. Q. Adams' adversaries, who tried to tie abolitionism to Adams and unite the South against his administration.<sup>4</sup>

All the abolitionist schemes endorsed by the Whig provided for removal of the Negroes from the state, but until that was accomplished the Whig wanted them treated decently, whether slave or free. The editors agreed with Governor William B. Giles who requested the repeal of unjust laws which allowed the sale into slavery of a "coloured female," for the most paltry theft. Once she became a slave all of her children were likewise bound to the system.<sup>5</sup> As abolition gained momentum in the North, Virginia's legislature passed sedition laws prohibiting

the writing, printing, or circulating of any paper, pamphlet, or book counseling slave insurrection or rebellion. The laws also prohibited a white man from teaching a slave to read or write. The Whig denounced the laws as a violation of freedom of speech, declaring that they were so sweeping that the authorities might construe some literature on colonization as subversive, and so send an innocent man to jail. The Whig also pointed out that since a slave increased his value when he acquired reading skills, denying the slave owner the right to teach his slaves how to read and write constituted illegal reduction of the value of a citizen's property.<sup>6</sup>

In 1831 a slave insurrection brought new urgency to the debate of the peculiar institution's future in Virginia. On August 21 Nat Turner, a slave preacher and self-proclaimed prophet, led a band of slaves numbering about seventy on a killing spree that resulted in the deaths of about sixty people, mostly women and children. To suppress the rebellion Governor John Floyd ordered four companies of state militia to the area while the federal government dispatched three companies from Fortress Monroe. The Whig's editor, John Hampden Pleasants, accompanied the state militia from Richmond.<sup>7</sup>

When word of the disturbance first arrived in Richmond, the Whig played down the importance by explaining that a few runaways had probably plundered and killed

some people but that the authorities had subdued the slaves quickly; hence the Whig concluded that there was "no cause for the slightest alarm." Gradually, however, the Whig received reports from Pleasants in Southampton that revealed the magnitude of the uprising and the loss of life: his accounts gave grisly descriptions of torture and mutilation of victims.<sup>8</sup>

The Whig identified Nat Turner (Pleasants described him as a religious fanatic with no purpose) as the ringleader of the murderers. The terror began when Turner and a few followers got drunk and killed a white man. Believing they were dead men for having slain him, the editor reasoned that they went wild with fear. As the band spread out over a twenty mile region, more slaves joined Turner and between the early morning hours of Sunday, August 21, and noon Monday, they killed most of their sixty-two victims.<sup>9</sup>

It is interesting to note that although the Whig's chief editor was on the scene and saw first-hand the results of the slave rebellion, he still expressed concern about the Negroes in Southampton. He cautioned against blind revenge propelled by unwarranted fear.<sup>10</sup> In spite of the presence of the militia, whites went on a rampage and seldom made any distinctions between slaves involved in the plot and those who were not. The white mobs and militia killed two-thirds of the rebel slaves

while the rest stood trial and died on the gallows.<sup>11</sup>  
 For the next two months Nat Turner avoided capture but finally Southampton County officials caught and hanged the man they blamed for initiating the uprising.<sup>12</sup>

Although no other slave revolts took place in Virginia immediately after the Southampton disturbance, and despite attempts of the Whig and other papers to calm the people, many rumors circulated of impending outbreaks. Governor Floyd complained in his diary of receiving numerous pleas for weapons from Amelia, Dinwiddie, Accomac, and Nottoway counties as well as some localities near the Blue Ridge line. When people did not talk of slave insurrections they debated various programs of abolition.<sup>13</sup>

The Whig continued backing its favorite scheme: colonization. According to the paper, Virginia needed to transport 2,000 slaves a year to Liberia to reduce the chance of another Nat Turner revolt. During the following year the Virginia chapter of the American Colonization Society anticipated exporting two hundred Negroes from Southampton County alone. The Whig urged all citizens to contribute generously and help defray the high transportation costs.<sup>14</sup>

The fact that Virginians began talking openly about abolition did not mean that they were about to join forces with William Lloyd Garrison. Quite the contrary, they placed much of the blame for the Turner uprising on



Garrison's editorials in the newly established Liberator. Governor Floyd, convinced of Garrison's guilt, predicted that if no steps were taken to prohibit the publication of seditious materials the Union could not endure. He confided to his diary that "a man in our States may plot treason in one state against another without fear of punishment, whilst the suffering state has no right to resist by the provisions of the Federal Constitution." If the abolitionists went undisturbed, he wrote, "it must lead to a separation of these states."<sup>15</sup>

Since the Virginia legislature was convening in December, many urged their delegates to bring up slavery and debate the feasibility of various emancipation plans. Although state politicians had avoided the topic like a plague, the Whig reported that even the large slave owners were now agitating for a debate. The Whig editorialized that if nothing was done, many frightened people would leave Virginia; and since the state had dropped from first in population to third between 1810 and 1830, the Whig warned that she could ill-afford more departures.<sup>16</sup> Another concern, especially since Nat Turner, was the increasing percentage of Negroes in the population. In 1790 whites outnumbered blacks by 24,000, but by 1830 the latter exceeded the former by 81,000.<sup>17</sup> In October the Whig reported that several states including Georgia and Louisiana had enacted laws prohibiting the

introduction of slaves for sale in the state. If other states followed suit, they would then close Virginia's valve for excess population.<sup>18</sup>

When the Virginia legislature convened in December, many young faces appeared including: Thomas Marshall, John Marshall's oldest son; Thomas Jefferson Randolph, grandson of Thomas Jefferson; James McDowell, Jr., later to be a Congressman and Governor; William B. Preston, a future Congressman; and William H. Roane of Hanover, grandson of Patrick Henry. These men, prodded by their constituents, were eager to debate slavery and Governor Floyd's message on December 6 gave them encouragement by suggesting that the Commonwealth appropriate funds for the removal of free Negroes from the state. Since so much of the annual message dealt with insurrection and removal of slaves, the speaker of the House referred the subject to a select committee of thirteen, ten of whom came from east of the Blue Ridge.<sup>19</sup>

When Roane of Hanover presented petitions from a local Quaker society recommending a policy of gradual emancipation, one week after the legislature gathered in Richmond, the Whig got its desired debate. Pro-slavery forces led by William O. Goode of Mecklenburg tried to prevent the petition from going to the select committee studying slavery, but when the House referred the petition by a vote of 93 to 27, the attempt failed.<sup>20</sup>

On January 10 Goode inquired about the progress of the select committee and learned from the committee chairman that the subjects under review, gradual emancipation and removal of free Negroes, were very complex and hence the committee could not yet report back to the House. Goode, hoping to abort the committee report, proposed a resolution discharging the committee from considering any petition, memorials, or resolutions pertaining to manumission. To counter Goode's move, Thomas Jefferson Randolph offered an amendment to Goode's resolution by suggesting that the committee study the feasibility of presenting to Virginia's voters Thomas Jefferson's old plan of making all children born of a slave mother the property of the Commonwealth. After they attained a certain age the state would pay for their transportation to Africa. Goode, with his proposal, precipitated exactly what he had desired to avoid: a lengthy debate on emancipation.<sup>21</sup>

Before the House could adopt either Goode's or Randolph's resolutions, the select committee reported out a resolution on January 16 declaring it inexpedient to enact at that time any legislation on the abolition of slavery. With this report Goode's and Randolph's resolutions were out of order. But to continue the debate Preston moved that "expedient" replace the word "inexpedient" in the committee's resolution and for the next

nine days Virginia's legislature argued over the desirability of the peculiar institution.<sup>22</sup>

For two weeks the Whig reported many speeches that chronicled the disadvantages of Negro slavery. Samuel McDowell Moore of Rockbridge County, soon to be a leading Whig, challenged proponents of the system to explain how they justified limiting any man's liberty when Americans proclaimed in 1776 that the "enjoyment of liberty, is one of those perfect, inherent and inalienable rights, which pertain to the whole human race." Believing no satisfactory explanation was possible, Moore identified an "irresistible tendency" of slavery, the destruction of "virtue and morality in the community." Because slave owners feared an informed and educated Negro, "ignorance is the inseparable companion of slavery." And without informed minds slaves could not be virtuous and moral, so they with their vices would also extend an "injudicious influence" upon the morals of the free. Another argument of Moore's, one echoed by many anti-slavery people including the Whig, warned that the peculiar institution weakened the country's defense against foreign aggression. While he admitted that many slaves received "mild" and "humane" treatment, he still characterized slavery as an "intolerable evil."<sup>23</sup>

Supporting Moore, George W. Summers of Kanawha County contended that slavery made labor "dishonorable";

consequently habits of idleness and dissipation attacked the virtue of industry. Denying that he was a "fanatic or philanthropic enthusiast," Summers emphasized his main goal of improving the condition of whites. In Summers' opinion the West, with no large slave population, enjoyed greater spirit of free inquiry and freedom of thought than the East. Even the poorest individual possessing only a "trusty rifle, log cabin, and a 'patch of corn,' is the most independent of men." To eradicate slavery, Summers, like the Whig, disapproved of immediate abolition and favored the gradual "post nati" plan (that of Thomas Jefferson and Thomas Jefferson Randolph). Summers respected the property rights of slave owners but cautioned them that all property "is held subordinate to . . . the general welfare of the community in which it exists."<sup>24</sup>

From Mecklenburg County two delegates, Alex G. Knox and William O. Goode, championed the property interests of the slave owners. Knox began his argument by denying that Thomas Jefferson's ideas should carry any weight since he waited for "the last solemn act" to manumit his slaves. Rather than castigate slavery as an evil and a source of the Commonwealth's weaknesses, as the Whig had done, Knox suggested that the peculiar institution facilitated the preservation of "a Republican Government." He asked his adversaries to name one

"solitary instance of a Government, since the institution of civil society, in which the principle of slavery was not tolerated in some form or another." Even the slaves, declared Knox, profited from slavery since they enjoyed instruction in moral principle, an enlightenment which the African, "wandering in wretchedness over sun-scorched deserts, never encountered."<sup>25</sup>

Goode also defended the system by claiming, what the Whig denied, that slavery contributed to an efficient agricultural economy.<sup>26</sup> He contended that slavery provided Virginia with the constant and dependable labor force which was required to plant and harvest tobacco. Some critics pointed to the state's declining exports as proof of the evils of slavery, noted Goode, but the reduction resulted from declining prices not the adversities of slavery. In the future, however, Goode expected the lower southern states to drain off many of Virginia's excess slave population. Why? Because it was profitable to use slaves in the production of cotton; hence Virginia would gradually end slavery just as the North did earlier. Already, said Goode, some farmers in Virginia had made slavery less important to them by shifting from tobacco to wheat production and the raising of livestock.<sup>27</sup>

Besides defending slavery and its benefits, Delegate John T. Brown of Petersburg catalogued the reasons why a slave's life was superior to that of many

peasants in Europe and some laborers of the North. The happiness of the slave "does not call for his emancipation." Brown asked how else the slave would be sure of a subsistence, independent of accident, protected while ill, and secure from cruel treatment. While the Negro lacked liberty so, said Brown, did a great part of mankind; not all could reach the top of the scale because the ignorant had to toil anxiously for their daily bread. To be free a man must be civilized and enlightened, conditions, Brown stressed, that the Negro was the least likely to attain.<sup>28</sup>

Unable to allow Brown's comments to go unanswered, Moore of Rockbridge again took the floor and contested the notion that a slave happily accepted his condition. While not questioning that the slave enjoyed comforts that workers around the world lacked, he argued, as did the Whig, that the very improvement offered the slave insured his eternal determination to improve himself, and that no amount of oppression could smother his desire for liberty. Moore asked, "Was it the fear of Nat Turner and his deluded drunken handful of followers" who produced panic in counties that never heard of Southampton? No. People all over the state requested arms because they held a suspicion "eternally attached to the slave himself, the suspicion that a Nat Turner might be in every family, that the same bloody deed could be acted over at any time

in any place. . . ." Moore counseled his fellow delegates to prevent future Southamptons by initiating a policy of abolition.<sup>29</sup>

Since both the emancipators and the slavery party numbered about sixty delegates, the decision on whether positive legislation would result depended on the votes of about a dozen compromisers. After two weeks of debate the legislature closed the discussions with four polls on the main topics.<sup>30</sup> The first count came on a motion to postpone indefinitely the committee report and Preston's proposed amendment. The slavery group lost this round 60 to 71 (only four of 24 Valley delegates voted aye and none of the 31 Trans-Alleghany men voted aye). When the Preston amendment came up, declaring it "expedient" to enact abolition laws, it too failed by a similar vote, 58 to 73. After the first two votes it was clear that neither the extreme pro-slavery or anti-slavery groups possessed the votes necessary to obtain all that they wanted.<sup>31</sup>

At this point Archibald Bryce of Goochland attempted to open the way to compromise by offering a preamble to the committee report. This preamble declared that slavery was an evil, but also stated that action other than removing free Negroes should await further growth of public opinion. This was approved 67 to 60. With Bryce's preamble the original committee report,



resolving that it was "inexpedient" to enact abolition plans, passed 65 to 58.<sup>32</sup>

For once the Richmond Whig and Enquirer agreed on a major issue: an end to slavery had to be found. Ritchie of the Enquirer said that the nation was watching the legislature to see if Virginia could lead the South away from the curse of slavery. Optimistically the Whig proclaimed that the unchaining of the presses to allow open debate on slavery and the frank discussions in the state government insured an eventual end to the institution.<sup>33</sup>

Nothing, said the Whig, was more important than slavery, not even war. The latter affected only a small part of the society, but slavery with its moral consequences extended indefinitely its "curse" to every individual in the state. The debates in the legislature, emphasized the Whig, were the most important since those of 1776. Virginia had set an example that other southern states might follow. But even the Whig did not expect immediate abolition. The larger slave holders would prevent any sudden change; nevertheless the paper expected small slave holders, merchants, and mechanics to unite someday and close out the peculiar institution. Even the larger slave holders, predicted the Whig, would see that the system had sheared the state of needed economic flexibility and threatened the lives of the white population.

Should a conflict with the North come, the Whig warned that the slaves would be a dagger "in our bosom." Even though gradual abolition might take fifty years, the paper declared that the job had to be done.<sup>34</sup>

While the emancipationists failed to win approval of positive laws leading to abolition, they did not view the debates or votes as a failure or the end of hope for the eventual end of slavery. The Whig listed five declarations that the House of Delegates had made: (1) that it was not expedient at this session to legislate on abolition, (2) that the "coloured" population was a great evil, (3) that humanity and policy demanded the removal of free Negroes and those who would become free, (4) that the above actions would absorb present resources, and (5) that it would be expedient to commence a system of abolition when public opinion demanded such action. In the opinion of the Whig the House of Delegates went as far as it had a right to go.<sup>35</sup>

The slavery debate, however, embittered and frightened some people. Governor Floyd supported the emancipationists when the debates began, but by late January entries in his diary reveal a growing concern for the state's political stability. Goode confided to Floyd that he and other pro-slave interests, hoping to get revenge on western Virginians, voted "no" on a bill providing a loan to make internal improvements. The

Mecklenburg delegate confessed that the debates convinced him that the people west of the Blue Ridge had no common interest, and that a separation of the two sections was preferable to a renewal of the slavery agitation in the House.<sup>36</sup>

To combat the anti-slavery arguments presented in the press and the legislature, Professor Thomas Roderick Dew of William and Mary College presented his Review of the Debate in the Virginia Legislature of 1831 and 1832, defending the peculiar institution. He convinced many people and made his work a Virginia conservative's handbook. Among those persuaded by Dew was John Floyd whose conversion may have resulted partly from the rising tensions with the federal government. Floyd appeared ready to let someone else such as Dew decide the slavery issue once and for all.<sup>37</sup>

Other events besides Dew's publication diverted Virginia's energies from ending slavery. Almost as soon as the debates ended in 1832, national political events captured the press' attention: rejection by the United States Senate of Martin Van Buren as Ambassador to Great Britain, the tariff controversy, and the threat of South Carolina to nullify laws and secede if necessary all tended to push slavery in the background. Since the debates resulted primarily from the turmoil of Southampton, as time passed and no more Nat Turners appeared,

many people concluded that slavery was there to stay and that another rebellion was unlikely.<sup>38</sup>

The Whig, however, took a longer time in changing its position on abolition, but the paper realized that Virginians were adopting more defensive attitudes about slavery. In 1835 the paper reported that a "most unfavorable" impact resulted from actions of northern "immediate abolitionists." Because they preached violence and fanaticism, the Whig explained, southern abolitionists could have no respect for them. Three years later as the Democratic press converted former Whig voters to its party by associating Virginia Whigs with some northern Whigs who favored immediate abolition, the Whig shifted its position to favoring only exportation of free Negroes.<sup>39</sup> Because of the "vile" abolitionists the Whig realized in 1845 that little hope for ending slavery remained: they had brought on the "universal suspension, not only of all measures for emancipation, but even of all thought of it!"<sup>40</sup> From this point the Whig found it politically expedient not to question the peculiar institution.

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Less than a month after the Whig began publishing, editorials favored the calling of a state convention to revise the nearly fifty year old constitution. While the Whig stressed that it meant no disrespect for the

revolutionary leaders, the paper argued that in 1776 (date of the last Virginia constitution) people were in turmoil and leaders were inexperienced in writing constitutions; the Whig, therefore, recommended that Virginia consider some needed changes to protect the founding fathers' ideals, and since the old document lacked provisions for amendment, a convention was necessary.<sup>41</sup>

For several years the Whig and other papers and groups (especially in the counties west of the Blue Ridge Mountains) agitated and petitioned for the legislature to call a convention.<sup>42</sup> But the delegates were slow to respond. In February of 1825 the Senate rejected a bill providing an opportunity for the voters to state whether or not they approved of a convention. One year later the House by a 101 to 94 vote rejected another attempt to put the question of a convention before the voters. After a third attempt failed in the House (107 to 103), the Whig warned of dire consequences if the legislature ignored much longer the will of the people. When the representatives denied voters the right to express themselves, "the servants" were telling "the master" what he could do. The paper, recalling the American Revolution, cautioned the resistors of change that revolution came in 1776 from less cause than the legislature had now given the people.<sup>43</sup>

Finally in December 1827 the advocates of constitutional reform mustered a majority in the House (114 to

86) and a few weeks later the Senate also passed the bill asking the voters whether they wanted a convention. If they voted yes, the Whig assumed, the legislature would call a convention, but legally the popular vote did not bind the legislature. Although the Whig had finally got the question before the people, the paper despaired that only freeholders would be able to vote. It was, complained the Whig, simply "unfair" to exclude "free men" from a voice in forming the government under which they would live. Freehold suffrage violated the "essence of Republicanism"--that all free men have the right to vote. To exclude non-freeholders from the election fostered danger because they probably "constituted a majority of freemen of Virginia," and if the convention question failed in the next election they might take matters into their own hands.<sup>44</sup> But the voters avoided such a confrontation, endorsing the convention by a majority of 7,100 votes.

After the success at the polls in April, the supporters of reform strove to get voters to pressure their representatives to heed the will of the majority. Since the presidential election had pushed the convention issue out of the spotlight, the Whig constantly reminded the readers not to become apathetic about needed constitutional changes.<sup>45</sup> But as the legislature decided to abide by the popular demand, the Whig's fear for a

convention proved to be unfounded; nevertheless there were problems, one of the most important of which was establishing the basis for representation.<sup>46</sup>

A conflict arose over whether to apportion delegates to the convention according to the total white population or by awarding each congressional district one representative. Since only seven of the twenty-one districts were west of the Blue Ridge, the westerners objected to the latter. They argued that over forty-five per cent of the white population lived in the West, but that region, by the congressional district plan, would receive only thirty-one per cent of the delegates. After extensive debates the legislature compromised by directing each of the twenty-four senatorial districts to elect four delegates. According to this arrangement (nine districts were west of the Blue Ridge) the West got thirty-six of the ninety-six seats in the convention or about thirty-seven per cent. The Whig, even though it had favored the reformers, counseled acceptance of the compromise.<sup>47</sup>

Once the state settled on organizational and procedural items, the last hurdle for the reformers was the selection of delegates. As the April election approached, many former opponents of constitutional change reversed their stances and declared for reform. Amused, the Whig cautioned readers not to be fooled by men like William

Daniel of Lynchburg who opposed changes in the judiciary (election of judges). While the Whig feigned gratification for the surge of "new converts," the paper suggested that the voters stick with the "old advocates" of reform.<sup>48</sup>

In the election, voters in Richmond and the city's senatorial district chose Chief Justice John Marshall and United States Senator John Tyler as members of the district's four-man delegation. These two men joined such other distinguished leaders at the convention as James Madison, James Monroe, United States Senator L. W. Tazewell, Governor William B. Giles, eleven members of Congress (among them, John Randolph, C. F. Mercer, P. P. Barbour, and Philip Doddridge), as well as the distinguished lawyer and future United States Senator, B. W. Leigh.<sup>49</sup>

Before the convention met in Richmond on October 5, 1829, a mass meeting in Augusta County sent an address to the delegates imploring them to consider the "wisdom and safety" of gradual emancipation. The Whig, agreeing that slavery brought "down a curse upon the land where it exists," supported requests that the convention investigate ways to relieve "our posterity" from the burden of slavery. While the Whig initially had not planned to suggest emancipation as a topic, the paper now contended that since Augusta had formally raised the subject it was incumbent on the delegates to give



consideration to the petition. The paper pleaded with the politicians not to be demagogues and inflame passions by saying that the petition constituted an attack on private property.<sup>50</sup> The topic, however, never came up in the convention.

As scheduled the convention assembled in the Capitol in Richmond on October 5, and named James Monroe Presiding Officer.<sup>51</sup> The assembly created four committees (each had one representative from each senatorial district) to study different sections of the constitution and recommend amendments.<sup>52</sup>

One of the proposals that vitally concerned the Whig came from the committee on suffrage. It advised that all who then enjoyed the right to vote should continue to exercise the privilege, and that suffrage should include those who possessed freehold of a certain value (amount to be decided by the convention); owners of vested estates in fee, in remainder, or in reversion; leaseholders paying a certain amount annually; and taxpaying housekeepers. While many expressed disappointment it became clear quickly that the reformers lacked the votes to expand suffrage any more than the report proposed.<sup>53</sup>

While the Whig had clamored strongly for an extension of suffrage, many in the East had also favored enlarging the electorate. At the start of the convention, John Marshall presented a "memorial from a numerous and

respectable body of citizens, then non-freeholders of the City of Richmond," claiming that they should have the privilege of voting. The memorial and others like it from Fairfax and Shenandoah counties cited the Bill of Rights and the work of Thomas Jefferson in championing their claims. They denied that property was a fair criterion by which to judge merit, because under the old constitution many intelligent men whose vocations required no property had no opportunity to participate in government. To charges that they were too ignorant and vicious to vote, they indignantly reminded the delegates that non-freeholders fought in the country's wars and composed a large percentage of the militia. But the non-property owners failed to convince a majority of the delegates.<sup>54</sup>

Benjamin Watkins Leigh led the conservative opposition against any extension of suffrage. If free manhood suffrage became law in Virginia, Leigh warned, the liberty of all would be threatened. He explained:

It has pleased heaven to ordain that man shall enjoy no good without alloy. Its greatest bounties are not blessings, unless the enjoyment of them be tempered with moderation. Liberty is only a means; the end is happiness. It is indeed the wine of life; but like other wines, it must be used with advantage; taken to excess, it first intoxicates, then maddens, and at last, destroys.<sup>55</sup>

It was obvious to Leigh that all men were not created equal since every day men were born into bondage. He went further and denied that the majority had a natural

right to govern and he termed the Bill of Rights a compilation of "metaphysical subtleties."<sup>56</sup>

In the debate following the presentation of the committee report some delegates futilely tried to alter the report. Philip Dodderidge championed universal white manhood suffrage, and when this proposal appeared dead he supported other plans, including one that would make all taxpayers eligible to vote. But by a four-vote margin the old guard defeated that plan. By the constitution of 1831 the following qualified a man to vote:

(1) a 25-acre freehold of improved land acquired before 1830; (2) a 50-acre freehold of unimproved land acquired before 1830; (3) a \$25.00 freehold; (4) a \$25.00 joint tenancy; (5) a \$50.00 reversion; (6) a five-year leasehold of annual rental value of \$20.00; and (7) being a tax-paying housekeeper and head of a family. The new provisions enlarged the electorate some, but the law also proved confusing and resulted in many contested elections over the next twenty years.<sup>57</sup>

Another divisive issue, apportionment, also captured the Whig's interest. Delegates from the West wanted to base representation on the white population while the conservative spokesmen of the East demanded that property (slaves) be part of any representation distribution. Others sought compromise by suggesting an average of the federal numbers (counting three-fifths of slave population) and white basis.

One defender of the status quo, A. P. Upshur, contended that it was necessary to consider two majorities: a majority of numbers and a majority of interests. While admitting in most governments a majority of the legal voters could safely exercise power, he stressed that in Virginia people lacked identical interest. Thus it was necessary for the slave owner to possess power to protect his "peculiar" property from unfair taxation. Property, he believed, had to have a voice in government or government would destroy property. Other conservatives, such as William B. Giles, maintained that Negro slaves were human beings who deserved representation through their masters.<sup>58</sup>

Associating reformers with radicalism became a favorite device of the conservatives. They claimed that if the reformers had their way, Virginia would face chaos and bloodshed. While the reformers objected to the comparison, they used the opportunity to point out that France's upheavals followed the rule of a privileged minority, not a period of excessive liberty.<sup>59</sup>

On October 24 the committee responsible for the legislative department reported out a bill favoring the white population as the basis for the House of Delegates, but asking for no change in the Senate. Immediately the eastern conservatives proposed a plan relying on the mixed basis (white population combined with taxation).

The mixed basis, they contended, offered the only means of giving justice and protection to property owners. While the basis would increase the West's labor representation without additional taxation to them, the East's labor, on the other hand, would lose representation but have no reduction of taxes and probably an increase. But the delegates from the West, supported by the Whig, complained that the legislature ignored the economic needs of the mountains. George W. Summers of Kanawha argued that because of inequities in the legislature, the East had prevented the establishment of branch banks of the Bank of Virginia west of the Blue Ridge. The easterners denied the charge and asserted that, in fact, a "wise and conservative minority" had spared the West the evils of excessive banking.<sup>60</sup>

The conservatives also asserted that a switch to the white basis had dangerous implications for national politics. Since the slave population provided the South with one-third of its representatives in Congress, the Conservatives contended that repudiation in Virginia of the principle (to include slaves in representation) would only encourage those in the North who oppose counting three-fifth's of the slave population in congressional districts. To change the basis of representation in the state, warned the conservatives, would imperil the South's political power.<sup>61</sup>

Quoting the Bill of Rights, the advocates of white basis said that "all power is vested in and consequently derived from the people" and that the white basis plan adhered to the principle of power to the people. But the mixed basis, they argued, granted power to wealth. While the first plan offered a millionaire no more representation than any other white man, the conservatives' plan conferred on a rich man representation equal to many hundreds of honest citizens.<sup>62</sup>

As the debate over representation intensified, men such as John Marshall, James Madison, and James Monroe tried to find a compromise. Although Marshall favored federal numbers (counting three-fifths of the slave population), he proposed conciliating the sections' differences by allowing the average between white basis and federal numbers to determine the distribution of delegates. Madison, aged and enfeebled, pleaded for agreement and compromise but also expressed his preference for the federal numbers. Recognizing a danger of division in Virginia, Monroe addressed the convention and warned that if the convention failed to reach agreement soon, they would have to return to their homes in disgrace. If a constitution passed with only a narrow majority, the countryside would erupt with sectional feelings leading to "dismemberment of the State." Rather than allow such a disaster, the former president pleaded

with the delegates to yield something to their opponents. He recognized that westerners had a legitimate claim for more delegates in the legislature, but he reminded the reformers that property owners also had rights. To Monroe a plan recognizing the white basis in the House and federal numbers in the Senate seemed reasonable.<sup>63</sup>

After weeks of debate the convention endorsed William F. Gordon's plan which apportioned both Houses to remove inequities. But no principle of representation became part of the constitution. By Gordon's plan Western Virginia increased its number of delegates, but a procedure to correct future imbalances remained undefined. Under the new constitution the westerners received 56 delegates in the House to the East's 78, while in the upper house they got 13 senators to 19 in the East. The convention apportioned seats according to the 1820 census rather than the 1830 census, which revealed a smaller percentage of the state's population in the East.<sup>64</sup>

On January 15, 1830, the convention adjourned sine die leaving the voters the choice in April of 1830 of accepting or rejecting completely the proposed constitution. The Whig lost no time endorsing the new constitution even though the document was not all that the paper had hoped for. The Whig noted that it contained no provision for popular election of Governor, abolition of Executive Council, or representation based on the white

population.<sup>65</sup> Before the convention met the Whig had supported white basis for both Houses. As the debates dragged on the paper feared that no constitution might result and so suggested a compromise with the advocates of federal numbers. The paper had agreed with Monroe that if one section forced all its views on the other, the state might divide permanently between East and West. The Whig, while fighting for the new constitution, labeled as aristocrats those who opposed extending the suffrage and equalizing representation. They, said the paper, preferred property "to persons" and sought to give influence to wealth while denying free men equal rights.<sup>66</sup>

The Whig emphasized that at least the reformers attained greater representation for the West. While the white basis remained unrecognized in the constitution, the paper reminded those disappointed by the results that the mixed principle also failed to gain acceptance; thus by voting to approve the new constitution the reformers would not endorse the despised concept. In addition the Whig considered it worthwhile that the state would rid itself of eighty superfluous legislators (reference to reduced numbers in the constitution) and five Councillors (Executive Council reduced from 8 to 3).<sup>67</sup>

In the spring the voters approved the new constitution with over 26,000 voting yes to 15,363 no's, but the vote showed a wide split in the state.<sup>68</sup> By more



than a two to one margin the West cast 13,282 no votes and only 5,985 for ratification while the East polled 20,070 for ratification and only 2,281 against.<sup>69</sup>

Although distinguished men served in the constitutional convention, they failed to arrive at a lasting settlement of the state's controversies. Almost every state election between 1831 and 1851 aroused bitter feelings and contested elections because the suffrage requirements were so muddled and confusing. At the close of the convention the Whig had advised the unsuccessful westerners to send to the next constitutional convention fewer lawyers and more "men of everyday sense."<sup>70</sup> But the fact remained that Virginia had failed to settle issues that dangerously divided the state.

Because the state constitution adopted in 1830 fell short of satisfying the reformers and since the suffrage requirements were so vague that the legislature continually had to decide contested elections, many papers in the West and East, including the Whig, soon advocated the calling of a new convention.<sup>71</sup> While the eastern politicians primarily concerned themselves with suffrage, the westerners, as expected, were most keen on establishing representation on the white basis. After obtaining public approval in April 1850 and electing delegates to the convention in August the Reform Convention assembled in Richmond on October 14.<sup>72</sup>

In contrast to the almost undivided attention the Whig gave the constitutional convention of 1830, the paper during the convention of 1850-1851 refrained from vigorous support or opposition to questions before the delegates. The Whig, while most of the debates in Richmond went on, focused on the efforts of Clay in Washington to diffuse the major national crisis over slavery in the territories. California had applied for admission in 1850 as a free state, precipitating a conflict between the pro-slave and abolition advocates. Even after the compromise bills passed Congress in the fall of 1850, the Whig used most of its editorials to encourage southern acceptance of the settlement. Other than indicate a preference for freehold suffrage to universal manhood suffrage and the mixed over the white basis of representation, the paper refrained from commenting on the proposed constitutional reforms. It also underwent two changes of editors between 1850 and 1851 which probably contributed to the paper's reluctance to comment on divisive subjects. And since the Whig was seeking political unity not turmoil, acceptance of the constitution seemed reasonable.<sup>73</sup>

Most voters in the state followed the paper's example in acquiescing in the convention's proposals. While the reformers got the universal suffrage as well as the white basis for the lower house of the legislature,

the East maintained the mixed basis in the Senate. As a result the West would elect a majority in the Senate, 30 to 20, but on the joint ballot the West controlled by four votes. The direct election of Governor was another reform that displeased the Whig, but as with the other issues the Whig, for fear of disrupting the state, chose not to debate the reformers. So on October 4, 1851, Virginia's voters ratified the constitution 75,748 to 11,063. The total number who voted, 86,811, represented about 49 per cent of the adult white male population.<sup>74</sup>

### CHAPTER III FOOTNOTES

- <sup>1</sup>Richmond Whig, June 15 and June 22, 1824.
- <sup>2</sup>Ibid., June 22, 1825.
- <sup>3</sup>Ibid., August 2, 1825; Charles S. Sydnor, The Development of Southern Sectionalism, 1819-1848, Vol. V of A History of the South, ed. by Wendell Holmes Stephenson and E. Merton Coulter (10 vols.; Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1948), 123-124 and 128.
- <sup>4</sup>Ibid., August 2 and August 15, 1825.
- <sup>5</sup>Ibid., December 5, 1827.
- <sup>6</sup>Ibid., February 22, 1830.
- <sup>7</sup>Ibid., August 25, 1831.
- <sup>8</sup>Ibid., August 25 and September 3, 1831.  
Pleasants offered one of the best accounts of the insurrection.
- <sup>9</sup>Ibid., August 29, 1831.
- <sup>10</sup>Ibid., August 29, 1831; Joseph C. Robert, The Road from Monticello, A Study of the Virginia Slavery Debate of 1832 (Durham: Duke University Press, 1941), 3-4.
- <sup>11</sup>Richmond Whig, September 3, 1831. Robert, 4-10.
- <sup>12</sup>Robert, 15-30.
- <sup>13</sup>Richmond Whig, October 6, 1831. Ambler (ed.), Diary, 157-161.
- <sup>14</sup>Richmond Whig, October 6, 1831.
- <sup>15</sup>Ambler (ed.), Diary, 159-162.
- <sup>16</sup>Richmond Whig, November 17, 1831.
- <sup>17</sup>Robert, 11.

<sup>18</sup>Richmond Whig, October 6, 1831.

<sup>19</sup>Robert, 14-16. Later the legislature expanded the special committee by eight; sixteen of the enlarged group came from the East.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid., 16-17.

<sup>21</sup>Richmond Whig, January 13, 1831; Robert, 18-19.

<sup>22</sup>Richmond Whig, January 17, 1832.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid., January 16 through January 25, 1832; Robert, 62-64. Robert offered portions of many of the major speeches given during the debates.

<sup>24</sup>Richmond Whig, January 16 through January 25, 1832.

<sup>25</sup>Robert, 84.

<sup>26</sup>Richmond Whig, February 22, 1825; August 2, 1827; February 22, 1830.

<sup>27</sup>Robert, 107.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid., 90-91.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid., 104. Richmond Whig, January 19, 1832.

<sup>30</sup>Richmond Whig, January 28, 1832; Robert, 115-118.

<sup>31</sup>Robert, 113-118.

<sup>32</sup>Ibid., 113-118.

<sup>33</sup>Richmond Whig, January 19, 1832; Ambler, Ritchie, 164-167.

<sup>34</sup>Richmond Whig, January 12, January 19 and January 21, 1832.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid., January 28, 1832.

<sup>36</sup>Ambler (ed.), Diary, 175-177.

<sup>37</sup>Robert, 46-47.

<sup>38</sup>Ibid., 49-54.

<sup>39</sup>Richmond Whig, July 24, 1825; January 12, 1838.

<sup>40</sup>Ibid., June 20, 1845; Clement Eaton, Freedom of Thought in the Old South (Durham: Duke University Press, 1940), 89-143. Eaton stressed that northern abolitionists chilled southern abolition movements.

<sup>41</sup>Richmond Whig, March 16 and March 23, 1824.

<sup>42</sup>Ambler, Ritchie, 118-123; Simms, 36-38. Julian Chandler, "Representation in Virginia," in Johns Hopkins University Studies in Historical and Political Science, ed. by Herbert Baxter Adams (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1896), XIV, 20-44; Julian Chandler, "Suffrage in Virginia," in Johns Hopkins University Studies in Historical and Political Science, ed. by Herbert Baxter Adams (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1901), XIX, 28-40.

<sup>43</sup>Richmond Whig, January 30, 1827.

<sup>44</sup>Ibid., February 2 and February 6, June 4 and December 19, 1828. The Whig denied that freeholders were superior citizens to non-freeholders. In the June 4 editorial the Whig calculated that non-freeholders outnumbered the freeholders by 10,000. Chandler (XIX, 40) contended that before the 1830 constitution two-thirds of the freemen could not vote and that the 1830 constitution permitted only about one-half of the freemen to vote. He based this conclusion, however, not on the examination of tax records but on the voter turnouts prior to and after the constitutional reforms. But it is significant that no one contested the reformers' argument that thousands of freemen could not vote. In fact the opponents of suffrage expansion defended the practice of exclusion as wise and necessary.

<sup>45</sup>Ibid., November 22, 1828.

<sup>46</sup>Ibid., January 9 and January 13, 1829.

<sup>47</sup>Richmond Whig, January 9 and January 13, 1829; Charles Ambler, Sectionalism in Virginia from 1776-1861 (New York: Russell and Russell, Inc., 1964), 144-145.

<sup>48</sup>Richmond Whig, April 21, 1829.

<sup>49</sup>Ibid., May 5, May 26 and October 5, 1829; Chandler, "Suffrage in Virginia," XIX, 31; Ambler, Sectionalism, 145.

<sup>50</sup>Richmond Whig, July 14, 1829.

<sup>51</sup>Ibid., July 21 and October 5, 1829. As October 5 approached the Whig announced that a stenographer would record the speeches and debates for the paper. And to keep readers abreast of developments, the Whig promised three extra editions a week.

<sup>52</sup>Ibid., October 6 and October 12, 1829. The four committees divided the following subjects: suffrage, apportionment, the executive department, and the judicial department.

<sup>53</sup>Ibid., November 25, 1829; Chandler, "Suffrage in Virginia," XIX, 33.

<sup>54</sup>Richmond Whig, October 6 through October 12, 1829.

<sup>55</sup>Chandler, "Suffrage in Virginia," XIX, 34.

<sup>56</sup>Ambler, Sectionalism, 151.

<sup>57</sup>Chandler, "Suffrage in Virginia," XIX, 37-42.

<sup>58</sup>Ambler, Sectionalism, 151-153.

<sup>59</sup>Ibid., 153-154.

<sup>60</sup>Richmond Whig, October 25, 1829; Chandler, "Representation in Virginia," XIV, 32-33; Ambler, Sectionalism, 157-158.

<sup>61</sup>Ambler, Sectionalism, 157-158.

<sup>62</sup>Chandler, "Representation in Virginia," XIV, 34.

<sup>63</sup>Ibid., 33-37.

<sup>64</sup>Ibid., 33-34. Richmond Whig, January 15, 1831.

<sup>65</sup>Richmond Whig, January 15, 1831.

<sup>66</sup>Ibid., November 9, November 12, November 16, November 17 and November 25, 1829; January 26, 1830.

<sup>67</sup>Ibid., January 15, January 16 and January 26, 1830.

<sup>68</sup>Ibid., July 1, 1830.

<sup>69</sup>Chandler, "Representation in Virginia," XIV, 43.

<sup>70</sup>Richmond Whig, January 15, 1830.

<sup>71</sup>Ibid., June 1 and June 18, 1850; Chandler, "Representation in Virginia," XIV, 45-59.

<sup>72</sup>Chandler, "Representation in Virginia," XIV, 60.

<sup>73</sup>Richmond Whig, June 7 and July 30, 1850; April 8, 1851. It is interesting to note that between 1830 and 1851 the Whig had dropped its advocacy of universal manhood suffrage and representation based on the white population.

<sup>74</sup>Ibid., April 8, July 1 and July 7, 1851. Chandler, "Representation in Virginia," XIV, 68-70.



## CHAPTER IV

### ECONOMIC POLICY: SHIFT WITH THE TIMES

For Virginia to regain her lost power and prestige in the national government, the Whig believed that the state had to abandon her reliance on a one crop agricultural system. To facilitate economic growth the paper recommended that Virginians re-evaluate their positions, as it had done, on the tariff, the national bank, land policy, and internal improvements. Other editors in Virginia, however, challenged the Whig on almost all the major controversies. During a time when most championed only one section's interests, the paper tried to convince the people in the South that sectionalism and provincialism would ultimately end in tragedy for the region.

Because political and economic advantages had flowed away from the once dominant Old Dominion, the Whig stressed that many of the state's notions regarding national and state government relations were outmoded. Why, asked the Whig, should Virginia allow constitutional qualms to interfere with the building of roads, canals,

and harbors or the diversification of the economy, or the founding of a stable currency? The Whig answered that national trends foretold the creation of new industries and new roads, both of which required national protection and financing; therefore, if Virginia desired to recover her former place in federal councils she had to endorse new ideas.

The Whig occupied a good position to encourage southerners, and Virginians in particular, to embrace national policies, since it too had formerly advocated the very policies that the paper in the 1830's was pressing voters so hard to drop. Until other points or views had a hearing, the Whig reasonably concluded that few would break out of their mental ruts; thus the Whig assumed the task of persuading its readers of the requisiteness of change. First the tariff, then the Bank, and finally the dilemma of how to distribute and improve the land captured the Whig's attention.

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At its beginning, the Whig's editorials had strongly condemned a protective tariff system; the tariffs constituted a "degrading tribute" to the North, because the system permitted domestic industry to raise prices that mechanics, farmers, and merchants had to pay. With the prospect of benefiting only a few, the "tariff-ites" would ruin and oppress "the many." Even though

experience had born out Adam Smith's opinion that every man guarded best his own interest and that "all classes" prosper when government restrained itself from favoring one group over another, many politicians still promoted protection. To avoid a "downright robbery" the Whig advised the South to boycott northern goods and thus apply pressure on the tariff advocates to reverse their stance.<sup>2</sup>

Other evils, warned the Whig, would result from a prohibitive system. Smuggling, a "horrid" and "nefarious" practice, would surely emerge once tariffs raised the price of imported goods, and no threats of severe punishment would prevent men from trying to avoid the required duties. In 1825 the Whig doubted that more industry constituted a blessing because any little mechanical innovation meant a reduction of jobs and consequently higher unemployment. And the Whig also cautioned that once the United States excluded foreign products, other countries would do likewise in self-defense, so to the Whig the tariff system was self-defeating. In addition the Whig said that governments trying to prevent smuggling generally violated an individual's rights through illegal search and seizure procedures: avoiding these evils and dangers would preserve the stability of the Union.

Less than two years later, however, the Whig began reconsidering the tariff since it seemed destined to remain law for a long time. Believing that few Virginians (including its own editors) had ever objectively studied import duties, the paper pledged that articles on both sides of the subject would soon appear in the Whig. With the additional information and debates the Whig expected the tariff to attract new devotees.<sup>4</sup>

In October, 1827, the Whig reprinted an article from the Charleston City Gazette defending the tariffs, and after endorsing the item the Richmond paper contended that already voters in the Old Dominion perceived that dire predictions of disaster voiced in 1816 and 1824, when the last two tariffs passed Congress, had not come true. If the nation pursued its present tariff policies, the Whig predicted, a larger home market would arise for agricultural products as well as raw materials. As long as the rates allowed for continuance of the United States foreign commerce, the paper foresaw only better days. Furthermore, if the country fully adopted Clay's American System then all sections would share the benefits and burdens more equitably.<sup>5</sup> In Virginia and in the nation we would also develop resources, continued the Whig, and foster independence from foreign countries for the production of articles of comfort not to mention enjoying a shield from fluctuations in European markets.<sup>6</sup> From the

Whig's vantage point, the South had "but . . . two alternatives, to bring themselves within the benefits of the "American System," by commencing manufactures themselves or to leave the Union.<sup>7</sup>

But when South Carolina and groups in other southern states in 1828 actually began suggesting disunion rather than abide by tariff laws, the Whig recoiled in shock at the demagogues who exhorted the populace to overthrow constituted authority.<sup>8</sup> Numerous anti-tariff county conventions in Virginia petitioned the legislature to restrict the sale of articles manufactured in the North and West. To quell some of the tensions, the Whig editorialized that such drastic action ran counter to the United States Constitution which delegated to Congress the power to regulate trade between states. Besides, it would be foolish for Virginians to pay \$7.50 for a hog when they could obtain one from Kentucky for \$5.00, but, warned the Whig, some extremists contemplated just that.<sup>9</sup> Similarly a call by the Southron of Milledgeville, Georgia for a national anti-tariff convention promoted a vigorous Whig reaction. The Georgia paper assumed that a national meeting would instruct state legislatures on how best to obstruct the sale of goods protected by the tariff. Such actions, feared the Whig, "would prove fatal to the tranquility and integrity of the Union."<sup>10</sup>

Anti-tariff forces in Virginia and South Carolina became subjects of strong editorials questioning their motivations: John Randolph, a constant critic of Adams and Clay, cared too much for England, said the Whig, to be trusted.<sup>11</sup> More surprising to the Whig was John C. Calhoun's sudden antagonism for the tariff, a measure he formerly endorsed. Perhaps, reasoned the Whig, political expediency determined his vote: with South Carolina becoming more intransigent Calhoun may have had to accommodate his theories to the changing political winds to insure his place in the Senate and his state's backing in the approaching presidential elections.<sup>12</sup>

Despite the tempest the "Tariff of Abominations" became law in 1828, but the voices opposing the duties continued agitating the South. The Whig pleaded unsuccessfully for a moratorium at least until 1832 when the topic would again come up before Congress. When debates persisted, the paper labeled the activities "child's play" and "unstatesmanlike"; nevertheless because no quiet resulted, the Whig reluctantly resumed printing pro-tariff articles which only intensified the discussion that the paper wanted stilled.<sup>13</sup>

Anti-tariff forces again in 1831 sought a national convention of all tariff foes, which, of course, the Whig viewed with alarm. Since most tariff advocates would never change their minds, what, wondered the Whig, could

a convention accomplish? One result the paper anticipated was encouragement of South Carolina's nullifiers who had never stopped fomenting dissatisfaction over the 1828 tariff. Because some of the nullifiers had no training in economics or business, the Whig pointedly referred to the tariff as a "business affair" understood only by those trained in the field. When the convention received the endorsement of Thomas R. Drew of William and Mary College, the paper belittled the professor by commenting that the issue concerned an "everyday affair, much too simple to be understood by those, who in the pride of much learning, disdain to pick up the facts . . . strewn along the path . . . and insist upon digging into the bowels of the Earth for truth."<sup>14</sup> The Whig perceived that pro-tariff men, in response to South Carolina, would call a convention of their own. Not only would both conventions fall short of winning more converts, but most likely, forewarned the Whig, acrimonious speeches and addresses would imperil the peace, harmony, and "union" of the nation.<sup>15</sup>

But since the nullifiers revealed no propensity for moderating their demands, the Whig also continued editorials defending the import duties.<sup>16</sup> Again the paper accused southern politicians of willfully misleading the masses for political expediency. After denying that the paper represented manufacturers, the Whig

professed that "we honestly . . . believe, that it is for the permanent interests and independence of the country" to maintain a tariff. Virginia, said the paper, would enhance her position in the nation if she applied her surplus capital and labor to manufacturing to aid her "drooping" agriculture. Besides it was "wise" and "patriotic" to disperse money at "home" rather than in England. A protective tariff would also enlarge the home market for agricultural products: "agriculture and manufactures are in strict alliance - Siamese twins - who if one flourishes, the other must flourish, if one falls sick . . . the other must languish also."<sup>17</sup> To calm the tobacco growers of Virginia, the Whig claimed that they would buy necessities at a lower price with the tariff than without it. And when cotton planters cried for relief the Whig impatiently reminded them that they, of all the agriculturalists, had less to complain about since the tariff created an American market to supplement French and English markets.<sup>18</sup> The Whig advised those who objected to federally financed internal improvements to support the tariff which provided revenue to reduce the national debt but not internal improvements. Once the government cleared the national debt the paper promised that lower tariffs would replace the present rates and end the annual surpluses which stimulated internal improvement. Most who favored the tariff wanted only to



provide revenue and incidental protection of industry; but as soon as the debt no longer existed then the Whig foresaw a reduction in duties of almost \$10,000,000.<sup>19</sup>

When South Carolina nullified the tariff of 1832, the Whig strove to encourage a compromise; fearful for the Union, the Whig pleaded with southerners to act rationally rather than emotionally. Though appreciating Jackson's determination to carry out the law of the land, the paper rejected Jackson's theories on state rights and his appeal for additional power in the so-called Force Act.<sup>20</sup>

After the crisis in 1833 passed, the tariff did not stir many comments from the Whig until the 1840's during the administration of Tyler and Polk. With a Whig administration in Washington for the first time in 1841, the paper recalled its previous arguments about the need of a home market, and the benefits of a diversified economy.<sup>21</sup> But the paper also presented some new arguments including quotations favoring duties from the presidential messages of George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, and James Monroe.<sup>22</sup> Clay's speeches which promised no "High Tariff" also appeared in the Whig: he contended that manufacturing had taken "deep root" so a need no longer existed for high tariffs.<sup>23</sup>

As debate in England on whether or not to repeal the corn laws intensified, American free trade advocates

attempted to use the debates as evidence that the United States and Great Britain might soon reach an accord on a trade policy removing all duties. The Whig denied the likelihood of England repealing her corn laws and suggested that England only wanted to trick the United States into adopting a free trade policy so that England's manufacturers could swamp the American market with cheap products to destroy United States manufactures.<sup>24</sup> Not only would free trade destroy American products, said the Whig, but it would also drain the United States Treasury of specie. The death of President William H. Harrison in 1841 had put the Whig tariff in danger, but John Tyler, who succeeded Harrison, signed the bill, greatly relieving the Whig's worries.<sup>25</sup>

The 1844 national elections, however, again heightened anxiety that the free trade Democrats led by the new President, James K. Polk, might triumph. After Polk designated Robert J. Walker, an anti-tariff man from Mississippi, as Secretary of the Treasury, the Whig editor wrote that little hope persisted that anything but a low tariff could pass the new Congress. Yet the paper, determined to uphold the tariff, renewed the editorial defense by questioning how the United States could provide military supplies to her soldiers if the country depended on Great Britain. She had nearly gone to war over Oregon and had an interest in Mexico, so, the Whig

queried, what if the United States fought a war with Great Britain? Could Americans expect their enemy to sell weapons to her? No.<sup>26</sup> And later as the War with Mexico raged, the editorials again pressed for continuation of a revenue tariff to meet defense expenses. When supporters of low duties claimed that greater agricultural exports to England resulted from rumors that the United States contemplated free trade, the Whig retorted that probably the rumors of a short European crop determined the increase in price and demand for American goods.<sup>27</sup>

Not only the rates bothered the Whig but the recommendation of Senator Dixon Lewis of Alabama (supported by the Secretary of the Treasury), chairman of the Senate Finance Committee, that the new tariff follow the ad valorem principle also disturbed the paper and Richmond merchants. They preferred specific duties to avoid the deceptions of "unscrupulous foreigners" who had little regard for "our custom-house oaths." But perhaps it was too much to expect a "Southern cotton-planter [Lewis]" to understand "commercial operations."<sup>28</sup> If the ad valorem tariff became law the opponents forecasted that "DIRECT TAXATION" would result to pick up the slackened flow of revenue.<sup>29</sup> Their pleas and arguments came to naught because the Congress passed the bill and Polk signed it.<sup>30</sup>

During the 1850's the tariff faded from national attention as slavery and territorial policies dominated the political debates; nevertheless the Whig on occasion reiterated its reasons for a protective system and blamed the South's weakening economic condition on the failure to diversify. Usually the editorials identified the villains--free trade Democrats--many of whom represented Virginia in Congress. "The support of Free Trade," the Whig contended, would "stand out in history as the most marvelous instance of popular error on record."<sup>31</sup>

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When the Whig sided with Clay in national political contests, the paper necessarily embraced the Bank of the United States and also accepted the task of challenging the opposition's financial programs. During the 1830's and 1840's the Whig frequently launched editorial campaigns to convince doubtful Virginians of the National Bank's benefits; usually, however, it fell short of its goal. Since none of its editors could claim expertise in banking, the Whig worked under a handicap because a primary antagonist, the Richmond Enquirer, could call on state bankers such as Dr. John Brockenbrough, President of the Bank of Virginia and Ritchie's cousin, for support in attacks on the Whig's bank policy.

In the midst of electioneering for the presidency in 1832, Henry Clay pushed the National Bank into the

Whig's editorial column. Even though the Bank's charter did not expire until 1836, the Whigs in Congress determined that by pressing a rechartering of the institution and requiring the President to take a stand, they could aid Clay. If Jackson signed the bill he stood to lose voters in the South and West, and should he issue a veto many northern Democrats especially in Pennsylvania would, so the Whig reasoned, desert the Old Hero.<sup>32</sup> After the Congress had sent the Bank Bill up to the President on July 4, the paper commented that the Whigs had played their cards well because Jackson now had to show his "true colors." Just what the President might do the Whig did not know, but it suspected that he would use a veto with the promise that if the next Congress again passed the bill he would accept it as the "will of the People."<sup>33</sup>

He neglected to follow the script the Whig had outlined, however, when he vetoed the Bank Bill and explained in his veto message to Congress that he deemed the Bank unconstitutional and inefficient. The Whig conceded that with much skill he had appealed to class hatred, sectional jealousy, and prejudice against foreigners.<sup>34</sup> Stunned not so much by the veto as the harsh language, the Whig rather lamely supported Clay's defense of the Bank's constitutionality.<sup>35</sup> Although the Whig regretted the defeat, the paper delighted in the prospect of Clay now being able to carry Pennsylvania in

the approaching presidential elections. After the veto the Pennsylvania Enquirer, formerly a firm Jackson paper, "hailed down the Jackson colors," noted the Whig, which reasoned that since Biddle's home office was in Philadelphia, many Pennsylvanians would resent the President's outburst against what they recognized as a state and national interest.<sup>36</sup>

When the Democratic presses launched an offensive against Clay and Webster, charging that their support for the Bank resulted from their financial obligations to that institution and from their former positions as defense attorneys for Biddle's Bank, the Whig rebuked the press for slander and attempted to put the Democrats on the defensive. To the accusation that Biddle's power constituted a danger to the nation, the Whig retorted that the nation's finances were never in better condition, and that if Biddle had in fact purchased newspapers to counter criticism of the Bank, as some claimed, he had only followed the "precedent established by the General himself." The Whig also underscored its distrust of Jackson by labeling his actions a "high-handed usurpation" and an exercise of power never designed for use except when public funds were in danger. And since no one even pretended that the Bank endangered public money, the Whig added, he had violated the law. If he suspected Biddle of "wrongdoing" why did he not remove the man rather than destroy the Bank?<sup>37</sup>

After winning re-election Jackson began, illegally in the Whig's opinion, to remove government deposits from the Bank of the United States. Basing removal on what he called the voters' mandate, Jackson sought to shackle Biddle's institution even before the expiration of the Charter in 1836. The Whig, unconvinced by the President's arguments, contended that his victory represented only a personal victory based on popularity with the voters; even if some of the voters endorsed his veto, they certainly had not contemplated the precipitous removal of United States deposits.<sup>38</sup> In order to explain the withdrawal policy, the Whig offered an illogical account of pressures on Jackson: supposedly Vice-President Martin Van Buren had initially proposed the scheme with the intention of stopping the plan at the last minute to gain the affection of the banking interest, but Amos Kendall, a member of Jackson's Kitchen Cabinet and no friend of Van Buren, helped force the bill through to embarrass the Vice-President in the West. In other words, according to the Whig, the whole idea had backfired on the Magician from New York. If the Whig's analysis of the policy's origin appeared dubious, the editorial's prediction of economic instability and unsatisfactory exchange rates came closer to the truth.<sup>39</sup> Because withdrawal would reduce the Bank's specie and thus its ability to discount notes, the Whig predicted that many merchants distant from the

Mother Bank would not be able to remain in business since the exchange duties would fall into the hands of "shavers and brokers" who would demand unreasonably high rates.<sup>40</sup>

As Jackson began distributing federal deposits to state banks (Pet Banks), the Whig seized the opportunity to question the sincerity of the President's position. In his veto he had criticized the Bank of the United States for concentrating too much power in one man's hands and for selling stock to foreigners, but the Whig perceived that many deposits had found their way to the Manhattan Bank which was also controlled by one man and owned mostly by foreigners. If, in fact, the President had only exchanged one bank for another, what, asked the Whig, had Jackson accomplished except a personal assault of Biddle?<sup>41</sup>

None of the Pet Banks, in the Whig's opinion, possessed enough specie to meet economic crises; therefore "a casual derangement in the commerce of the country, the loss of a southern crop, or the demand of specie from abroad" could create a "violent convulsion in the whole paper system."<sup>42</sup> Unlike the Bank of the United States, the Pet Banks lacked the desire to limit issue of state bank paper which, if unrestricted, would wreck the economy and scatter "public monies" to "the four winds." Though the Whig hoped that no panic would develop, the paper in the spring of 1836 foresaw an "evil hour" when Jackson's



assurances of a "more equal currency - and a more healthy circulation" would be proved erroneous.<sup>43</sup>

By mid-1836 the Whig's prophecy seemed to be coming true. Trying to stem the wild financing of lands in the West, Jackson issued the Specie Circular which required settlers to pay gold and silver, not bank notes, for federal lands. Since the banks had been preparing to receive millions that the federal government had just voted the states (a law distributing any federal surplus over five million dollars), the circular descended like a bolt, severely tightening the money market.<sup>44</sup> At that point some Whigs, assisted by Democrats like Senator William C. Rives of Virginia, campaigned to enact legislation compelling the government to accept bank notes for federal land and in early 1837 they succeeded. This pleased the Whig, but Jackson, as one of his last acts as President, pocket vetoed Rives's Currency Bill.<sup>45</sup>

As the most severe economic panic since 1819 seized the country, the Whig placed the blame completely on the Democrats. When the Executive took control of the public money, claimed the right of manipulating the currency, and exercised that right, contended the Whig, the panic became inevitable, for "no credit system" that depended on "the will of one man" could possibly "flourish."<sup>46</sup> The paper insisted that the destruction of the Bank of the United States supplied the primary impetus

for the evils now facing the nation. When the Bank fell the "Pet Banks" increased banking capital by \$100,000,000, thereby flooding the United States with worthless notes. Speculation and overtrading, as a result of inflated currency, ran rampant between 1834 and 1836, but by the spring of 1837 it was clear to the Whig that the conditions compelled the Pet Banks to curtail their activities.<sup>47</sup> By May the crisis had deepened so much that the Whig lamented the "folly of the rulers" that had destroyed "our credit as a people . . . abroad."<sup>48</sup> But while the Whig leveled the blame at the Democrats, it still advised Whigs to avoid vindictiveness and to assist the administration in finding a solution.<sup>49</sup> Cooperation with Van Buren's administration, however, did not include accepting a "Treasury Bank" or "Sub-Treasury System." Such an institution placed the public monies into the hands of office holders, a dangerous precedent.<sup>50</sup> Eventually in July 1840 Van Buren got his Sub-Treasury, but the Whigs, after victory in 1840, repealed the measure in 1841.

Pleas from the administration that the banks resume specie payment in 1838 failed to gain support from the Whig, which preferred Biddle's advice of waiting until the panic destroyed all the worthless and non-redeemable notes before state banks attempted to renew specie redemption.<sup>51</sup> Since the government for the last

nine years had chased specie from circulation, the Whig thought it unfair for Van Buren's people to blame Biddle for their error.<sup>52</sup> Later, although professing "little knowledge of the subject," the Whig urged further delay in resumption of specie payments by banks for fear of acting "premature" and causing irreparable damage to the financial system.<sup>53</sup>

With William Henry Harrison's victory in the presidential election of 1840, the Whig anticipated a special session of Congress to meet and repeal Van Buren's Sub-Treasury law, which the paper called a "fraud," and replace it with a national bank.<sup>54</sup> But only a month after his inauguration Harrison died, propelling the state rights Virginian, John Tyler, into the White House. In May the Congress convened, as Harrison had instructed prior to his death, with the expectation that the Whigs would now establish a national bank;<sup>55</sup> and their expectations were buttressed by Tyler, who in his address to Congress judged Van Buren's "Sub-Treasury" unsatisfactory and suggested the creation of a "fiscal agent" to manage government funds. His references to the topic further convinced congressional Whigs of the new President's support of a national bank.<sup>56</sup>

As the Whig had expected, Tyler's Secretary of Treasury, Thomas Ewing, submitted a report to the Congress on June 3, recommending repeal of the Independent

Treasury Act and the creation of a fiscal agent of the United States. A few days later the Senate requested that the Secretary forward as soon as possible a detailed plan for his proposal. Ewing immediately conveyed on June 12 a scheme providing for (1) a central bank in the District of Columbia, and (2) branches of discount and deposit in several states if they consented. Obviously the crucial element (and one that favorably impressed the Whig) in the administration's plan focused on the requirement that each state sanction any proposed branch of the bank to be placed in the state.<sup>57</sup> Since all, even the most staunch state rights advocates, accepted the federal government's power as the legislative body of the District to establish a bank in that area, Tyler's plan had avoided the pitfalls that plagued former bank proposals.<sup>58</sup>

After hearing the plan, the Congress sent it to a select committee chaired by Clay, where Tyler's scheme evoked little favor. Rather than endorsing the President's ideas, the committee, in effect, sent to the floor of the Senate a renewed call for a national bank.<sup>59</sup> The committee assumed the constitutionality of a national bank (a question that troubled Tyler and other state rights men) and denied the necessity of having a state approve a branch bank. To do otherwise, contended the committee, would rob the bank of its national character and probably prevent adequate stock subscription.<sup>60</sup>

Even though Clay enjoyed the support of most Whigs in the Senate, some including William C. Rives, now a Virginia Whig, objected to the deletion of the section requiring state approval and unsuccessfully offered an amendment. But after much debate Clay as well as the Whig perceived that his bill without amendments could not pass;<sup>61</sup> consequently he incorporated a proposal suggested by John Minor Botts (a Whig representative who claimed to have the President's approval) which required a state's assent before a branch could be established, but allowed the government to assume that any legislature approved if it did not register a formal dissent at its first session after the passage of the act. The Senators adopted the bill with this amendment and sent it to the House which also acted favorably.<sup>62</sup>

When the bill passed the Senate, the Whig scoffed at any suggestion that the President might veto the bank and hence prevent a quick settlement of this "vexed question."<sup>63</sup> While the paper denied that a veto would shatter the Whig Party, the Whig admitted such an action would "shock" most people and give new hopes to the late defeated party.<sup>64</sup> But when the veto came on August 16, the Whig confidently expected the Whigs in Congress to unite with the President on a compromise. The President had acted constitutionally, reported the Whig, and everyone should obey it. And since his move appeared to be a

matter of conscience, the Whig hoped he would continue to enjoy the nation's respect.<sup>65</sup> But the Whig also cautioned Tyler not to let praise from old enemies, like the Enquirer, sway him because Ritchie and the "Locos" only wanted to trick the President into thinking he could expect their continued support even in the presidential election of 1844.<sup>66</sup>

Later events proved the Whig's hopes false, however, because Tyler had not used his last veto. He had inferred in his first veto message that some form of a bank was acceptable to him, but the Fiscal Corporation which became the Congress's second proposal also went beyond Tyler's constitutional limits. In an attempt to placate Tyler, Whigs such as A. H. Stuart of Virginia had conferred with the President and his Secretary of the Treasury to determine what bill would be acceptable.<sup>67</sup> But while the Whig leaders had professed a desire to mediate differences, the second bill still created a national bank that varied greatly with Tyler's bank proposal which stressed the need to preserve state sovereignty; consequently on September 9, 1841, he vetoed the second bank bill.<sup>68</sup> Stung and surprised, the Whig accused Tyler of wanting to control the whole national Treasury, despite strong party support for a well-regulated Bank of the United States to guard against Executive power and influence which might combine "the purse and the sword."<sup>69</sup>

After the second failure the Whig gave up any ideas of having Congress pass and have signed a bank bill before 1845. But the editorials continued offering to the readers reasons why, in the future, the nation had to have a new bank; the Whig emphasized the ability of a national bank to control state banks and keep them from issuing more money than necessary to facilitate community development. Nothing, warned the Whig, created a greater danger to an economy than "redundancy of paper money": a condition that Jackson encouraged by destroying the Bank of the United States.<sup>70</sup> Reviewing the debates and votes on the bank in 1816 enabled the Whig to remind southerners that their representatives had approved of the measure 34 to 19.<sup>71</sup>

With the defeat of Henry Clay in 1844 the Democrats, led by James K. Polk, put to rest any further hopes of reviving a national bank. The Democratic administration favored a Sub-Treasury or Independent Treasury system, and in July 1846 Polk succeeded in accomplishing one of his four main goals: the passage of his Constitutional or Independent Treasury. Though the Whig predicted that Polk's institution would affect "injuriously all the great interests of the country," his scheme prevailed and virtually put the bank issue out of future political battles.<sup>72</sup>

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As with the tariff the Whig traveled a twisting path in regard to internal improvements. Initially the paper abhorred federally financed canals and roads claiming that if Congress ever acquired the power to build them an endless succession of appropriations would result.<sup>73</sup> If the founding fathers had wanted Congress to finance improvements, the Whig argued, they would have delegated the power to Congress, adding that a constitutional amendment conferring such authority would be dangerous. "'Good roads are good things,' but the preservation of the sovereignties of the states, the integrity of the Constitution, and the liberty of the people, are better."<sup>74</sup>

Even though J. Q. Adams favored internal improvements, the Whig explained that while it differed with the New Englander on that subject, there seemed to be no alternative to backing Adams for president since all other candidates also endorsed federal internal improvements despite the denials of some of their hypocritical supporters in Virginia. Furthermore the Whig indicated a willingness to abide by the "will of the majority" and acquiesce to construction of roads and canals with federal funding.<sup>75</sup> When Adams, in his annual message to Congress (December 1825) called for a National University and Observatory, the Whig again disputed the legality of spending federal money for such purposes; yet the paper



also said that those who sanctioned construction of roads and canals should now admit the right of Congress to establish a university and observatory.<sup>76</sup>

As early as 1830 the Whig had come out for distribution of net annual proceeds of the sale of public lands among the states according to representation in Congress so that the states would have enough funds to finance their own improvements: roads, canals or education. Under such a plan Virginia could, calculated the Whig, finally receive a just reward for her service to the Union--donation of western lands to the federal government. Certainly, contended the Whig, the scheme would violate no state rights principles.<sup>77</sup>

During the years prior to the Civil War a number of proposed land policies interested the Whig, especially Clay's plan, first introduced in 1832, for it best fitted the Whig's beliefs. Rather than drastically reduce land prices and cede land to the states in which it lay, as the Democrats wanted, Clay recommended that ten per cent of land revenue go to the state in which the sold land lay, and that the remaining proceeds be distributed among the states according to their Congressional representation. Once they got their share, the states could use the revenue on education, internal improvements, colonization of Blacks, or the reduction of state debts.<sup>78</sup>

Unfortunately, reported the Whig, Clay lacked the backing

in Congress to get the measure through.<sup>79</sup> While Clay pressed for his land bill, Senator Thomas Hart Benton of Missouri presented an alternative much more favorable to the developing western states. His plan simply turned public lands over to the western states in which they lay, an arrangement, said the Whig, which denied Virginia her fair share.<sup>80</sup> About the only benefits the paper could see from granting public lands to the western states involved the reduction of money available for federal patronage often used by the Executive "as a political engine."<sup>81</sup> With the Congress divided and the President opposed to Whig proposals, no land bill became law during Jackson's term.

But by the middle of Van Buren's Presidency the controversy again aroused tempers and produced conflicting bills in Congress. The administration backed a Pre-Emption Bill in 1838 which the Whig believed would make landholders out of "squatters" who had intruded on public land.<sup>82</sup> With an eye on approaching elections, the paper accused the President of trying to buy votes; moreover, if Van Buren got his way, the Whig complained, Virginia would lose money equivalent to that needed to expedite internal improvements and educational reforms.<sup>83</sup>

Not until John Tyler assumed the Presidency in 1841 did the Whig see a satisfactory distribution bill become law.<sup>84</sup> Since Virginia Democrats led by Thomas

Ritchie bitterly opposed dispersement of net proceeds of public land sales, the Whig commenced a defense of the law by denying the charge that it required an increase in the tariff rates. In a more positive vein the Whig predicted that the government would retrieve public credit so badly hampered by the "Locos's" attack on the currency. And finally because the bill directly curtailed corruption and increased power of the states while lessening that of the federal government, the Whig considered it "the greatest, most practical and substantial States Rights measure of the age."<sup>85</sup> But when Virginia's Democrats regained control of the state legislature in 1842, they refused to accept federal money from the land sales, whereupon the Whig lashed out at them and Thomas Ritchie in particular, labeling their efforts "absurd" and blaming their actions on a hatred for Clay who had been instrumental in securing the bill.<sup>86</sup>

While the Whig failed to attain what it wanted, the western representatives in Congress also lost their bid for their favorite project: graduated prices for public lands. When Polk took office in 1845, his legislative goals included a sliding scale for western lands and in an attempt to put the plan into law the administration sought a coalition of southerners and westerners. The administration, to secure the South's votes, promised a reduction of tariff rates, a commitment Polk kept. But

once the tariff bill passed Congress enough southern representatives reneged and voted against the land bill to kill it in the House.<sup>87</sup> Its defeat obviously pleased the Whig, which contended that if the measure had become law it would have alienated the entire "Public Domain" while receiving "into the Treasury from the sales scarcely a sufficient amount to defray the expenses connected with their survey and sale."<sup>88</sup>

Throughout the 1850's the Whig on occasion reiterated its disapproval of graduated prices and all attempts at giving away land to the western states. Those who proposed such plans as Stephen A. Douglas, Thomas Hart Benton, and Andrew Johnson, the Whig accused of appealing to "class legislation" that filled the Northwest but left Virginia and other former land owners with nothing. If the Democrats pursued their present course, the Whig warned, Virginia would lose population and "all elements of greatness."<sup>89</sup> When Virginia's representatives declined to contest Iowa's and Illinois's request for public land to finance railroad construction, the Whig belabored the politicians for preferring "sterile abstractions to the state's welfare." If someone did not act quickly, lamented the paper, no one could ever halt the "grab system."<sup>90</sup>

As homestead bills received increased attention in Congress, the Whig railed and called them attempts to

turn the "government into a stupendous alms-house, for the benefit of the vagrants and paupers of every nation upon earth."<sup>91</sup> But the Whig proved ineffectual in its efforts and by 1857 the paper admitted as much. Since southern states like Mississippi, Alabama, Louisiana, Arkansas, and Missouri had enjoyed grants of public land, it was fruitless, said the Whig, to expect them to object to other states obtaining similar benefits. On the other hand the northeastern states were satisfied that Congressional grants filled up the territories with foreigners and abolitionists so those states, the Whig realized, would not demand their share of public lands.<sup>92</sup> After 1857 the Whig seldom mentioned land policies.

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To facilitate the goal of diversification energetically the Whig pressed for internal improvements (financed by local and state government) and later direct steam lines to Europe, but the paper found it almost impossible to persuade Virginians to change their economic patterns. As a consequence, the Whig occupied the post of an opposition voice warning that if Virginia and the South did not strengthen themselves economically, they would face an unhappy future of shrinking political and economic power.

Internal improvements, said the Whig in 1825, benefitted all segments of a society by banding people

together, developing industry, and facilitating transportation of agricultural goods to markets; hence the wealth and prosperity of all the people increased.<sup>93</sup> Five years later the Whig bemoaned the fact that Virginia was still "behind nearly all the states" and her "old resources" were exhausted; therefore the Whig concluded that "pride, interest, and a generous spirit of emulation, all demand immediate and efficient action."<sup>94</sup> For a start the paper urged Richmonders to develop rail lines connecting the capitol with the Shenandoah Valley allowing Richmond merchants the opportunity to market the Valley's products. When Lynchburg citizens and their state representatives petitioned the legislature to improve the navigability of the James River, the paper implored Richmond residents to support Lynchburg's request which would connect East and West Virginia as well as foster a commercial thoroughfare along the James.<sup>95</sup>

Much to the Whig's delight a group formed the James River and Kanawha Company with the goal of connecting the James and Kanawha Rivers via a canal and railroad. When completed, Richmond would have an outlet to the Mississippi Valley; consequently the city of Richmond, in 1834, realizing the potential, subscribed to \$400,000 of stock,<sup>96</sup> but a shortage of money constantly hampered the company and eventually prevented success.<sup>97</sup>

With projects under way to improve the James River above Richmond, the Whig began agitating in 1838

for the clearing of the river "below tide."<sup>98</sup> Since Richmond was "as much a port of entry as any port," the Whig campaigned for the federal government to improve navigation in the national interest.<sup>99</sup> But because Virginia's state rights advocates abhorred federally financed improvements, the Whig also failed in this endeavor.

When delegates assembled at Richmond in 1851 to write a new state constitution, the Whig fruitlessly editorialized that they ought to provide future legislatures with more authority to appropriate money for works of internal improvements. But the new constitution severely reduced the likelihood of state aid: according to the new regulations the state legislature had to raise annually seven per cent of the public debt which in 1852 would amount to \$770,000 above what was requisite for ordinary expenses of the government. Since debt retirement payments would produce new taxes, the Whig correctly predicted that no hope existed for the levying of additional taxes to invest in "local, low profit adventures."<sup>100</sup> With these facts before it, the paper urged the legislature to concentrate less on local interests and more on improving the economy of the entire state by such projects as the James River Canal, the Danville Railroad, and the Central Railroad.<sup>101</sup> Because all of the projects mentioned directly involved the capitol city, the Whig appeared less than objective in its selection of worthy projects.

After 1852, however, little chance remained for Virginia to complete rapidly her programs of improvement. Due to the debt retirement provisions of the state, the preference of northern capital for industrial investments, and reluctance of foreign investors, the Whig despaired that the state could not acquire the necessary capital. Bitterly it blamed the Democrats who, the paper said, had gladly debated slavery and passed resolutions reaffirming their love for the Resolutions of 1798 and 1799 rather than meet Virginia's economic wants. While it admitted that the Democratic tactics garnered them votes, the paper regretted that they had also let Virginia's economy stagnate.<sup>102</sup>

With the failure to advance internal improvements apparent, the Whig concentrated on establishing a direct steam line between Norfolk and European markets. Besides creating a commercial interest, the Whig predicted that the direct line would improve the state's currency and increase the flow of European immigrants and capital, both badly needed in Virginia.<sup>103</sup> Numerous Southern Commercial Conventions in the 1850's encouraged the Whig by endorsing a steam line; conventions in Memphis, Charleston, Bristol, and Richmond resolved in favor of establishing direct connections with Europe from ports along the Virginia coast as well as from points in Georgia and Louisiana.<sup>104</sup> In 1857 the Bristol Convention delegates



appointed William B. Preston as their representative and instructed him to go to Europe and determine whether a direct steam line was feasible, and the next year at a convention in Richmond, he reported that such a project could succeed.<sup>105</sup> Since Preston stressed the advantages of a line between France and the Chesapeake Bay, the Whig praised Preston's report and urged the state to raise one and a half million dollars to establish the line. Again the Whig argued that the growth of commercial interests in Virginia and eventually throughout the South would strengthen the South in national politics.<sup>106</sup>

Besides stressing the need to establish southern commerce, the Whig consistently solicited manufacturers to build factories in Virginia, and in the two decades prior to the Civil War, beseeched other southern states to divert capital from agricultural pursuits such as cotton to the production of essentials--clothing, equipment, and iron.<sup>107</sup> A common theme of its editorials was that an agricultural state could provide additional markets for farm goods (and higher prices) if industrial laborers could secure opportunities to sell their skills. Obviously, argued the paper, a worker could not grow his own food; consequently he would depend on the farmers to meet his needs. As the demand for good products increased the Whig expected more Virginians to abandon staple crops for the cultivation of corn and vegetables as well as the raising of hogs.<sup>108</sup>

The Whig's analysis of Virginia's economic woes was clearly expressed in an editorial in 1852 which said that "evil consists in the great mass of the population of Virginia having only one pursuit." Virginia, argued the Whig, had to forego her "Arcadian taste" against manufacturing before she could "devise means for multiplying and diversifying industrial pursuits - so as to prevent emigration and furnish profitable occupations to a great number of people."<sup>109</sup>

But because of the state's "Arcadian taste" Virginia resisted the Whig's suggestions so that a failure of one crop ruined a farmer and abundant crops lowered prices. For forty years the Whig presented alternatives, but unfortunately for the state's economic development, the voters waited until after the Civil War to adopt most of them. Rather than diversify their economy the people divided over slavery and embarked on a sectional conflict.

#### CHAPTER IV FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup>Richmond Whig, February 10 and February 20, 1824; August 26, 1825.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., August 26, 1825.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., August 30, 1825.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., August 8, 1827. Recent elections across the nations had convinced the Whig that most Americans supported the tariff, so the Whig thought it unwise to oppose a political party solely because of the tariff.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., October 6, 1827. Clay's American System centered on a protective tariff to establish American industry and furnish a home market for the agriculture of the American farmer and federally financed internal improvements. The distributing of net land sales to the states also became part of Clay's system. These new revenues would allow states to finance improvements of their own. See Clement Eaton's Henry Clay and the Art of American Politics (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1957), 43-46.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., October 6, 1827.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., August 8, 1827. While in theory the Whig accepted the logic of free trade, the paper, however, doubted the wisdom of letting the United States adopt the policy while no other nation did so.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., September 22, 1827.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., August 30, 1828. The Whig was responding to an anti-tariff resolution passed at a Mecklenburg County meeting.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., June 14, 1828.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., October 1, 1828.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., October 15, 1828. Since the Whig had radically shifted its policies, the paper's attack seemed unfair. See Meigs, I, and Wiltse, I. They both contend that Calhoun's reversal of policy was sincere.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., February 9 and October 26, 1830.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., July 18, 1831.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., August 11, 1831.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., November 10, 1831. The Whig argued that the constitutional power given Congress to regulate commerce was sufficient to allow it to regulate duties.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., July 7 and October 6, 1831. The Whig feared that without the tariff to secure a home market, the United States would be at the mercy of Europe.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., July 21, 1831.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid., November 24, 1831.

<sup>20</sup>See above Chapter II, pages 40-42.

<sup>21</sup>Richmond Whig, March 28, June 7 and July 21, 1842; September 5, 1844. Without the tariff the Whig predicted 700,000 workers would turn to farming. Since Massachusetts alone bought 40 million dollars a year of American raw materials--cotton, tobacco, rice, wheat, and corn--the Whig believed an anti-tariff policy would be suicide for the South.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid., April 6, 1843; March 14, March 19 and March 26, 1844.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid., October 27, 1843.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid., July 4, 1843; April 12, 1844.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid., June 7, 1842; July 4, 1843; March 2 and April 12, 1844.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid., February 3, February 10 and February 12, 1840.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid., June 1 and July 18, 1846.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid., July 17, 1846.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid., July 31, 1846. See also Charles Sellers, James K. Polk Jacksonian (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1957), II, 445-468.

<sup>30</sup>When the tariff passed, the Whig predicted a deluge of British goods creating unemployment. Since Vice-President George M. Dallas had cast the deciding vote, the

Whig heaped scorn on him. See Richmond Whig, July 31, August 1, August 4 and October 26, 1846. And see Sellers, Polk, II, 445-468.

<sup>31</sup>Blaming the drain of specie on Democratic cuts in the tariff, the Whig complained that England's superior productive capacity had allowed her to swamp the United States with manufactured goods. See Richmond Whig, March 26, 1853; October 6, October 7 and October 9, 1857.

<sup>32</sup>Richmond Whig, July 9, 1832. See also Glyndon G. Van Deusen, The Life of Henry Clay (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1937), 257-260. And Clement Eaton, Clay, 99-100.

<sup>33</sup>Richmond Whig, July 9, 1832.

<sup>34</sup>For good accounts see Ralph C. H. Catterall, The Second Bank of the United States (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1903), 239-240; Charles S. Sydnor, The Development of Southern Sectionalism, 1819-1848, Vol. V of A History of the South, ed. by E. Merton Coulter and Wendell Holmes Stephenson (10 vols.; Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1948), 205; Eaton, Clay, 100; Van Deusen, Clay, 258-259; Richardson, Jackson's Papers, II, 576-591.

<sup>35</sup>Richmond Whig, July 13, 1832.

<sup>36</sup>Ibid.

<sup>37</sup>Ibid., September 27, 1833.

<sup>38</sup>Ibid.

<sup>39</sup>Ibid., September 24 and October 4, 1833.

<sup>40</sup>Ibid.

<sup>41</sup>Ibid., October 4, 1833; March 6, 1835.

<sup>42</sup>Ibid., April 1, 1836. The Whig used the Secretary of Treasury's report on the holdings of thirty-five pet banks.

<sup>43</sup>Ibid.

<sup>44</sup>Sellers, Polk, 320; Van Deusen, Clay, 288-290.

<sup>45</sup>Sydnor, Southern Sectionalism, 320; Richmond Whig, March 7, March 21, April 11 and April 14, 1837. Particularly disturbing to the Whig was the practice of

transferring specie from commercial cities where it was needed to the "Western wilds" where it could not be found.

<sup>46</sup>Richmond Whig, March 21 and March 28, 1837.

<sup>47</sup>Ibid., April 11 and April 14, 1837.

<sup>48</sup>Ibid., May 16, 1837.

<sup>49</sup>Ibid., June 20, 1837.

<sup>50</sup>Ibid., July 28, 1837; July 3 and June 29, 1838; August 20, 1839. See also Van Deusen, Clay, 345. Eventually in July 1840 Van Buren got his Sub-Treasury but the Whigs elected in 1840 repealed it in 1841.

<sup>51</sup>Thomas Payne Govan, Nicholas Biddle, Nationalist and Public Banker, 1786-1844 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1959), 312-406. Biddle now headed a bank chartered by the state of Pennsylvania.

<sup>52</sup>Richmond Whig, April 17, 1838.

<sup>53</sup>Ibid., January 8, 1841.

<sup>54</sup>Ibid., January 25, 1841.

<sup>55</sup>Chitwood, John Tyler, 213-215.

<sup>56</sup>Ibid., 212.

<sup>57</sup>Richmond Whig, June 25, 1841.

<sup>58</sup>Chitwood, John Tyler, 219-221.

<sup>59</sup>Richmond Whig, July 5, 1841.

<sup>60</sup>Chitwood, John Tyler, 219-221.

<sup>61</sup>July 2, 1841. Rives had returned to the Senate in 1831.

<sup>62</sup>Chitwood, John Tyler, 223.

<sup>63</sup>Richmond Whig, July 31, 1841.

<sup>64</sup>Ibid., August 10, 1841.

<sup>65</sup>Ibid., August 18 and August 19, 1841.

<sup>66</sup>Ibid., August 21, 1841. Chitwood, John Tyler, 230 through 236 and 240 described fierce Whig reaction to Tyler.

<sup>67</sup>Chitwood, John Tyler, 240-247.

<sup>68</sup>Ibid.

<sup>69</sup>Richmond Whig, September 11, 1842; April 7, 1843.

<sup>70</sup>Ibid., December 19, 1843.

<sup>71</sup>Ibid., February 20, 1844.

<sup>72</sup>Ibid., April 7, 1846.

<sup>73</sup>Ibid., January 27 and February 6, 1824.

<sup>74</sup>Ibid., March 15 and December 13, 1825. The Whig contended that the power to finance internal improvements would be for an unlimited time whereas the war authority was of short duration.

<sup>75</sup>Ibid., March 15, 1825.

<sup>76</sup>Ibid., February 6, December 13 and December 20, 1825.

<sup>77</sup>Ibid., February 11, 1830.

<sup>78</sup>Van Deusen, Clay, 253-255.

<sup>79</sup>Richmond Whig, March 8, 1833; December 4, 1835.  
See also Van Deusen, Clay, 252-255.

<sup>80</sup>Richmond Whig, March 8, 1833.

<sup>81</sup>Ibid., March 3, 1837.

<sup>82</sup>Ibid., February 2, 1838.

<sup>83</sup>Ibid., January 18, 1839; August 10, 1841. The Whig estimated that distribution would give Virginia three to four million dollars a year.

<sup>84</sup>Ibid., September 7, 1841.

<sup>85</sup>Ibid., March 25, 1842; April 6, 1843. Since Congress had the power to "dispose of the territory of the United States," the Whig assumed that the Congress could also distribute the profits from land sales.

<sup>86</sup>Ibid., February 10, 1843.

<sup>87</sup>Sellers, Polk, II, 471-472.

<sup>88</sup>Richmond Whig, July 15, 1846.

<sup>89</sup>Ibid., March 9 and March 11, 1852.

<sup>90</sup>Ibid., March 4, March 5, March 9, January 12,  
June 30 and July 2, 1852.

<sup>91</sup>Ibid., March 17, 1854.

<sup>92</sup>Ibid., April 21, 1857.

<sup>93</sup>Ibid., August 19, 1825.

<sup>94</sup>Ibid., September 14, 1830.

<sup>95</sup>Ibid., July 3 and November 26, 1830.

<sup>96</sup>Ibid., December 27, 1834.

<sup>97</sup>Ibid., May 23, 1845.

<sup>98</sup>Ibid., November 9, 1838.

<sup>99</sup>Ibid., October 17, 1843; July 24, 1851.

<sup>100</sup>Ibid., February 13, 1852.

<sup>101</sup>Ibid., February 13, 1852.

<sup>102</sup>Ibid., November 11, 1851; January 2, July 12 and  
July 15, 1857.

<sup>103</sup>Ibid., February 25 and March 11, 1851; Decem-  
ber 14, 1852.

<sup>104</sup>Ibid., June 8, 1853; July 1, 1854; June 19, 1857.  
See Herbert Wender, "Southern Commercial Conventions, 1837-  
1859," Johns Hopkins University Studies in Historical and  
Political Science, ed. by the Departments of History,  
Political Economy and Political Science (Baltimore: The  
Johns Hopkins Press, 1930).

<sup>105</sup>Richmond Whig, June 2, May 30 and July 3, 1857.  
For full reports on the commercial conventions see The  
Commercial Review of the South and West, VIII-XXVII.  
Hereafter referred to as DeBow's Review.

<sup>106</sup>Richmond Whig, February 19, 1858.



<sup>107</sup>Ibid., February 8 and December 31, 1841;  
January 19, 1844; March 20, June 10 and July 25, 1845;  
August 27 and September 8, 1846; May 11, 1849; August 13  
and September 4, 1852; January 4, 1853; June 15 and  
October 31, 1854.

<sup>108</sup>Ibid., December 31, 1841; June 10, 1845;  
May 11, 1849; August 13, 1852 and April 27, 1858.

<sup>109</sup>Ibid., August 13, 1852.

## CHAPTER V

### A VOICE OF CAUTION IN A TIME OF TURMOIL

During the political controversies in the 1840's and 1850's the Whig generally acted as a minority voice warning the majority that its policies threatened the Union's stability. Whether issues involved territorial expansion or presidential elections, the paper accused the Democrats of leading the nation into turmoil and disaster. Unsuccessfully the Whig sought a national coalition of conservatives to prevent a civil war between the sections.

As early as 1829 the Whig had opposed annexation of the Texas Territory because it would lead "to the inevitable destruction of the Union." Why, asked the Whig, saddle the nation with new and heavy debt except perhaps to gratify a few adventurers?<sup>1</sup> When rumors of annexation increased during Texas' fight for independence, the Whig again cautioned that because of treaties of friendship with Mexico the United States should not even discuss annexation until Mexico recognized the independence of Texas.<sup>2</sup> But despite Whig opposition, likelihood

of annexation persisted. During John Tyler's administration the Whig, aware of his desire for Texas, accused him of trying to "strengthen himself at home" by diverting the public's attention to foreign affairs.<sup>3</sup> If Texas became part of the Union the paper feared that the Union could not endure: "we trust for our country's sake and happiness - for her liberty and Union and Peace - that this most extravagant scheme . . . of annexing Texas . . . will be frowned down by the . . . people."<sup>4</sup>

Unless the United States dropped the Texas question, the Whig warned, slavery would entangle national politics. If slavery spread to Texas, the paper admonished, the North would dissolve the Union rather than accept Texas, and if Congress prohibited slavery in Texas then the South would secede rather than allow free states to acquire so much power in the federal government. Either way, in the Whig's view, the United States would lose. Since Texas included enough territory to support 30,000,000 people, it could defend itself militarily; and even if England established controlling influence in Texas (as some said England planned to do) the United States ought not interfere. Under England the territory would learn to cherish a "love of justice, of law, and liberty, which so pre-eminently distinguish Great Britain"; hence a policy of non-intervention could advance American interests.<sup>5</sup>

Of course voices in Virginia challenged the Whig's analysis. Henry A. Wise, soon to become a Democratic Congressman from Virginia and in 1855 the state's governor, intimated that England wanted to abolish slavery in Texas and thus weaken the institution in the South. Supposedly England's plan included Mexico's recognition of Texas on the condition that Texas end slavery. Responding to Wise, the Whig charged him with trying to further his political career by stirring up a storm of emotion which would cost the country "blood, tears, and treasure" it could not afford.<sup>6</sup> Because of Great Britain's activities the Whig correctly anticipated appeals to the President to enforce the Monroe Doctrine; therefore, the paper hastily pointed out that a "very different state of affairs" existed when Monroe delivered his message in 1823. Then the country acted to prevent the "Holy Alliance" from crushing free government in Latin America; on the other hand, the United States in 1843 did not know what England planned.<sup>7</sup>

As the 1844 presidential election approached, the Whig, in an attempt to rally supporters, catalogued reasons why the Whig Party had rejected pressures for annexation. First a war with Mexico was certain to follow annexation, and besides a war debt, the nation would have to shoulder Texas' debt of ten million dollars. If Texas' superior cotton lands became available, the Whig predicted, South Carolina, Georgia, and the Gulf Coast cotton states

would lose population and capital to the richer land. In addition, other nations would consider the United States a "bully" for forcing Mexico to give up just claims and for violating a treaty of "commerce, amnity, and friendship."<sup>8</sup> Those who encouraged expansion did so, said the Whig, for personal advantage. Some, like Senator Robert J. Walker of Mississippi, were "land jobbers" seeking a quick profit while politicians like John Tyler sought votes.<sup>9</sup> By mid-1844 the Whig even denied that England was interested in Texas and thus the need for speedy annexation no longer existed.<sup>10</sup>

When James K. Polk defeated Clay for the Presidency in November 1844, the paper knew that the Texas and Oregon questions would not abate. During the campaign the Democrats had promised to secure all of the territory up to the 54°40' line. But England, also possessing a claim to the Oregon Territory, had always insisted on a line following the Columbia River up to the 49th parallel. After Polk's inauguration in which he affirmed his intention of securing all of Oregon, the Whig foresaw the likelihood of England's encouraging Mexico to go to war over Texas. Since Great Britain could anticipate a war over Oregon, why not, reasoned the Whig, expect her to obtain the aid of Mexico by provoking war and thus give indirect aid to England's effort to retain Oregon.<sup>11</sup> But even more important was Congress' passage at the end of

Tyler's term of a joint resolution annexing Texas which made a conflict inevitable.<sup>12</sup>

If there had to be war with Mexico, the Whig emphasized that a war over Oregon at the same time with England amounted to suicide. Rather than fight, the Whig recommended that the administration press for a compromise based on the 49th parallel; such a solution, the Whig contended, would satisfy the British government. Should war with England come, the paper forecasted that the Royal Navy would sweep American commerce from the sea and blockade American ports, placing the United States in a very weak position.<sup>13</sup> Members of Polk's administration, although not the President himself, recognized the dire possibilities and sought to mediate differences over Oregon.<sup>14</sup>

In the meantime the Whig watched the administration move closer to war with Mexico. By August of Polk's first year in office, the Whig's editorials averred that the government was "hungry" for California and that Polk contemplated securing it by purchase if possible or force if necessary.<sup>15</sup> With renewed fervor the paper pleaded with the public to act with the "respect due" one nation to another, great or small. When the Enquirer questioned the Whig's patriotism, the paper replied that it had reluctantly concluded that Mexico, not the United States, had the justification to declare war; nevertheless, the

Whig assured its readers that if war came it would support the war effort.<sup>16</sup>

In May 1846, when news dispatches told of Mexican attacks on American troops in disputed territory along the Texas border, the Whig concluded that Polk had precipitated war by moving troops under General Zachary Taylor from the Nueces to the Rio Grande. If Mexico had attacked Americans at Corpus Christi, then Mexico, explained the Whig, would have been wrong and Polk free from censure, but that had not happened.<sup>17</sup> So the administration was using "Love of Country" to cover its "own errors": anyone who accused Polk of "folly" and responsibility for the war became, in the pro-war press, unpatriotic. After criticizing Polk, however, the Whig endorsed the bills authorizing the raising and equipping of volunteers because it accepted the fact that American troops were under attack.<sup>18</sup>

Fortunately for the United States, the Whig could report in June the settlement of the Oregon boundary dispute. Before England received news of hostilities in Texas, her government had sent a proposed compromise centering on the 49th parallel, and on June 10 the President submitted the treaty to the Senate which promptly ratified the arrangement.<sup>19</sup> The Whig, never having believed the American claim to Oregon to be "undisputed," wholeheartedly approved of the treaty, but insisted on crediting Polk's ambassador at London and the Senate rather than the President.<sup>20</sup>

With Oregon settled the Whig again concentrated on the Mexican conflict which the paper hoped would come to a speedy end because of its "tendency, if protracted, to strengthen the power . . . of the Executive." If the struggle extended over a long period of time, the paper also recognized that demands for more of Mexico's lands would increase. "No rational mind," argued the Whig, could doubt that the addition of an immense territory, occupied by "an ignorant, heterogeneous and bigoted population," must terminate in disunion and ultimately in "subversion of our limited constitutional government."<sup>21</sup> When some New York Whigs began suggesting Zachary Taylor as a presidential possibility, the Whig reasoned that perhaps Polk would now close out the war quickly to avoid having new heroes appear to challenge his party in 1848.<sup>22</sup>

As criticism of the Whig's unpatriotic attacks on the President increased, the paper attempted to explain the fine distinctions which allowed it to call the war "unjust" and "unnecessary" and yet at the same time required it to support the prosecution of the war. If Congress had declared war on Mexico to retrieve debts or redress grievances of Americans in Mexico, explained the Whig, no one would have questioned the "justice" or "constitutionality" of the war, but because Polk ordered American troops beyond the "legitimate" boundary between Mexico and Texas, the paper contended that most people



understood that Polk initiated the war. Even though the war "in its origin" was unconstitutional, all "true patriots" would now defend the country.<sup>23</sup>

After hearing of Stephen W. Kearney's activities in California, the Whig lamented that now it was certain that Polk had determined from the beginning to acquire New Mexico and California.<sup>24</sup> Because a New York regiment carried agricultural implements, not rifles, the Whig accused Polk of sending them not as soldiers but as "emigrants" to settle the territory. Obviously, observed the Whig, Polk would employ his authority to raise 50,000 volunteers to colonize Mexican land.<sup>25</sup>

At the end of a hot summer in 1846 David Wilmot, a Democratic representative from northern Pennsylvania, did just what the Whig wanted to avoid: he entangled slavery in the debates on the Mexican War by urging Congress to prohibit slavery from all territory taken from Mexico.<sup>26</sup> While many northern states, including Massachusetts, Michigan, New York, and Vermont, endorsed the "Wilmot Proviso," almost all southern states denounced it. Senator William O. Butler of South Carolina labeled the proviso treasonable, and Calhoun warned that the South would secede rather than submit. The Washington Union (now edited by Thomas Ritchie) wanted Wilmot read out of the party.<sup>27</sup> The Whig joined the debates, reluctantly, because slavery in the territories was "a question, once

settled . . . forever, by the celebrated Missouri Compromise."<sup>28</sup> In the Whig's opinion Congress lacked the power to forbid introduction of slavery into any portion of the Union: "each state must determine for itself, . . . questions of this character."<sup>29</sup> To avoid disunion the Whig advised against any new acquisition of land.<sup>30</sup> It argued that if the United States declared its intention not to take Mexican land, that government would have greater incentive to stop fighting. Should the war continue, however, the Whig contended that the South would face "submission" to the Wilmot Proviso or "disunion."<sup>31</sup>

Rather than following the path of conquest, the Whig restated that it believed the United States' mission was "to transmit to our posterity the free institutions bequeathed to us by our ancestors." And the Whig expressed confidence that "the example of free government, as illustrated in our own experience, would recommend itself to the people of other countries, in Europe as well as upon this continent." But if the United States dismembered Mexico, "our own Confederacy" might also dissolve.<sup>32</sup>

When the war finally ended with Senate ratification of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo on March 10, 1848, little debate occurred because the public wanted the war over.<sup>33</sup> But the Whig stressed that whatever the treaty provisions, the United States had paid too high a price.

To determine the total cost the Whig included expenditures for the war effort, payments to the Mexican Government, assumption of American claims on Mexico, surveying of new land, and interest on the debt: the Whig's final figure surpassed \$428,000,000. Yet the "bitter hostility" which the war "created between the North and South" worried it even more than the millions of dollars spent.<sup>34</sup>

Not long after the war's close, disturbing questions about California and New Mexico arose in Congress. By mid-1849 word spread that California would soon apply for statehood and already a battle between pro-slavery states and free states appeared certain. If the North insisted on including the Wilmot Proviso in California's Constitution, the South, editorialized the Whig, would threaten secession. Since nature had decreed no slavery in California, the paper regretted that the extremes, North and South, seemed so set on raising "an irritating question for the sake of mere abstraction."<sup>35</sup>

As a storm over slavery in the territories gathered, President Zachary Taylor formulated a plan of settlement which in December 1849 he presented in his annual message to Congress. Despite the complexity of the problems involved, the President's plan required very little action. He simply stated that California would soon apply for statehood, and he hoped Congress would accept her request and avoid "exciting topics of sectional

character."<sup>36</sup> But in no way did he deal with the other assorted problems facing the nation such as fugitive slaves, slave trade in Washington, D.C., boundary disputes between New Mexico and Texas, and the territorial organization of Utah and New Mexico. Despite these shortcomings the Whig accepted and defended Taylor's proposal.<sup>37</sup>

Attacks on Taylor came from several directions. James A. Seddon, Democratic Congressman from Virginia, disapproved of Taylor's "coercion" of California into statehood before congress had organized an official territorial government there. In defense the Whig reminded Seddon that Texas had also achieved statehood without a territorial government; moreover the paper denied that the President coerced California.<sup>38</sup> Other critics including Henry Clay complained that Taylor had dealt with only one of five "wounds" afflicting the nation. To these complaints the paper just reiterated that Taylor's "non-intervention" policy best protected the nation's interest.<sup>39</sup> According to Taylor the courts could adjudicate the other four grievances.<sup>40</sup>

But by the spring of 1850 the Whig was wondering whether the southern "fire-eaters" would permit peaceful settlement of the crisis. John C. Calhoun had on March 4 addressed his last remarks to the Senate; he warned his colleagues that the southern people abhorred the consolidated government that had developed and that because of

their discontent they would, if abolition activity did not cease, demand disunion.<sup>41</sup> His speech convinced the Whig that he had "thrown off the mask" and assumed the mantle of an "avowed DISUNIONIST."<sup>42</sup> A few days later the paper, using even stronger words, characterized Calhoun's ideas as "treason to the liberties and to the happiness of the people of this great country."<sup>43</sup>

Just three days after Calhoun's address, Daniel Webster delivered his greatest speech. He began by reviewing the events that had separated the sections over slavery and expansion and then he blamed both the North and South for the friction between sections. Finally he detailed the futility of disunion and the impossibility of peaceful separation.<sup>44</sup> From the speech it was clear that Webster, despite his abolition affiliations and support in Massachusetts, had decided to compromise for the Union. Because he was a Whig, the paper took delight in praising the speech as a great contribution towards "national unity."<sup>45</sup>

But some southerners cared little for national unity. South Carolina's fire-eaters had called for a southern convention to meet in Nashville in June to discuss relations between the states and the federal government. Behind the call lay the belief that after southerners agreed on a list of demands, the North would have to acquiesce or watch the dissolution of the Union. When

the idea of a southern convention first surfaced, the Whig contended that the convention advocates wanted secession but that they were deceiving southern unionists by describing the convention as an avenue to compromise. Other criticisms by the Whig included: (1) lack of a popular vote to determine if people wanted a convention, (2) lack of power of state legislatures to appoint or defray expense of delegates to the convention, and (3) disapproval of making demands on the North.<sup>46</sup> In April the paper advised patriots to let the "disunionists" play out their hands. The Whig accurately perceived that most southerners sought moderation not secession and that the June convention had little chance of influencing the states.<sup>47</sup> Events substantiated the paper. When the convention opened on June 3 only nine states had sent delegates and some of them had dubious credentials. After feebly resolving in favor of extending the Missouri line (36°30') to the Pacific, the convention adjourned.<sup>48</sup>

In the Congress some southerners, including Senator Henry S. Foote of Mississippi, and Henry Clay, organized to draw up a compromise. At Foote's request on April 18 the Senate established a special committee chaired by Clay to consider all the known alternatives on the territorial and slavery questions. During the first week in May, Clay presented the committee report. It sanctioned formation of additional states from the Texas

territory, admitted California immediately, established territorial governments in New Mexico and Utah without favoring or opposing slavery, recommended payment of money to Texas for ceding contested land to New Mexico, proposed a tough fugitive slave law, and abolished the slave trade in Washington, D.C.<sup>49</sup> For the first time in many years the Whig disagreed with Clay on a major issue. He, the Whig complained, would empower the Congress to implement the Wilmot Proviso. In addition he assumed that Congress could, without Texas' permission, award New Mexico 125 million acres to settle a boundary dispute with Texas; moreover the Whig stressed that the land handed to New Mexico would become free soil. Consequently the Whig concluded: "we infinitely prefer the plan suggested by General Taylor."<sup>50</sup>

Through June debates over the alternatives continued in Congress with hope dimming that the Congress could settle the crisis. But in July fate intervened with the death of President Taylor; he had vigorously opposed and had threatened to veto any measure on the territories except his own, but his Vice-President and the man who succeeded him, Millard Fillmore, had before Taylor died confided to friends that he favored Clay's compromise bills.<sup>51</sup> After Taylor died and Fillmore affirmed his desire for the compromise, the Whig switched its policy to support the new President.<sup>52</sup>

But the battle was far from over, for at the end of July the Omnibus Bill (containing all of Clay's proposals) failed a test vote and briefly precipitated jubilation in the ranks of its ultra southern opponents.

Senator Stephen A. Douglas of Illinios, however, picked up the pieces and proceeded to direct the compromise through Congress one bill at a time.<sup>53</sup> The Whig emphasized that the North had dropped the Wilmot Proviso.

Even though Utah and New Mexico would be free states, nature, not Congress, decreed it. And since the South had always maintained that a state should determine its own institutions, the Whig contended that California's admittance as a free state, at the request of the state's voters, violated no southern principles. What had won, declared the Whig, was the policy of "non-intervention": Congress had decided to let each state determine its own slavery policy.<sup>55</sup>

For the rest of 1850 and much of 1851, the Whig concentrated its editorials on the necessity of union and futility of secession. While no power or constitution could take away the right of revolution, the Whig explained that "no evidence in the proceedings of the Convention which formed the federal Constitution, or in the Constitution itself" justified the contention "that the federal government is a league or confederacy of States." Obviously, said the Whig, the framers created a "National "



Government" with a constitution whose preamble began "we the people," not we the states. If the generation of 1787 meant to form a confederacy, why, asked the Whig, did they declare the Constitution the "Supreme Law of the Land"?<sup>56</sup> Since "no government is ever so suicidal as to provide for its own demolition," the Whig concluded that the authors founded the Constitution on the "principle of perpetuity" and when it received the signature of George Washington, "men thought it was the seal of immortality."<sup>57</sup>

Besides contesting the legality of secession, the Whig spent much time explaining the stupidity of secession. While the fire-eaters sought disunion to insure slavery, what they proposed would actually destroy it. If the South seceded, a hostile and abolitionist country would border the new confederacy: the Whig argued that the United States would be even less inclined to return fugitive slaves and less willing to prevent abolitionists from raiding the border states to help slaves escape.<sup>58</sup> When secessionists talked about a commercial treaty with England, supposedly dependent on the South's cotton, the Whig questioned the logic of a slave nation trusting the world's leading abolitionists. After she made the South one of her colonies, England "would, we doubt not, bring about abolition here" just as she has done in her other possessions. While Negroes would still work the fields, they would be emancipated, for "southern slavery against

the combined forces of abolitionism in England and . . . the North could not stand a day."<sup>59</sup> By July 1851 the paper enthusiastically reported that most people, North and South, accepted the Compromise.<sup>60</sup>

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Even while debates over California raged, some southerners contemplated acquiring Cuba and more of Mexico.<sup>61</sup> In 1849 rumors of an impending filibuster to Cuba flooded the country; accordingly President Taylor issued a proclamation warning filibusters headed for Cuba that they could expect no aid from the United States. The Whig endorsed the President and admonished those involved that it was illegal for armed groups to invade a country at peace with the United States; moreover, the Whig contended that the filibusters sought to plunder, not to free the people in Cuba. But whatever their purpose, the paper estimated that ninety-nine per cent of the American people agreed with Fillmore's proclamation.<sup>62</sup> When Senator John Slidell of Louisiana proposed in 1852 that Congress give the President the power to suspend neutrality laws if Congress were not in session, the Whig retorted that Slidell's "ill-advised, reckless and dangerous" suggestion had but one goal--to open the door for filibusters.<sup>63</sup>

Later, when the Ostend Manifesto broke into the news, the Whig's suspicions of the Pierce administration

proved well founded. After Pierce named Pierre Soule ambassador to Madrid, the Whig had commented that it was strange to see a "French Jacobin" and a man known to thirst for Cuba sent to Spain.<sup>64</sup> In 1854 the administration instructed Soule to offer Spain \$130,000,000 for Cuba and not unexpectedly the Spaniards refused to sell. Determined to possess Cuba, Soule left Spain and in October met the American ambassadors to London and Paris, John Buchanan and John Y. Mason, in Belgium where they wrote and sent a message, the Ostend Manifesto, to Secretary of State William L. Marcy. When it became public in March 1855, Pierce had to repudiate the report which sanctioned in the national interest American seizure of Cuba.<sup>65</sup>

But land other than Cuba interested expansionists. Some like Governor William Carr Lane of New Mexico contemplated using a boundary dispute with Mexico as a pretext for grabbing more land. Distressed at the possibility of new annexation, the Whig rebuked those "Progressive Democrats" who threaten the nation's stability by seeking to annex land even though the nation just survived a near fatal crisis in 1850. Since the United States barely got through the "manifest destiny delusion of a Polk Administration" the Whig questioned the propriety of planting new seeds of discord."<sup>66</sup> The Mexicans, said the Whig, proved themselves undeserving to join the United

States Republic. Whenever they had revolted to achieve change they had fostered a military despotism: they did not "know how to appreciate the blessings of liberty."<sup>67</sup>

Though the nation avoided further conflict over Mexico, another explosive question, that of the Kansas-Nebraska Territory, precipitated a crisis. On January 4, 1854, Senator Stephen A. Douglas, Chairman of the Senate Committee on Territories, presented a plan for organizing the Nebraska Territory. In its original form the bill avoided slavery except to provide that the state's constitution and not Congress would determine that question. The wording corresponded exactly with that used in the Utah-New Mexico Acts. Confused over what the bill actually meant, the Whig's first editorial on the subject questioned President Franklin Pierce's pledge to observe the "non-intervention policy" in the territories.<sup>68</sup>

Others, including Senator Archibald Dixon of Kentucky, also found the vague language of Douglas' bill perplexing; consequently southerners secured major amendments drastically altering the original proposal. Since Douglas at first left the impression that the Missouri Compromise Line would remain valid until a court overturned it, southern senators, eager to destroy the 36°30' restriction on slavery, pressured Douglas into adding a section explicitly repealing the 1820 agreement as it pertained to slavery in the Louisiana Purchase Territory.

And Douglas also agreed to divide the land into two territories: Nebraska and Kansas.<sup>69</sup>

While the South rejoiced over the prospect of extending slavery into new territory, many in the North, long having viewed the 36°30' line a permanent settlement, fiercely objected.<sup>70</sup> Their protests produced ridicule in the Whig's columns because those complaining the most were the ones who refused to obey the Fugitive Slave Law of the Compromise in 1850; the Whig, however, professed no interest in reopening "the discussion of the slavery question. We are sick and disgusted with it." If the North would only observe the principles of 1850, the paper predicted that the Congress could avoid debate on slavery in the territories.<sup>71</sup>

As opposition to Douglas' plan increased in the North, the Whig identified what it called the central problem:

That issue is not whether slavery shall be extended or restricted, but whether all the states of this Union are equal before the Constitution - whether the people of one section have the same rights as those of the others, that is the true question; the extension or restriction of slavery is the consequence, and is a very different matter.

Rather than view the extension of slavery as a way to strengthen the institution, the Whig maintained that just the opposite was true. Indeed the paper contended that the "diffusion" of the peculiar institution "would weaken it." And since "quasi-abolitionists" represented Missouri

and Texas about half the time, the Whig suggested that southerners re-examine their demands for new slave states. If abolitionists had not barred slaves from California, the Whig argued that in fifty years the drain of slaves from Virginia, Kentucky, Tennessee, and North Carolina would have been so great they would have abolished slavery on their own.<sup>72</sup>

When the political turmoil did not subside in February and March, the Whig admitted despair. Because so many in the North of all classes--professors, ministers, and tradesmen--joined the "dregs" and "fanatics" in stirring up opposition to rights of slave states, the Whig, for the first time since 1850, expressed concern for the Union. With unmatched "unanimity of sentiment" the North appeared to be driving southerners to "submission or stern resistance." The Whig wrote that most in the South would refuse to suffer more "concessions."<sup>73</sup>

As the debate in Congress unfolded, the Whig watched with disapprobation as angry Senators accused the South of conniving with Douglas to overthrow the Missouri Compromise: critics charged that in exchange for Douglas' will the South had pledged its support to him in the next presidential election.<sup>74</sup> Denying all charges the Whig defended Douglas' actions as sincere and while he was not perfect the paper estimated that he was well above those who attacked him.<sup>75</sup>

Four months after the debates began, Congress passed the Kansas-Nebraska Bill. Even though the Whig hoped debates on slavery would terminate, the paper reluctantly concluded that since so many politicians, North and South, depended on the slavery issue to stay in office, they would persist in their demagoguery. While the South won recognition of the "principle of free access," the Whig doubted that the victory justified the price.<sup>76</sup>

For almost three years the paper avoided discussing developments in Kansas, but just prior to Buchanan's inauguration it returned to the subject by accusing the Democrats of trying to make Kansas a free state. Pierce appointed John W. Geary Governor of the territory who promptly harassed pro-slavery officials in Kansas and as a result Kansas was "lost to the South forever."<sup>77</sup>

Although, continued the Whig, Democratic papers pledged that if Buchanan won in 1856 he would admit Kansas only as a slave state, they since have reflected and confessed that the country will soon have another free state.<sup>78</sup>

Embittered by Whig losses at the polls, the paper, rather than quieting emotions, was stirring confusion and trying to disrupt the Democratic Party. And when northern Democrats under Douglas began challenging the Buchanan administration on its Kansas policy, the Whig accurately and cheerfully characterized the event as the Democratic Party's "denationalization."<sup>79</sup>

After the new administration assumed office in March 1857, it named Robert J. Walker of Mississippi, former Secretary of Treasury for Polk, Governor of the troubled Kansas Territory.<sup>80</sup> But before he arrived in Kansas the pro-slavery legislature set up elections in June 1857 to select delegates to a state constitutional convention in Lecompton. Since the free-soilers refused to participate in the elections, the slavery advocates expected to control the convention, attach a slave code to the Constitution, and apply to Congress as a slave state. In the midst of turmoil, Walker arrived and in his inaugural declared that the people should be allowed to vote on any portion of the new constitution that pertained to slavery and in such an election all residents could vote. Pro-slavery groups, not wanting to return the Constitution to the voters for approval, objected to Walker's promise.<sup>81</sup> Since Walker planned to allow all residents to vote and not just those recognized by the legislature, the Whig labeled the policy "squatter sovereignty." And because Buchanan possessed the power of recall but did not use it, the Whig concluded that the President approved of Walker's performance. Although Buchanan had promised to protect southern interests in his campaign, the Whig insisted that his Kansas policy revealed his true sympathies.<sup>82</sup>

In September the state convention met and as expected drew up a constitution (the Lecompton



Constitution) favorable to slave owners. As Walker had promised the slavery portion was put before the voters but no matter how they voted the Constitution would protect slaves already in Kansas. One additional safeguard, included for slave owners, prohibited any alteration of the Constitution prior to 1864. These maneuvers to insure the peculiar institution infuriated Douglas and other northern Democrats. When the Whig heard of the fraudulent voting and denial of representation of fifteen counties in the convention, it also expressed doubt as to the authenticity of the convention. Even though the Whig wanted Kansas as a slave state, the paper perceived a "defect" of real substance which if verified might overturn the Lecompton Constitution.<sup>83</sup>

But soon the Whig satisfied itself that the Lecompton Constitution represented the wishes of enough voters in Kansas for Congress to accept that territory's bid for statehood. If southerners failed to demand admission of Kansas with the Lecompton Constitution, the Whig said that they would be the "laughing stock" of the North. When Congressmen suggested amendments requiring a yes or no vote on the whole Constitution by Kansas voters before Congress granted statehood, the Whig retorted that Congress should determine only whether a proposed state constitution was republican and if so accept it.<sup>84</sup> To the suggestion by Senator George E. Pugh that Congress affirm

the right of people to amend their state constitution, at any time (annulling the prohibition on change until 1864) the Whig answered that such a proposal violated the principle of "non-intervention."<sup>85</sup>

By mid-April, however, it was apparent to all factions that a compromise offered the only way out of the Kansas debacle. So when the bill for admission went to a joint conference committee, William H. English, an anti-Lecompton Democrat, helped work out an agreement with southern and administration Democrats. The committee reported out the "English Bill" which required that the entire Lecompton Constitution go before the voters again, and if they accepted it Kansas would receive a federal land grant: this last feature appeared to many critics to be a bribe but actually Congress generally granted similar amounts of land to new states.<sup>86</sup> Unhappy with the final solution, the Whig called Buchanan's endorsement of the English Bill a betrayal and correctly foretold voter rejection of the Constitution.<sup>87</sup>

\* \* \* \* \*

With the revival of the slavery debates over the admission of California in 1850, the presidential elections of 1852, 1856, and 1860 challenged the energies of the Union supporters in Virginia. In all three elections the Whig stressed the importance of electing a man who could best preserve the nation. But the Whig Party in

Virginia, like its counterpart in other southern states, disintegrated over slavery; because many Whigs in the North adopted abolition platforms many of Virginia's Whigs turned to third parties in a search for a national unionist party.<sup>88</sup>

As the election of 1852 approached the Whig clearly indicated that it was satisfied with Millard Fillmore's performance and wanted him to be the Whig candidate. His adherence to the Compromise of 1850 and willingness to use troops to enforce the Fugitive Slave Law convinced the Whig that he possessed the sense of fair play needed to maintain order.<sup>89</sup> If the conservatives, North and South, failed to unite, the Whig prophesied that southern ultras and northern abolitionists would form a sinister coalition bent on permanently dividing the nation.<sup>90</sup> When opponents criticized Fillmore's lack of bold policies, the paper explained that the absence of excitement benefited the people; wars and rebellions pleased historians, argued the Whig, but threatened the well-being of the United States.<sup>91</sup>

Both national nominating conventions, however, neglected to follow the course the Whig expected. In Baltimore during the first week in June, the Democrats jolted the country when they picked a relatively unknown New Englander, Franklin Pierce. He had served in the Senate and fought in the Mexican War, but his positions on

major issues were an enigma to most of the nation. And since the convention deadlocked over the candidacies of Stephen A. Douglas, Lewis Cass, James Buchanan, and William L. Marcy, Pierce's neutrality presented the delegates an opportunity finally to nominate a candidate after forty-nine ballots.<sup>92</sup>

Delighted by this unexpected development, the Whig reported that most people, including Democrats, were busy trying to find out "who and what" Pierce represented. Since Pierce while in Congress had voted against every measure designed to develop the West's resources, the Whig predicted defeat for him in that section. Not only had the Democrats named a man of "mediocre intellect," continued the Whig, but they had also neglected to endorse the principle of non-intervention so important to southern voters.<sup>93</sup>

The Whig's high spirits suffered a setback, however, when the Whig convention met in Baltimore after the Democrats and chose Wingfield Scott over Fillmore. To placate the southerners, William A. Graham of North Carolina received the Vice-Presidential nomination.<sup>94</sup> Although Scott lacked Fillmore's popularity in Virginia, the Whig gamely raised the general's banner and advised all of Fillmore's followers to aid Scott's campaign. Rather than emphasize the candidate, the Whig concentrated its editorials on the Whig's platform which promised

support for the Compromise of 1850 and swore allegiance to the "integrity of the Union."<sup>95</sup>

As Democratic presses tried to connect Scott with William H. Seward and other abolitionists of the Whig Party, the paper countered by reprinting Scott's letter of acceptance to the convention in which he embraced the "whole" Whig platform including the strong statement favoring strict enforcement of the Fugitive Slave Law.<sup>96</sup> But despite the Whig's efforts, Pierce carried Virginia 73,858 to 58,572. And while Scott's showing was respectable, the Whig began to have serious doubts as to the future of the Whig Party.<sup>97</sup>

By the spring of 1855 the Whig had decided to advocate the cause of the Know-Nothing or American Party. While the paper never approved of the secrecy of the organization, the Whig saw nothing wrong with protecting American institutions by prohibiting Catholics from public office. Such a practice, contended the Whig, encouraged patriotism. The Whig stressed, however, that the American Party did not deny a naturalized citizen the right to vote. Yet, since the Whig approved of changing the naturalization laws to require an immigrant to wait over twenty years before he could vote, the paper obviously contemplated reducing the foreign vote.<sup>98</sup> So to avoid the divisive issue of slavery the Whig appeared ready to unite the nation by stirring nativists prejudices.

On February 22, 1856, the American Party convened its national convention in Philadelphia, and nominated the Whig's favorite candidate, Millard Fillmore. Besides stating the nativists principles, the platform identified the "Federal Union and Constitution" as the only sure bulwark of American independence.<sup>99</sup>

In 1856 the Whig had many candidates to contend with. At the Cincinnati convention in June the Democrats named James Buchanan and four weeks later the first national Republican convention nominated John C. Fremont; not until September 17 did the Whig convention meet and then only to endorse the American ticket.<sup>100</sup> After Fremont entered the race the Whig hinted that the election might have to go to the House of Representatives. That prospect did not worry the Whig, because it assumed that Congress' conservatives would vote for Fillmore, not the radical Republican.<sup>101</sup>

But the election results showed that the Whig had grossly over-estimated Fillmore's strength in the nation and Virginia. In the state Buchanan led with 89,706 votes to 60,310 and 291 for Fillmore and Fremont respectively. While Buchanan won 174 electoral votes and Fremont 114, the American candidate gained only 8.<sup>102</sup> Buchanan's victory displeased the Whig, but Fremont's strong appeal in many of the northern states alarmed the paper more. His performance proved to the Whig that the Republican Party would be a powerful force to contend with in 1860.<sup>103</sup>

More than a year before the 1860 elections, the Whig renewed its call for all national conservatives to unite in an Opposition Party to oppose the "Black Republicans" and Democrats. Because the only national party, the Democratic Party, appeared likely to break up into sectional factions, the Whig contended that the time was right for conservatives in all regions to form a new national organization.<sup>104</sup> Since the Whig perceived that no party contemplated interfering with slavery in a state, the paper declared that the new organization ought to ignore slavery. Rather than bicker over a dead issue, the Whig demanded that conservatives nominate candidates who were "well-known, able, conservative, rational men." A man's ability and character, not past differences, argued the Whig, should determine the party's selection.<sup>105</sup>

Later, in the fall of 1859, events made the paper's appeal more urgent. John Brown, planning to arouse Virginia's slave population into a liberating army, seized the United States arsenal at Harper's Ferry, but federal troops promptly responded and captured Brown and his raiders. At first the Whig downgraded the episode as an exaggerated "humbug."<sup>106</sup> Because of the North's sympathy, however, the Whig reassessed the raid and concluded that it might turn out to be a godsend since it jarred northern conservatives into realizing that the Union was threatened.<sup>107</sup>

When South Carolina recommended a conference of southern states to discuss federal-state relations, the Whig responded negatively. What the secessionists desired, warned the Whig, was to make impossible demands on the North and then secede; therefore a convention would not benefit Virginia and would only increase popular excitement and widen the national breach. Rather than seek new amendments to protect slavery, as the secessionists proposed, the paper contended that Virginia could better secure her rights by observing and having others observe the United States Constitution. If that was not enough, then no amendment, concluded the Whig, could possibly save the Union. By a vote of 31 to 11 the Virginia Senate acted as the Whig had hoped and rejected the invitation.<sup>108</sup>

Political explosions at the Democratic Convention at Charleston in April 1860 tended to confirm the Whig's view that the Democrats could no longer remain a national organization. Angered over the convention's refusal to adopt a slave code, southern delegates led by William L. Yancey of Alabama marched out of the convention and the Democratic Party. In June what was left of the National Democratic Party nominated the energetic Stephen A. Douglas. Determined to have a candidate, the southern Democrats nominated John C. Breckinridge.<sup>109</sup>

On May 9, shortly after the Charleston convention adjourned, the Constitutional Union Party met at Baltimore



and nominated a slate headed by John Bell, former Whig and Senator from Tennessee. Pleased with this development, the Whig praised Bell's unionism and willingness to treat all sections fairly. As the Whig had hoped, the party avoided the divisive issues and in its platform merely pledged to uphold the Constitution.<sup>110</sup>

Although the Whig stated that the contest primarily centered on Bell and the Republican candidate, Abraham Lincoln of Illinois, the paper also expressed some kind words for Douglas. While the Whig emphasized that it found Douglas' squatter sovereignty views objectionable, the paper still preferred the "Little Giant" to the Black Republican or Breckinridge, the tool of "Disunionists." So if Fillmore's backers believed that he could not carry a state, the Whig firmly suggested that they switch to Douglas who at least was a "unionist."<sup>111</sup> Of course, the Whig also encouraged Douglas' backers to do the same for Fillmore.<sup>112</sup>

Towards the end of the campaign the Whig, worried about an increased secessionist feeling, stressed that the economic success of the North and South depended on continued unity because "harmony at home" was "essential to successful trade abroad."<sup>113</sup> If the election precipitated a civil war, Virginia and the other border states, cautioned the Whig, would face most of the bloody battles alone while the Gulf states remained secure a long way from the action.<sup>114</sup>

Republican victories in the early fall state elections of Indiana, Pennsylvania, and Ohio foretold the November balloting. Even though Lincoln polled only forty per cent of the popular votes, he gathered a total of 180 electoral votes to his opponents combined total of 123. While the Whig lamented the outcome, it did not fail to note that Bell carried not only Virginia but also Kentucky and Tennessee: if the nation was to avoid war, the Whig knew that the border states had to provide leadership in conciliating the sections.<sup>115</sup>

Immediately the Whig denied that the constitutionally proper election of Lincoln warranted secession, and in fact the paper disclaimed secession as a legal procedure; while the Whig as yet saw no justification for armed conflict it recognized, however, that people if oppressed could revolt. After blaming the Democratic Party's rupture for Lincoln's win, the Whig advised Virginians that the state "should at all times - and especially in critical times like these - be calm, deliberate and enlightened."<sup>116</sup> Before the "Cotton States" seceded they should ponder their course and remember that though they had suffered the border states had endured more; furthermore to secede prior to consulting other southern states amounted to coercion. The Whig also insisted that many of Lincoln's backers were not avid abolitionists and Congress, under Democratic control, could limit the new President.<sup>117</sup>

To illustrate further the need for moderation the Whig described just what secession and civil war would entail.<sup>118</sup> In order to maintain a standing army the Whig estimated that Virginia would have to pay an additional seven to eight million dollars in taxes and since the new Confederacy abhorred tariffs it would levy direct taxes on Virginia's slave property to raise revenue. After a long bloody period of anarchy and struggle the Whig predicted that as in France a "strong government"--a dictatorship-- would assume power and destroy free government. Surely, pleaded the Whig, Virginia deserved a better fate.<sup>119</sup>

Between Lincoln's election and inauguration, many peace plans surfaced and the Whig received almost all proposals favorably. But whatever occurred, the Whig warned, the federal government should not coerce the seceded states. If troops moved against any southern state, the Whig understood that all slave states would rush to the defense of their sister state. When Lincoln in his inaugural stated his intention to hold and occupy federal property, the Whig alerted the President that such action if carried out in South Carolina would mean civil war.<sup>120</sup>

In an unsuccessful attempt to quiet the crisis, John J. Crittenden of Kentucky, Henry Clay's successor in the Senate, proposed that the Congress initiate a constitutional amendment extending the Old Missouri Compromise

line to the Pacific. Territories and states below the line would receive Congressional protection for slavery.<sup>121</sup> Other attempts at compromise including the calling of a national convention in Washington also failed, but the Whig still retained its confidence that war was not inevitable.<sup>122</sup>

When Virginia's voters elected delegates to a state convention on February 4, unionists won a clear victory.<sup>123</sup> With most of the Gulf states already out of the Union, the Whig wrote that the burden of mediating the differences between the deep South and the North rested on Virginia. The convention opened in Richmond on February 13, but the delegates took no action until April when they defeated a motion 45 to 95 to submit an ordinance of secession to the voters in May.<sup>124</sup> Naively ignoring the growing tensions and approaching crisis in Charleston's harbor, the Whig in April 1861 still envisioned a peaceful reuniting of the nation.

## CHAPTER V FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup>Richmond Whig, October 6, 1829.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., July 22 and December 9, 1836; January 17, 1837.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., November 22, 1842.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., February 28, 1843.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., May 13, 1843.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., October 19, 1843.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., September 6, 1843; May 21, 1844.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., March 28, 1844.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., May 21, 1844.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., April 30, 1845; Ferrell, Diplomacy, 235-240.

<sup>12</sup>Sellers, Polk, II, 207-208, 215-216.

<sup>13</sup>Richmond Whig, June 17, 1845.

<sup>14</sup>Sellers, Polk, II, 357-397; Robert H. Ferrell, American Diplomacy, A History (Revised and Expanded Edition; New York: W. W. Norton and Company, Inc., 1969), 230-248. Polk's minister to Great Britain, Louis McLane, diligently worked to convince the American State Department of the need to compromise.

<sup>15</sup>Sellers, Polk, II, 213. Sellers argues that California had long been a goal of Polk. Another historian stressing the importance of trade in Polk's decision was Norman Graebner, Empire on the Pacific: A Study in American Continental Expansion (New York: Ronald Press Co., 1955).

<sup>16</sup>Richmond Whig, August 18, 1845.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., May 14, 1846; Sellers, Polk, II, 416-421.

<sup>18</sup>Richmond Whig, May 15, 1846.

<sup>19</sup>Ferrell, Diplomacy, 235-242.

<sup>20</sup>Richmond Whig, June 24, 1846.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid., June 10, 1846.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid., June 17, 1846. The Whig also cautioned its readers not to engage in "hero worship."

<sup>23</sup>Ibid., June 30, September 14, October 8 and December 2, 1846. Concerned about the performance of volunteers in combat, the Whig questioned whether a month's training was enough to take a man from the "plough" and make a soldier of him.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid., October 5, 1846; Dwight L. Clark, Stephen Watts Kearney, Soldier of the West (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1961), 288. On March 1, 1847, Brigadier General Stephen W. Kearney proclaimed, as Governor and Commander of the Tenth Military District, that the United States possessed California and that all allegiance to the Mexican government was dissolved.

<sup>25</sup>Richmond Whig, October 8 and October 12, 1846. For other accounts of the war's origins see Justin H. Smith, The War with Mexico (2 vols.; New York: The Macmillan Company, 1919); Albert K. Weinberg, Manifest Destiny and Mission in American History (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1963); Normal A. Graebner, Empire on the Pacific: A Study in American Expansion (New York: Ronald Press Company, 1955).

<sup>26</sup>Allan Nevins, Ordeal of the Union (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1947), I, 9-12.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid.

<sup>28</sup>Richmond Whig, February 24, 1847.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid., April 16, 1847.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid., February 24, 1847.

<sup>31</sup>Ibid., May 29 and September 1, 1847. The Whig believed that no candidate who opposed the Wilmot Proviso could win the presidency.

<sup>32</sup>Ibid., October 23 and October 28, 1847.

<sup>33</sup>Nevins, Ordeal, I, 18-21.

<sup>34</sup>Richmond Whig, June 9, 1848.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid., May 18, 1849.

<sup>36</sup>Congressional Globe, 31st Cong., 1st Sess., 1849, XIX, Part I, 70-72; Nevins, Ordeal, I, 256.

<sup>37</sup>Richmond Whig, January 29 and March 22, 1850.

<sup>38</sup>Ibid., January 26, 1850. Critics of the administration accused Taylor of sending Thomas Butler King (a Georgia Whig) to California to force the people to apply for statehood. He did go and encourage state organization but there was little evidence of coercion.

<sup>39</sup>Ibid., January 29, 1850; Nevins, Ordeal, I, 307-320, 265-266. In a Senate speech in January Clay recommended (1) admittance of California with her free constitution, (2) establishment of territorial governments in land taken from Mexico without any condition or restriction on slavery, (3) that Texas' western boundary exclude all of New Mexico, (4) that the national government assume the debts of Texas contracted prior to annexation, (5) prohibition of the slave trade in Washington, D.C., (6) protection of slavery in Washington as long as Virginia and Maryland desired it, (7) a more effective fugitive slave act, and (8) that Congress formally declare that it has no power to interfere with interstate slave trade. Congressional Globe, 31st Cong., 1st Sess., 1850, XIX, Part I, 244-246.

<sup>40</sup>Nevins, Ordeal, I, 239-256.

<sup>41</sup>Ibid., 280-282.

<sup>42</sup>Richmond Whig, March 7, 1850.

<sup>43</sup>Ibid., March 12, 1850.

<sup>44</sup>Nevins, Ordeal, I, 288-289.

<sup>45</sup>Richmond Whig, March 7, 1850.

<sup>46</sup>Ibid., January 15 and January 22, 1850.

<sup>47</sup>Ibid., April 9, 1850.

<sup>48</sup>Nevins, Ordeal, I, 316-317.

<sup>49</sup>Ibid., 311-312; Congressional Globe, 31st Cong., 1st Sess., 1850, XIX, Part I, 418 and 780.

<sup>50</sup>Richmond Whig, May 28 and May 31, 1850.

<sup>51</sup>Nevins, Ordeal, I, 324-344.

<sup>52</sup>Richmond Whig, August 2, 1850.

<sup>53</sup>Nevins, Ordeal, I, 340-342; Arthur Charles Cole, The Whig Party in the South (Washington: American Historical Society, 1913), 174-211. Cole stressed the importance of the Whigs while Holmon Hamilton, Prologue to Conflict (Kentucky: University of Kentucky Press, 1964) emphasized the role of Douglas and the Democrats in securing the compromise.

<sup>54</sup>Richmond Whig, September 10, 1850.

<sup>55</sup>Ibid., September 11, September 23 and September 27, 1850.

<sup>56</sup>Ibid., March 17 and March 18, 1851.

<sup>57</sup>Ibid., November 22, 1850.

<sup>58</sup>Ibid., July 16, 1851.

<sup>59</sup>Ibid., October 4, 1850.

<sup>60</sup>Ibid., July 26, 1851.

<sup>61</sup>Ferrell, Diplomacy, 252-256.

<sup>62</sup>Richmond Whig, April 29 and May 30, 1851; August 21, 1849. While the Whig accepted the idea that Cuba would one day belong to the United States, the paper wanted the process to be an "honorable and pacific means."

<sup>63</sup>Ibid., May 5, 1853.

<sup>64</sup>Ibid., August 11 and August 12, 1853.

<sup>65</sup>Ferrell, Diplomacy, 253-256.

<sup>66</sup>Richmond Whig, March 1 and May 3, 1853.

<sup>67</sup>Ibid., March 1, 1853.

<sup>68</sup>Ibid., January 7 and January 10, 1854; Nevins, Ordeal, II, 94-100. Senator Stephen Douglas had purposely made the original language vague.



<sup>69</sup>Nevins, Ordeal, II, 95-98.

<sup>70</sup>Ibid., 301-346; Richmond Whig, February 21, 1854. The Whig denied that the Missouri Compromise was a southern measure, rather the paper contended the passage depended on northern votes and only a minority of southern congressmen.

<sup>71</sup>Richmond Whig, February 10, 1854.

<sup>72</sup>Ibid., February 11 and February 14, 1854.

<sup>73</sup>Ibid., March 15, March 20 and March 21, 1854. When some southerners questioned Douglas' sincerity, the Whig defended him.

<sup>74</sup>Nevins, Ordeal, II, 109-119.

<sup>75</sup>Richmond Whig, March 21, 1854.

<sup>76</sup>Ibid., May 25 and June 9, 1854.

<sup>77</sup>Ibid., January 1, 1857.

<sup>78</sup>Ibid., January 23, 1857.

<sup>79</sup>Ibid., March 16, 1857. See Franklin Nichols, The Disruption of American Democracy (First Collier Books Edition; New York: Collier Books, 1962), 104-138. His thesis stressed the importance of the break up of the last remaining national party in 1860, the Democratic Party.

<sup>80</sup>Nichols, Disruption, 107. Frederick P. Stanton of Maryland was named Secretary of the territory and preceded Walker to the territory in an unsuccessful attempt to settle problems before Walker came.

<sup>81</sup>Nichols, Disruption, 119-120.

<sup>82</sup>Richmond Whig, March 16, May 5, June 12, July 13, July 14, July 27, July 28 and August 4, 1857.

<sup>83</sup>Ibid., January 1, 1858; December 25, 1857.

<sup>84</sup>Ibid., January 29, 1858.

<sup>85</sup>Ibid., March 9, 1858.

<sup>86</sup>Nichols, Disruption, 171-180.

<sup>87</sup>Richmond Whig, April 30, May 1, May 4 and August 13, 1858. When Kansas voters rejected the constitution the Whig lamented that now the territory had to wait until 93,000 people populated the area before they could obtain statehood.

<sup>88</sup>Philip Morrison Rice, "The Know-Nothing Party in Virginia, 1854-1856," The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography, LV (1947), 61-75; Stanwood, Presidential Elections, 56.

<sup>89</sup>Richmond Whig, February 21 and February 28, 1851; June 8, 1852.

<sup>90</sup>Ibid., March 4, April 25 and July 1, 1851; September 18 and September 20, 1852.

<sup>91</sup>Ibid., February 27, 1852.

<sup>92</sup>Stanwood, Presidential Elections; Nevins, Ordeal, I, 187; James G. Randall and David Donald, The Civil War and Reconstruction (Second edition; Boston: D. C. Heath and Company, 1961), 90-91.

<sup>93</sup>Richmond Whig, June 9, June 11 and June 17, 1852.

<sup>94</sup>Stanwood, Presidential Elections, 250-251.

<sup>95</sup>Richmond Whig, June 22 and June 25, 1852.

<sup>96</sup>Ibid., July 3, July 5, July 23, September 25 and September 28, 1852. To picture Pierce as unsafe on slavery the Whig printed an old speech of Pierce's in which he bitterly attacked slavery.

<sup>97</sup>Ibid., December 5, 1852; Stanwood, Presidential Elections, 257.

<sup>98</sup>Ibid., March 9 and June 19, 1855.

<sup>99</sup>Stanwood, Presidential Elections, 261-263.

<sup>100</sup>Ibid.

<sup>101</sup>Richmond Whig, June 23 and July 15, 1856.

<sup>102</sup>Stanwood, Presidential Elections, 276.

<sup>103</sup>Richmond Whig, January 23, 1857.

<sup>104</sup>Ibid., June 28, 1859.

1859. <sup>105</sup>Ibid., June 28, September 20 and October 18,

<sup>106</sup>Ibid., October 18, 1859.

<sup>107</sup>Ibid., January 13, 1860.

1860. <sup>108</sup>Ibid., January 31, February 3 and March 9,

<sup>109</sup>Nichols, Disruption, 109.

<sup>110</sup>Stanwood, Presidential Elections, 288-290;  
Richmond Whig, January 22, 1860.

<sup>111</sup>Richmond Whig, July 13, 1860.

<sup>112</sup>Ibid., July 24, 1860. In particular the Whig wanted Douglas' voters to support Fillmore in Maryland, Delaware, Virginia, North Carolina, Georgia, Tennessee, Kentucky, Missouri, Alabama, Mississippi, Florida and Louisiana.

<sup>113</sup>Ibid., September 13, 1860.

<sup>114</sup>Ibid., September 27 and October 5, 1860. When William Yancey traveled north to campaign, the Whig accused him of wanting only to further divide the Democrats to insure Lincoln's victory. After a Republican victory, Yancey, contended the Whig, expected the South to secede.

<sup>115</sup>Ibid., November 9, 1860; Stanwood, Presidential Elections, 297. In Virginia the election gave John Bell 74,681; John Breckinridge 74,323; Stephen Douglas 16,290; and Lincoln 1,929 votes. Thus about 92,900 of the 167,123 votes cast supported unionist candidates.

<sup>116</sup>Ibid., November 9 and November 13, 1860.

<sup>117</sup>Ibid., December 13, 1860.

<sup>118</sup>Ibid., January 9, 1861. The Whig saw no hope of a peaceful secession.

1861. <sup>119</sup>Ibid., January 4, February 9 and February 19,

<sup>120</sup>Ibid., January 9, March 6 and March 14, 1861.

<sup>121</sup>Randall and Donald, Civil War, 150.

<sup>122</sup>Richmond Whig, January 19, January 29,  
February 15 and March 4, 1861.

<sup>123</sup>Ibid., February 8, 1861.

<sup>124</sup>Ibid., May 5, 1861.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE WAR YEARS: ORGANIZATIONAL PROBLEMS

1861-1865

When Edmund Rufflin ignited the first shot fired at Fort Sumter in the early morning of April 12, he signaled an end to debate over secession. Southerners opposed to disruption of the Union had to choose immediately between shifting position or leaving the Confederacy. Most newspaper editors chose enthusiastically to embrace secession.<sup>1</sup> A few, including Robert Ridgway of the Whig and Parson William G. Brownlow of Knoxville, Tennessee still refused to accommodate disunionists, but neither man retained his post for long. Ridgway lost his job to Alexander Moseley, the old stand-by editor of the Whig, while Brownlow literally took to the hills--the Smoky Mountains of East Tennessee. The Parson, from the sanctuary of Union-held territory, directed editorials at his fire-eating adversaries, but Ridgway remained out of work until the war ended.<sup>2</sup>

Although the Whig enjoyed wide circulation in the state and in the Richmond area, it faced stiff competition from four other dailies. The Richmond Examiner, edited

by John Moncure Daniel, a skilled but erratic man, provided support for the Whig's criticisms of the Confederate government. Edward Pollard, Daniel's assistant, took particular delight in blaming Jefferson Davis for all of the South's woes.<sup>3</sup>

The other local papers, the Enquirer and the Sentinel, supported and defended the Davis administration. The former paper, established by Thomas Ritchie in 1804, initially allowed government officials such as J. B. Jones, a war clerk, to write editorials explaining government policy.<sup>4</sup> The Sentinel, formed in 1863 by Richard M. Smith of Alexandria, took up the administration's cause when the Enquirer became disenchanted. Smith had worked earlier on the Enquirer's editorial staff.<sup>5</sup>

A fifth paper, the Dispatch, provided the city with an independent view. Before the war the editorials directed by a triumvirate of James Cowardin, William H. Davis, and Hugh P. Pleasants (brother of John Hampden Pleasants), tried to steer clear of any party attachment. All three editors had formerly supported the Whig Party, but when that organization faded from the scene they decided to establish a paper modeled after the Baltimore Sun.<sup>6</sup>

Several of the area papers found their editors actively involved in the military action--Nathanial Tyler and O. Jennings Wise, the son of former Governor Henry

Wise, both took commands at the start of the war. Young Wise died in 1862 on Roanoke Island, but Tyler returned to his post in December, 1862. Both Tyler and Wise provided dispatches to the Enquirer on military activities.<sup>7</sup>

For a short time Daniel of the Examiner served on A. P. Hill's staff and tried to build up his commander at the expense of General James Longstreet. In the summer of 1862 Daniel's efforts irritated Longstreet and started an enduring feud. Considering the egos of the Richmond editors, it is no wonder that serious difficulties arose between the military and the press. But in the early stages of the war the editors and most people tried to maintain a united front.<sup>8</sup>

Richmond responded emotionally to the news of Sumter with crowds rushing into the city's street shouting support for the Confederacy while speakers extolled the virtues of a southern nation. The former editor of the Southern Monitor warned that the North had great power, but he concluded that the South had no choice but to secede. Hundreds of citizens paraded to Capitol Square and appropriated state cannons to boom approval of fire-eating speeches.<sup>9</sup> With little result Governor John Letcher attempted to cool Richmond's enthusiasm by reminding the people that Virginia remained in the Union and had refused to recognize the Confederacy.<sup>10</sup>

On April 17 after Lincoln had issued his call for seventy-five thousand militia to put down the insurrection

in the South, Virginia's State Convention, in accord with popular pressure, voted for secession. Several times prior to Sumter the delegates had voted down secession resolutions, but events foreclosed further delay. Under new direction the Whig openly endorsed separation arguing erroneously that Lincoln had exceeded his constitutional powers when he called out the militia. That action, argued the Whig, was reserved for Congress.<sup>11</sup>

The Richmond paper saw one "imperative policy" available to the state--"instant, thorough and cordial union, with the whole South." Under no illusion of a peaceful separation, the Whig warned its readers that they must prepare to meet the onslaught of a huge federal army. Already sensing the magnitude of the conflict facing the South, the paper entreated all able-bodied men to arm for a conflict against an army of two hundred thousand soldiers motivated by a "diabolical hatred."<sup>12</sup>

To emphasize a radical shift in policies, the Whig expressed full support and confidence in its former political opponent, Governor John Letcher. In April some voices suggested that Virginia's executive resign to make room for a man with experience in military affairs. The Whig editorialized that the crisis required all citizens to unite behind the Governor; since no one on the horizon had outstanding abilities for the job, the paper concluded that a change in the State House would entail additional



problems for an already complex situation.<sup>13</sup> The Whig sought some continuity in the shifting sands of Virginia's politics.

Fortunately for Jefferson Davis, Letcher remained in office. Generally the two politicians worked well together and, unlike many other southern leaders, avoided disruptive clashes. Since Richmond was the Confederate capitol and seemed destined to be the center of military as well as civil activity, a good working relationship appeared essential for the welfare of the Old Dominion and the Confederacy.

Throughout the conflict, the Whig blamed the North for the war and warned that the stakes were high. When Lincoln revealed his plan of supplying Sumter, the President made "a substantial declaration of war" which, the paper believed, left the South with the choice of resisting or submitting. The sole blame rested on Lincoln and the Republicans who tried to impose their "notions upon others."<sup>14</sup> Agreeing with southern nationalists like William Yancey and J. D. B. DeBow, the Whig contended that the North-South confrontation was not between members of the same political community, but one of distinct sections possessing inimical habits, manners, and morals. To justify the future hardships of the South, the Whig identified what was at stake: the extermination of "Anglo-Saxon freedom," and "intolerable military

despotism." During the first winter of the War, the paper declared that "either slavery or the Union must be destroyed. Truly this is the logic of the controversy." Seward deluded some by talking of peace, but he prepared for a "war of gigantic proportions" which belied his public statements; the Whig advised the border states that they had to choose between slavery or union and surmised incorrectly that all but Delaware preferred slavery.<sup>15</sup>

Denying that slavery was the cause of disunion, the paper contended that if slavery had not existed, "fanaticism would have seized upon something else": the North was determined to "impose its . . . notions upon others."<sup>16</sup> After the fall of Atlanta and just prior to Savannah's surrender, the Whig reminded its readers that the North sought to rule the South and to impose "notions and theories" which only benefitted the Republicans.<sup>17</sup>

Although disillusioned and disappointed over military and diplomatic failures, the editor defended throughout the war the South's decision to seek independence.<sup>18</sup> The Whig considered it an "injustice" to apply the word "rebellion" to secession because the North maneuvered to provoke the South to fire the initial blast; hence the blame rested on Lincoln and Major Anderson at Sumter. The Republicans desired to rule the South to serve their own interest, leaving no alternative except assistance.<sup>19</sup>

Resistance required the creation and organization of a new national government and, by the time Virginia joined the Confederacy, the Montgomery delegates had formed the essential structure of a provisional executive, congress, and constitution. But with the secession of the Upper South, the location of the capitol became an unsettled issue. Davis favored a move to Richmond, believing that that city would provide the administration with a good location from which to direct military affairs, and that such a move would boost the morale of the border states.<sup>20</sup> The Whig agreed, noting that shifting the capitol to an exposed border region would impress Europeans with the Confederacy's determination to retain all of the seceded states permanently.<sup>21</sup>

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After Virginia joined the Confederacy, the Whig never hesitated to express its opinions whether they were critical or encouraging. State and national policies as well as most public officials came under the critical eye of the paper's editorials which generally revealed a suspicion of politicians.

Without success the Richmond paper sought major revisions in Virginia's constitution. Disliking Virginia's recent adoption of "universal suffrage" and direct election of most state officials, the Whig labeled them "emanations from the free labor, free schools, free love . . .

of the Yankees of New England." He called the innovations "repugnant to our institutions" and urged the Virginia State Convention to change the state's constitution. Besides limiting suffrage, the Whig recommended appointment of the Judiciary by the Governor with consent of the Senate, annual instead of biennial sessions of the General Assembly, and an end to the direct election of the Governor.<sup>22</sup>

Although a state convention convened in November of 1861 to consider constitutional revisions, few innovations resulted. Retention of the popular election of Governor disgusted the Whig which commented that the delegates had lacked "backbone"; consequently the Whig foresaw "traitors of the North-West" controlling the state elections. Some changes, however, resulted including a limit on suffrage to those who paid taxes and the election of magistrates for twelve year terms, one-quarter to be elected every three years. While the Whig found solace in some of the actions, it disapproved of the overall philosophy of popular government.<sup>23</sup>

Despite the Whig's disappointment with the state constitution, the paper still retained bright expectations for Virginia and the new confederacy. The possession of the "best social system," a good climate and fertile soil, production of goods needed by the world, and two thousand miles of coast promised the South independence and

prosperity. If war came, the Whig assured its readers that the Confederacy enjoyed a superior military position by virtue of interior lines, high morale, and the certainty of aid from foreign countries.<sup>24</sup>

For the first time editors of the Richmond Whig gave support to the "King Cotton" theory. The South, explained the paper, produced eighty per cent of the cotton used in European textiles; if the South cut off Europe's supply of cotton, England and France faced economic ruin and social revolution. "Hundreds of thousands" of unemployed textile workers consumed by "Irrepressible fury" assured the South of aid and commercial agreements with foreign nations to complete secession successfully.<sup>25</sup>

Unlike the provisional congress and most southerners, the Whig opposed the November elections to replace the temporary government. The Whig preferred "to let well enough alone." Why distract the nation from the war effort and create divisions in political ranks? A delay until November 1862 seemed reasonable. The Whig actually desired the postponement of all "agitating questions . . . until this war was ended."<sup>26</sup>

Subsequent political elections and debates made the Whig's warning prophetic. The Richmond Examiner criticized Vice-President Alexander H. Stephens and other former Whig politicians for supporting the "old Union" too long. In defending Stephens, the Whig recalled that many

prominent southerners sought compromise up to April 1861; thus few politicians could meet the Examiner's loyalty test. The Whig justifiably feared that future elections promised more division and disruption.<sup>27</sup>

Once the fall campaign started, the Whig leveled serious criticism at the executive branch. Because the confederate constitution gave the president broad powers, the Whig complained that the South in its haste to establish a government had created an "Elective King." Even though the Whig expressed confidence in Davis' respect for law, the paper warned of the possibility that someday another man could misuse the extensive powers given the executive. Rather than a powerful president the Whig preferred "a mere agency" without power or patronage. To avoid disruptive campaigns for the office, the Whig suggested that the oldest Senator function for two years as the nation's executive. If nothing was done, the Whig warned that just as the United States had in 1860 elected a tyrant determined to use his office to suppress his critics, the South could in the future without alterations in its constitutions produce a President who would also deny states their rights.<sup>28</sup>

Davis soon discovered that his critics objected to more than the constitution. By late 1861, the Confederate Congress and press were attacking the President, his military strategy, and his cabinet. Few comments

challenged Davis personally, but questions about his diplomacy, finances, and selection of leaders came daily.

The Whig agreed with the Charleston Mercury that some of Davis' agents were not up to meeting "the crisis." While both papers had confidence in the President's "sagacity and firmness" they believed that the men responsible for the "subsistence and health of armies" neglected their duties.<sup>29</sup> None of the administrators of the Commissary and Quartermaster Bureaus escaped criticism. In mid-summer of 1861 Tennessee's Congressman Henry Foote began accusing Lucius B. Northrop, Commissary General, of neglecting his duties and trying to make soldiers vegetarians. Foote and the Whig blamed the Commissary Department for the South's failure to follow up the victory at first Manassass.<sup>30</sup>

Northrop proved to be a poor choice. Crippled most of his life, the South Carolinian lacked the tact and common sense needed to deal with the problems of provisioning an army. While Northrop's primary qualification was his long friendship with Jefferson Davis, the relationship failed to shield the Commissary General from continuous attack.<sup>31</sup> The Whig found it incredible that an agricultural region lacked the ability to feed its own population. Later in the war when the Confederacy had to impress private property to meet the army's needs, the Whig asked why the Bureau neglected to secure its needs

from the Northern Neck and the farms in Virginia below the mountains? The paper thought that the resources existed, but mismanagement prevented proper development. By the spring of 1865 the South had adopted the hopeless policy of getting each family in Virginia and North Carolina to contribute supplies to support one soldier.<sup>32</sup>

Understanding that an army's fighting capabilities and morale depended on the supplies available to the soldiers, the Whig frustrated and discouraged, wrote that while money provided the sinews of war, "food, clothing, and transportation must be its legs, back, and belly." Unless the government delivered the "indispensables," the paper correctly reasoned that the South's strategy and tactics could not produce a victory. The press complained that the South lacked the organization essential to collect war materials located in "different localities."

The Whig, never without a solution to Davis' problems, argued that the supply departments needed administrators familiar with the country's geography, production, and capacity for production. From an ignorance of resources, complained the Whig, some counties were drained of all horses and mules while some regions enjoyed a surplus. And obviously, said the editor, the territory about to be taken over by the enemy should be cleared of resources. Too often supply agents riding around on fine horses impressed a "plough beast" [sic] capable of



supporting an entire family. One plan the Whig favored involved dividing the South into districts and taking inventories to secure needed materials from the sources best able to afford them.<sup>33</sup>

Industry and their locations became critical as the war effort expanded. The editor recommended that workshops be placed in the interior at Danville, Atlanta, Tuscaloosa, and Lynchburg. These workshops along with a system of short railroads might assure the South of an efficient supply organization. Under such a plan the loss of New Orleans and any future coastal area would be less staggering if interior facilities provisioned the armies; however, throughout the war the problem of production and distribution plagued the confederates.<sup>34</sup>

During McClellan's Peninsula Campaign in 1862, the Whig wrote about desperate shortages of munitions and clothing: stricter economy seemed absolutely necessary. The Confederate retreat from Manassas resulted in losses of materials difficult to replace; thus with conscription destined to enlarge the armies and their needs, the Whig urged new efforts by officers and men to conserve equipment.<sup>35</sup>

Although disconcerted about officialdom's incapacities, Richmonders tried to meet the supply crisis by collecting blankets, clothing, and spare food to send to local units in combat. Unfortunately the inadequate

system of transportation delayed delivery so long that the food spoiled. In spite of these difficulties the capitol city continued its attempts to supply husbands and sons by cutting up rugs and drapes to make needed blankets.<sup>36</sup> Aware of the local concerns, the paper charged Davis and his young "able-bodied" government clerks with roasting their feet before fires while the soldiers suffered through the winter with no blankets or shoes. The Whig demanded that the soldiers and their families receive their clothing and food before any other segment of the population.<sup>37</sup>

During the early stages of the war, the Whig preferred to blame the Secretary of War, not Davis, for the southern army's poor condition. Leroy Walker, the first Secretary of War, lacked the organizational ability of a good administrator and resigned under fire in the fall of 1861, leaving his department in chaos. But part of the trouble, the Whig realized, also rested with the President who refused to give enough freedom and responsibilities to any man running the War Department.<sup>38</sup> For a successor to Walker the Whig suggested that both R. E. Lee and General Leonidas Polk possessed the qualifications that Walker lacked. The first Secretary failed to be "decisive," spent too much time on "petty matters," and ignored the "great ones."<sup>39</sup>

Judah P. Benjamin became the temporary Secretary of War in 1861 after Walker left, but George W. Randolph

of Virginia assumed the permanent post in the spring of 1862. The appointment surprised and satisfied the Whig, but criticism of the department's policies continued throughout the war.

Randolph unexpectedly resigned in November 1862 over a quarrel with Davis; even though the Whig had respected Randolph, it eagerly suggested that the Secretary's departure presented Davis with a good opportunity to rearrange his whole cabinet which few in the South accepted as the best possible.<sup>40</sup> By late 1862 and early 1863 no cabinet member had escaped the hostile press. Reagan's delapidated postal system brought deserved barbs to him and Memminger's financial policies also drew unfavorable editorials. Stephen R. Mallory, Secretary of the Navy, who faced the difficult task of building a southern navy, seldom got much support from the Whig. Because every officer Mallory selected to command a confederate ship failed to do his job, the paper labeled the Floridian "unlucky" and stressed its point by listing the ships lost to the North: the Merrimac, Louisiana, Arkansas, Queen of the West, Indianola, and Diana. Davis had picked, said the editor, "a cabinet of dummies" to combat Lincoln who filled his cabinet with able men.<sup>41</sup>

As southern disappointments multiplied the Whig leveled most of its criticism at Davis. Because of the President the South, said the Whig, had neglected to

secure arms, ammunition, and steel-plated steamers from Europe.<sup>42</sup> When Davis recommended cutting government expenditures, the Whig countered by suggesting that Davis needed to spend more funds for protection against northern raids.<sup>43</sup> Under Davis' defensive policy, the Whig contended that morale plummeted because southern soldiers spent too much time digging ditches rather than attacking enemy units. And after "ten months of do-nothing" tactics, the Confederacy had lost Maryland, Kentucky, Missouri, half of Virginia, and the Mississippi Valley: "this defensive policy is humbug."<sup>44</sup>

Unaware of the South's overall weakness the press recklessly counseled Davis to initiate a southern offensive. "A slave-holding community . . . is most powerful for offensive war . . . but for defensive war, it is the weakest. . . ."<sup>45</sup> While the whites go on the attack slaves carry on needed activities, but, cautioned the Whig, when the battle erupts within slave territory the "peculiar institution" breaks down.<sup>46</sup>

When disappointment and frustration increased further southerners searched for scapegoats and usually found them. "Yankees and Jews" in the administration provided the Whig with convenient targets. Until Randolph became Secretary of War all important cabinet positions "were held by Yankees or Jews. The Secretary of War, himself, was a foreigner and a Jew."<sup>47</sup> The Whig

revealed that the Secretary of the Navy came from the West Indies of Yankee parents, the luckless Quartermaster General had the double handicap of being from Pennsylvania and being a Jew, while the Commissary General came from New England. Believing that the "great struggle of the Southern people" required "true Southerners," the editor called for a new cabinet.<sup>48</sup>

Davis' administration even received the blame for some of Richmond's social ills. With the increase of population in Richmond during the war, the city became necessarily, said the Whig, a haven for thieves. Congressmen seeking rooms made the Capitol a "boarding house" and woefully adulterated the "pure society of Richmond."<sup>50</sup>

With the arrival of discouraging military news, the Whig offered explanations by enumerating the President's mistakes. Davis neglected (1) to activate privateers early enough, (2) to obstruct rivers to prevent the northern navy from using them as avenues of attack, (3) to "retaliate in kind" on the northern cities, (4) to appoint any one but favorites and young untried men to important jobs, and (5) to use diplomacy to divide the South's enemies.<sup>15</sup> In a letter to W. M. Brooks, a Circuit Judge who criticized Davis, the Chief Executive tried to explain his policies. Davis stated that the lack of supplies and transportation forced the South to adopt a defensive policy, and that those who called for offensive



action failed to appreciate the South's limited supply of men and materials and the enormous expense of such a policy.<sup>52</sup>

Towards the end of the war, when Davis and Congress were exchanging criticisms daily, the Whig sided with Congressional critics. Davis became "the sublime military genius," blamed for sacrificing thousands of troops in Vicksburg and about to do the same in Savannah.<sup>53</sup> While the paper believed that "the cause has been imperiled" by a series of blunders by the administration or its immediate agents, it also contended that the legislature only wanted to help the President, not humiliate him.<sup>54</sup> The Whig said that he had no right to complain about Congress who placed "the whole war-making power of the country at the disposal of the Executive."<sup>55</sup> The paper editorialized that Davis had never suggested that the South lacked enough resources to win the war; therefore the paper argued that the Confederacy's failure stemmed from the President's inability to organize and direct the resources given him by the country and Congress.<sup>56</sup>

As the Whig saw it, the Confederacy "promoted failures, the incapable and unlucky," rather than following the precedent of the French who cut off the heads of generals for losing battles.<sup>57</sup> Yet when the President took firm measures to strengthen the South's war effort Davis met stiff resistance from the Whig and other newspaper critics.





## CHAPTER VI FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup>Dwight L. Dumond (ed.), Southern Editorials on Secession (New York: The Century Company, 1931), 415, 425, 492, 506, and 509. Other references to the impact of the assault on Fort Sumter include Hudson Strode, Jefferson Davis: Confederate President (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1959), II, 44-66; E. Merton Coulter, The Confederate States of America, 1861-1865 (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1950), 30-43; and Frank E. Vandiver, Their Tattered Flags (New York: A Harper's Magazine Press Book, 1970), 42-83.

<sup>2</sup>Richmond Whig, April 16, 1861; E. Merton Coulter, William G. Brownlow, Fighting Parson of the Southern Highlands (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1937), 134-160.

<sup>3</sup>J. Cutter Andrews, The South Reports the Civil War (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970), 28-30.

<sup>4</sup>J. B. Jones, A Rebel War Clerk's Diary (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott and Company, 1866), 52-53.

<sup>5</sup>Andrews, The South Reports, 33-34.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., 32-33.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., 26-27.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., 189-190. Daniel, through articles published in the Examiner, credited the victories at Frayser's Farm during the Seven Days Battle to Hill's direction of Longstreet's division. Longstreet objected to Daniel's articles and began feuding with Hill. Lee finally had to separate them by sending Hill to join Jackson's corps in the Shenandoah District.

<sup>9</sup>Alfred Hoyt Bill, The Beleaguered City, Richmond, 1861-1865 (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1946), 38-39 and Richmond Whig, April 16, 1861.

<sup>10</sup>Richmond Whig, April 19, 1861 and W. Asbury Christian, Richmond, Her Past and Present (Richmond: L. H. Jenkins, 1912), 221. On May 23 Richmond's voters endorsed secession with only four of 3,000 voters opposed to the action.

<sup>11</sup>Richmond Whig, June 20, 1861. Actually in the proclamation on April 15, Lincoln relied on the Militia Act of 1795 which empowered the President to call out the states' militia to suppress "combinations too powerful to be suppressed by the ordinary course of judicial proceedings." When Lincoln summoned the militia for 3 months he quoted from the 1795 law. But when Lincoln called for 42,000 volunteers to serve for 3 years and also directed that additional regiments be added to the regular army, he did extend his powers to a questionable limit. See United States Statutes of Lodge, I, 424; J. G. Randall, Lincoln the President, Springfield to Gettysburg (New York: Dodd, Mead and Company, 1945), 351-375; Alfred Kelly and Winfred A. Harbison, The American Constitution, Its Origins and Development (Fourth edition; New York: W. W. Norton and Company, Inc., 1970), 409-410 and 423-429. For a more detailed study see Edward S. Corwin, The President: Office and Powers (Third revised edition; New York: New York University Press, 1948).

<sup>12</sup>Richmond Whig, April 19 and April 22, 1861.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., June 20, 1861.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., April 29, 1861; January 6, 1862.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., January 6, 1862. The Whig's analysis resembled Lincoln's "House Divided" speech but with a different conclusion.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., August 13, 1862.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., September 28, 1864.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., October 30, 1863; September 28 and December 28, 1864.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid., October 30, 1863. For varying accounts of the events preceding Fort Sumter see Richard Current, Lincoln and the First Shot (New York: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1963), 15-208; Strode, Davis, II, 44-66; J. G. Randall, Lincoln the President, 351-375.

<sup>20</sup>Strode, Davis, II, 80-81.

<sup>21</sup>Richmond Whig, June 7, 1861.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid., June 22 and November 13, 1861.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid., November 19, November 22, December 2, December 14 and December 25, 1861; March 25, 1862. In the spring Virginia's voters ratified the proposed changes.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid., May 9 and May 31, 1861. The Whig was confident that most people in Virginia supported secession.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid., May 9, 1861.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid., August 26 and August 27, 1861.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid., September 18 and October 1, 1861.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid., September 20, August 9 and November 26, 1861; January 3, 1862.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid., August 28, 1861.

<sup>30</sup>Coulter, Confederate States, 250-251.

<sup>31</sup>Vandiver, Tattered Flags, 53.

<sup>32</sup>Richmond Whig, January 8, 1862; April 22, 1863. See also Coulter, Confederate States, 253.

<sup>33</sup>Richmond Whig, April 25, 1862.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid., April 28, 1862.

<sup>36</sup>Ibid., June 11, 1862.

<sup>37</sup>Bill, Beleaguered, 157; Richmond Whig, November 10, 1862.

<sup>38</sup>Richmond Whig, November 10, 1862.

<sup>39</sup>Vandiver, Tattered Flags, 28

<sup>40</sup>Richmond Whig, September 17 and September 21, 1861.

<sup>41</sup>Ibid., November 17 and November 23, 1863.

<sup>42</sup>Ibid., February 22, 1862; November 23, 1863.

<sup>43</sup>Ibid., February 22 and February 26, 1862.

<sup>44</sup>Ibid., February 26, March 18, March 29 and August 25, 1862.

<sup>45</sup>Ibid., August 25, 1862; May 30, 1863.

<sup>46</sup>Ibid.

<sup>47</sup>Ibid., September 2, 1862. The Secretary of War was Judah Benjamin who moved to the Department of State when Randolph became Secretary of War. Also see Bertram Wallace Corn, American Jewry and the Civil War (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1951), 176-188. Corn reported "scapegoatism in the Confederacy" centered on the Jews as "economic tensions, personal fears and frustrations, and mass passions required an outlet and a victim." Judah P. Benjamin, Secretary of State, received more abuse than most Jews at the hands of Congressmen like Henry S. Foote and Thomas R. R. Cobb. Ella Lonn's Foreigners in the Confederacy (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1940), 335-336 and 392-393. Lonn also found considerable anti-Jewish sentiment with most of the criticism leveled at Jewish businessmen; J. B. Jones, Diary, II, 78. The War Department clerk called Jews "extortionists" and he said they were ruining the Confederacy.

<sup>48</sup>Ibid., September 2, 1862.

<sup>49</sup>Ibid., April 30, 1863.

<sup>50</sup>Ibid.

<sup>51</sup>Ibid., May 30, 1863.

<sup>52</sup>Strode, Davis, II, 208-209.

<sup>53</sup>Richmond Whig, December 29, 1864.

<sup>54</sup>Ibid., January 26, 1865.

<sup>55</sup>Ibid., January 26 and March 20, 1865.

<sup>56</sup>Ibid.

<sup>57</sup>Ibid., February 3, 1865.

## CHAPTER VII

### STRAINS ON NATIONAL UNITY

Since the South had to organize a government and prepare for a long war which required the full cooperation of the politicians, public, and soldiers, the difficulties that Jefferson Davis faced when he assumed office were even greater than those of Lincoln.

Early in the war Davis asked Congress to increase the president's authority, but concentration of power in the central government frightened many southerners, and as the war dragged on editors commenced writing about the threat to individual liberty.<sup>1</sup> Rather than unifying behind the government when the conflict developed into an all-out struggle, politicians splintered into groups, each wishing to instruct Davis on strategy and, if necessary, to obstruct actions they opposed.

At first, the Whig accepted martial law and the suspension of the writ of habeas corpus, but soon it complained of restrictions applied to an individual's liberty. On March 3, 1862, Davis issued a proclamation placing the capitol city and a ten mile zone around Richmond under martial law. Since many spies circulated

through the city, the paper conceded the necessity of Davis' action and even defended the administration by saying that it delayed the proclamation until March because of its "tender regard" for a citizen's liberties.<sup>2</sup> But in August the paper reversed its position lamenting that "unreasonable searches and seizures" resulted from military domination of civilian authority.<sup>3</sup> Too often "it places the liberty of every man . . . at the mercy of an individual."<sup>4</sup>

Opposition to martial law centered on the men and methods used to suppress opposition to the Confederacy. Provost Marshal John H. Winder, whose indiscreet actions and selections of unqualified personnel invited criticism, was the target of attacks he might have avoided.

Unfortunately for Davis, Winder's "detectives" sometimes used excessive force to maintain law and order. After one local resident died unnecessarily at the hands of Winder's men, the Whig and the other papers complained that "a despotic . . . authority has been placed in the hands, not of our own trusted citizens, but of rude, harsh and unsympathizing strangers . . . of the very vilest character. . . ."<sup>5</sup>

The arrest of John Minor Botts, a former Whig congressman, provided ammunition for Davis' detractors. On the day that the President issued his Proclamation of Martial Law, Winder seized Botts for allegedly

organizing a group "hostile to the government."<sup>6</sup> When no evidence of wrong doing came to light, the administration released the prisoner; but before the hot-tempered and vociferous Richmonder won his freedom he dispatched letters to the newspapers ridiculing martial law and the men enforcing it. Finally on April 28, Adjutant General Cooper recommended Botts' liberation after he promised not to leave Richmond without the War Department's approval. By then Davis had new enemies aroused by Botts' graphic descriptions of his "solitary confinement . . . in a dirty, filthy Negro jail."<sup>7</sup>

While recognizing a need for wartime powers, the Whig contended that Davis sought too many prerogatives. "We cannot understand how [independence] can be promoted by giving to one man the authority to deprive all the rest of the glorious birth right of liberty."<sup>8</sup> George Washington never received such authority, said the paper, but Davis seemed to love power, to enjoy using it, and to be searching for more, for power equivalent to Lincoln's.<sup>9</sup> The Whig maintained that the Confederate constitution authorized the Congress to suspend the writ of habeas corpus but not to declare martial law. It conceded that limiting individual liberties in areas directly affected by invasion or rebellion was necessary, but opposed any suspension of the whole constitution, arguing that such a move was unnecessary and would create "a dictatorship of the executive."<sup>10</sup>

During the debates over martial law William L. Yancey, Governor Joseph E. Brown of Georgia, and other administration opponents received support from the press. The Whig thanked Yancey for warning the South about the "reckless legislation" which if unchecked would lead to "military despotism."<sup>11</sup> Critics maintained that a more permanent danger to liberty came from Davis' military despotism than from northern battalions. The Whig believed that invasion threatened only a temporary loss of freedom; on the other hand, no hope remained for a people who "voluntarily abdicate its freedom."<sup>12</sup>

As cases of unjustified imprisonment increased, editorials insisted on punishment of military officials who misused their authority. The Whig complained that too many citizens "perfectly loyal to the Confederacy" found themselves in jail alongside felons, and warned that before the end of the war "we shall be subjugated" if the South permits civil authority to wither.<sup>13</sup> Early in the war expansion of military power prompted the paper to editorialize against men with military commissions running for Congress. If military officers sought public office, the Whig feared that, to obtain votes, they might curry favor of their men and thus destroy discipline.<sup>14</sup>

Alexander Stephens provided prestige to the vocal critics of Davis and his suspension of the privilege of habeas corpus. Ignoring the Confederacy's military



problems and the real threat of eventual southern defeat, the Vice-President harped on the suspension of the writ of habeas corpus, calling it not only unwise and unconstitutional but "exceedingly dangerous to public liberty."<sup>15</sup> The Whig responded with praise by describing Stephens' speech as "distinguished," reflecting calmness, dignity, and ability.<sup>16</sup>

Even as General William T. Sherman marched through Georgia towards Atlanta, the Whig warned the people of tyranny under future southern presidents and urged all citizens who deplored despotism to reject demagogues and fallacious arguments that required people in time of public danger to "submit to domestic aggression."<sup>17</sup> The editor saw no antagonism between "the duties government owed to the people and the duties the people owed to the government."<sup>18</sup> The Richmond daily failed during the entire war to see the implications of a total war. Unrealistically the Whig maintained that a wartime emergency had no effect on an individual's liberty or a newspaper's right to criticize governmental decisions.

Although some southern papers, including the Richmond Examiner, protested bills forbidding editors to describe the movements or numbers of southern troops, the Whig acknowledged the wisdom of such legislation but cautioned the Congress not to go too far.<sup>19</sup> The Whig clearly intended not to give the executive or Congress

"indiscriminate support" or opposition:<sup>20</sup> "the true policy of the press . . . is to assail error and sustain right, wherever seen."<sup>21</sup> Certainly neither the Whig nor the Examiner ever gave "indiscriminate support" to Davis. As Davis gradually increased pressure on the editors and military commanders barred reporters, the Whig's anxiety for freedom of the press increased.

While Davis provided the press with much of its trouble, most field commanders failed to cooperate with newspapers. Joseph E. Johnston, R. E. Lee, and Stonewall Jackson complained about news helpful to the enemy appearing in southern papers;<sup>22</sup> consequently few reporters got the privilege of accompanying troops. The War Department irritated the press further by withholding military news until long after it appeared in northern accounts. When no hard news came to the southern editors, they filled the vacuum with guesses which often led first to false optimism and later to bitter disappointment and frustration.

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In the spring of 1862 the draft became the center of conversation. Jefferson Davis, a state rights advocate, startled the Congress in March by requesting legislation to establish conscription. Most of the President's generals, including R. E. Lee, endorsed the action. Recruitment officers, impeded by the realities of war,

found it impossible to fill the South's ranks. With military defeats in the West and McClellan threatening Richmond, the Congress and Davis realized that conscription offered the South its only hope of meeting the crisis.<sup>23</sup>

On April 16, 1862, the first conscription act passed Congress with little opposition. Except for many enumerated exemptions, the law called all white males between eighteen and thirty-five years of age into military service.<sup>24</sup> Even Davis' opponents, including Yancey, Rhett, Pollard, and Benjamin Hill supported the measure. In deference to state rights advocates, one provision placed conscripts in organizations from their respective states. Where possible state officers enrolled the draftees, but when needed the Confederate government provided conscript officers.

Newspapers perceived a manpower crisis late in 1861. Initially they favored bounties and furloughs to extend the tours of the twelve-month volunteers whose enlistment periods ended in April 1862.<sup>25</sup> But later the Whig said that "those entrusted with the conduct of the war" believed that conscription was a necessity, and "we therefore go for it."<sup>26</sup> Although the Whig disliked conscription in principle, the approach of enemy armies made quarreling unacceptable.

By the summer of 1862 the Whig fully supported the draft and encouraged the Conscription Bureau to

impress more men. Prodded by Lincoln's calls totaling six hundred thousand men, the Whig voiced no constitutional qualms about the draft. The paper advised Davis to disencumber the War Department of the "Yankees and Jews" who had prevented the South from properly using her resources.<sup>27</sup> Men entrusted with positions in the Conscription Bureau had to use discretion and wisdom which most of the present personnel lacked. To avoid the "loss of . . . credit among the people," the Whig suggested that only the best surgeons examine recruits.<sup>28</sup>

While the Whig had at first tried to ignore desertion, by August 1862 it was impossible; so to fill Lee's depleted ranks after Gettysburg, the Whig proposed that the women in the area organize "Recruiting Societies" whose job would entail calling on all the able-bodied men in the counties to return to Lee's army.<sup>29</sup> "The evil in question," said the Whig, "is a gigantic one. Some remedy must be speedily found."<sup>30</sup>

As the pressures for more men increased, many exemptions under the draft system came under close scrutiny, but when the government proposed dropping exemptions for newspaper employees, the press perceived a threat to freedom of the press. If Davis could draft editors or the employees of a paper, he could, contended the Whig, manipulate that medium of communication between the people and government.<sup>31</sup> The Whig's editor joined

his colleagues in August 1863 by cautioning the citizens against allowing Davis to control the press and thus destroy a safeguard essential for freedom.<sup>32</sup>

In the winter of 1863 and 1864 the Whig shifted positions and editorialized against general conscription. It now maintained that (1) men were needed for farming to provide food for the troops, (2) the draft, by itself, offered no sure way to victory, and (3) when a government possessed the power of general conscription there was too great a risk of dictatorial government.<sup>33</sup>

Convinced that the South could not match the North's mass army, man for man, the Whig stressed the desirability of a small, well-trained, well-fed, and fully equipped army.<sup>34</sup> Better the latter, thought the paper, than depending on a mass characterized by confusion. Rather than general conscription the editor preferred reducing exemptions to eliminate the soft jobs for the able-bodied in the service of the Provost Marshal and hospitals.<sup>35</sup>

In the last hours of the Confederacy the Whig opposed Davis' plan for ending all exemptions by substituting a system of details. The latter, said McDonald, promised only "corruption," "discontent" and more "desertion." The "fifteen Negro clause" also received the Whig's endorsement. The editor wrote that it provided for the army's manpower needs without crippling farm production.<sup>36</sup>

Opponents of change in the draft said that only Congress had the power to raise armies. They doubted Congress' power to delegate to the President the drafting and selection power. The Whig concurred that drafting men and putting them under military authority to do non-military jobs violated the Constitution. Although the military crisis demanded centralization, the Whig feared that such a development would lead straight to despotism and monarchy.<sup>37</sup>

Other papers such as the Richmond Examiner, Montgomery Advertiser, and the Charleston Mercury joined the Whig's opposition to the reduction of exemptions. The Alabama editor accused Davis of seeking "omnipotent military authority."<sup>38</sup> The Examiner and the Mercury openly talked of overthrowing Davis. Rather than junking the Conscription Bureau they wanted to shoot anyone who failed to comply with the draft.<sup>39</sup>

Unlike the Whig the Examiner had no fear of a dictator. But the old Democratic paper wanted to make sure the dictator was Lee not Davis. Lee opposed any such developments and prevented the Richmond paper from attaining its goals.<sup>40</sup> Voices like Daniel's calling for "a man on horseback" represented just what the Whig wanted to avoid.

\* \* \* \* \*

Another disquieting discussion revolved around the Confederacy's varied attempts to finance the war effort. The new Secretary of the Treasury, Christopher G. Memminger of South Carolina, faced the elusive task of formulating an effective economic policy. He, a hard money man, began with virtually no money in the Treasury and only limited experience in finances.<sup>41</sup> In Carolina's legislature he had chaired the state's Committee on Finance, but that experience proved to be of little use; consequently he found it necessary to lean heavily on advice from southern bankers.<sup>42</sup>

As one historian has pointed out, Memminger's devotion to hard money seemed ironic since the circumstances forced the Carolinian to scrap his old ideas.<sup>43</sup> Before the war ended the Treasury printed more than \$1,554,000,000 in paper currency, three times the amount of greenbacks printed by the North.<sup>44</sup>

When the Confederacy implemented a produce loan in May 1861 the Whig offered no objection. Common sense seemed to dictate that the government adopt a "supply in kind" policy whereby cotton farmers would place their crops at the disposal of the state and would receive in return state bonds or certificates of debt bearing interest.<sup>45</sup> Although the South had wealth, reasoned the Whig, the Confederacy lacked money, a medium of exchange to represent that wealth.<sup>46</sup> What the paper preferred was a

system that would enable Virginia's farmers to pay taxes or make loans in kind. Since the state's agricultural products were less durable than cotton, the Whig suggested that farmers supply armies in the vicinity in exchange for a certificate valid for credit on taxes.<sup>47</sup> The plan also offered the added advantage of cutting the transportation problems involved in supplying the troops.

During the summer of 1861, the Whig commenced to have doubts about the produce loan scheme and in October it recommended a new approach. The editor suggested that the South buy cotton and tobacco crops with treasury notes, a superior medium of exchange that would give the farmer more hope of defraying living expenses and paying taxes than the produce loan.<sup>48</sup> The Whig contended that notes based on cotton and tobacco offered as much intrinsic value as any paper money in the world.

Unfortunately for the South, Memminger disagreed with the Whig, calling the plan a "socialistic project."<sup>49</sup> Responding to the administration's refusal, the frustrated editor of the paper wrote that the nation's continued existence hung in the balance and that the "supremest law"--survival--required that Memminger suppress his constitutional scruples.<sup>50</sup>

In the fall of 1862 the Whig urged Congress to raise revenue through either increased taxes or "forced loans." The latter policy involved collecting an income



tax of twenty per cent and giving the taxpayer a Confederate bond bearing eight per cent interest. The Whig stressed that all southerners ought gladly to pay the taxes necessary to carry on the struggle.<sup>51</sup> Since the Constitution forbade direct taxation not apportioned according to the population, the Whig naively proposed that Congress apportion the tax according to aggregate income and population.<sup>52</sup>

In April the Congress enacted a comprehensive tax law which included some of the Whig's demands. The legislation provided an income and a license tax. Under the law, the Treasury collected an eight per cent duty on naval stores, salt, wines, tobacco, cotton, wool, flour, sugar, rice, and all other agricultural products; a license tax tapped bankers, brokers, auctioneers, liquor dealers, distillers, innkeepers, butchers, bakers, physicians, peddlars, lawyers, and photographers; and the graduated income tax ranged from one to fifteen per cent.<sup>53</sup> To avoid the constitutional prohibition of direct taxation on slaves and land unless apportioned according to population, the Congress levied a tax-in-kind. A farmer, after keeping enough food to care for his family, had to pay the Treasury one-tenth of his wheat, corn, oats, rye, buck-wheat or rice, sweet and Irish potatoes, cured hay and fodder, sugar, molasses, cotton, wool, tobacco, beans, peas, and bacon.<sup>54</sup>

The rising prices of the above items evoked debate over how to stop inflation. In March of 1863 the Virginia House of Delegates considered fixing prices, but the Whig opposed such laws as "unwholesome legislation," since the action ignored economic realities.<sup>55</sup> The paper explained that high prices resulted from an inflated currency, poor transportation, and a scarcity of articles everywhere. Fixed prices discouraged home manufacture, importation from abroad, and in the few districts enjoying surpluses encouraged a hoarding of goods. Interference with the prices, the editor grimly warned, meant "starvation."<sup>56</sup>

While the Confederacy's financial plight deteriorated, the Whig continually offered solutions. In October 1863 the Whig proposed that Davis ship enough cotton to Europe to raise forty to fifty million dollars in gold which would be used to retire worthless government issues and thereby restore confidence in Confederate finance: the paper promised that such a step would insure government needed funds.<sup>57</sup>

In August of 1863, the Whig began to question the Congress' ability to solve the problem of indebtedness, asserting that if the government failed to resolve to pay "every pecuniary obligation" each state might be forced to confront hard questions individually.<sup>58</sup> As one alternative it proposed dividing the Confederate debt among the states

according to population and allowing each state to decide for itself how it would raise the money to retire the debt. Virginia, for example, might employ forced loans of property to back the currency on a basis equal to that of specie.<sup>59</sup>

The Whig incorrectly heaped most of the blame for the South's financial condition on Secretary Memminger. Sarcastically the paper observed that "the currency question is just as far beyond the reach of his mind as the moon is beyond the reach of his hand."<sup>60</sup> The Whig accused the Secretary of manufacturing money in the belief that a flood of paper promises relieved the South from further efforts. Actually, Memminger tried to get the Congress to accept a more balanced program than the inflationary practice of printing currency, but the people's representatives refused.<sup>61</sup> The Whig criticized the Confederacy's failure to levy a tariff to make England and other European countries pay for their folly of prolonging the war; in addition, the paper urged the government to give more consideration to an export tax on cotton, tobacco, rice, and naval stores.<sup>62</sup>

Although other editors endorsed the Whig's demand for economic reform, Congress failed to stem inflation or to provide Davis with enough revenue to conduct the war.<sup>63</sup> Only about one per cent of the government's income came from taxes, which amounted to a paltry sum considering

the struggle's magnitude. The Confederacy's loan policies proved profitable for foreign financiers, but the government received little more than \$712,000,000 or only about thirty-nine per cent of its total revenues from the loans. The third source of revenue, paper money, provided an easy way to secure a circulating medium and pay outstanding debts, but Memminger called it the "most dangerous of all methods of raising money."<sup>64</sup> The Treasury Secretary, pressed by the inadequacy of other fiscal measures, resorted, in the end, to the very practice he had advised against.

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Since recruiting soldiers proved as difficult for Davis as securing needed revenue, by the end of the war many southerners believed that survival required the Confederacy to make better use of its free Negroes and slaves. Virginia's large Negro population offered a potential labor supply that the war leaders wanted to employ: in 1860 more than 490,000 slaves and 58,000 free Negroes lived in the state. They amounted to fifty-one per cent of the 1,048,000 white population.<sup>65</sup> For many free Negroes employment in transportation, mining, or industry offered nothing new: of Virginia's five thousand free Negro males between eighteen and forty-five years of age, over fifty per cent already worked in the aforementioned jobs.<sup>66</sup> But with fewer and fewer white males available for employment, the Negroes' role became more important.

Between February 1862 and February 1864 both the Virginia legislature and the Confederate Congress enacted regulations making Negroes, slave and free, liable for duty in the nation's defense. The first state legislation in February 1862 met little opposition, primarily because it involved no slaves. Under the law the courts registered all free Negroes eighteen to fifty years old; when the Adjutant General or the commanding officer of any post or department needed labor he went to a local court which determined the number of men required and then empowered a board of three justices to select workers from the registration list.<sup>67</sup> The laborer served for only 180 days and received pay, allowances, rations, and medical attention at the expense of the Confederacy.<sup>68</sup>

Later in the year the state developed a similar system to apply to the slaves. A census of all male slaves between eighteen and forty-five provided a list from which the Governor impressed slaves to work on entrenchments and other tasks when requested by President Davis.<sup>69</sup> The slave only worked for a term of sixty days and his owner received sixteen dollars a month compensation. A third law in March of 1863 exempted agricultural counties where slave impressment materially affected production. The monthly payment rose to twenty dollars and any soldier in the army owning one slave could refuse to hire out his one possession.<sup>70</sup> In March the Confederate

congress made the President, instead of the Governor, the chief enforcing agent in procuring Negro labor. Confederate officials received the prerogative to impress slaves for the war effort, but only in accordance with state regulations.<sup>71</sup>

Congress in February 1864 authorized a levy of twenty thousand slaves eighteen to fifty years old. The law required the use of free Negroes before slaves and only one-fifth of an owner's slaves were liable to the draft.<sup>72</sup> Although none of the jobs required firearms, Davis did favor arming slaves; but opposition to such a move forced him to delay his request for legislation authorizing it until later in the struggle.

In January 1864 General Joseph E. Johnston held a meeting of his corps and division commanders during which General Pat Cleburne advocated the arming of slaves.<sup>73</sup> Two officers immediately objected to the proposal and drew up a letter to Davis, signed by a number of their fellow-officers, stating that such a policy threatened to break down barriers between the races. Davis quickly replied that the matter could not be discussed in public and ordered Johnston to quiet the advocates of drafting black fighting men.

The Whig editorials generally favored the employment of Negroes for the war effort, but the paper never made an issue of it until after Gettysburg when the

manpower shortage made many people seriously contemplate the role of the Negro in Virginia and the Confederacy.

In August 1863 the Whig endorsed the Mobile Advertiser's advocacy of arming and placing Negroes in the army on a ratio of twenty Negroes to eighty whites in a company.<sup>75</sup>

While the Whig urged the government to resort to free Negroes before slaves, the paper also said that, if needed, the latter ought to be armed and sent into battle.

Once a slave shouldered a rifle, the Whig's editor doubted the possibility of returning that man to slavery; the paper warned southerners that they had the choice of losing twenty thousand slaves (the total number that Davis could draft) or freedom to the North.<sup>76</sup> In January of 1864 editorials revealed that some farmers disagreed with the Whig and resisted giving up slaves because they feared a loss of production and a detrimental effect on the morale of other slaves.<sup>77</sup>

The farmers provided only part of the opposition. Vocal politicians such as the fiery Texan Louis T. Wigfall and R. M. T. Hunter of Virginia condemned the measure while the Charleston Mercury labeled the scheme an abolitionist plot.<sup>78</sup> Opponents surmised that the arming of slaves tolled the end of slavery and the beginning of social equality and miscegenation.<sup>79</sup> When the Mercury accused Virginia of starting the movement to arm slaves, the Whig denied the allegation and contended that most

people in the Confederacy supported the plan which military leaders, including Lee, recommended to the President. Emancipation, said the Whig, was not the goal but merely the means to secure independence. While South Carolina might embrace the concept that "Southern independence and slavery must stand together or fall together,"<sup>80</sup> the Mercury erred in "applying it to the other states."<sup>81</sup>

In November of 1864 the Whig's only complaint concerning the Negro centered on the lax enforcement of the Congress' legislation authorizing induction of twenty thousand slaves.<sup>82</sup> When some critics complained that Negroes lacked the right to vote despite their service in the army, the Whig wrote that white males eighteen years old were also unfranchised.<sup>83</sup> As the South's position deteriorated, military commanders pleaded for armed Negroes in the ranks, and public sentiment finally endorsed full use of the Negro, but the conflict was almost over when Congress belatedly acted in March 1865; hence the war ended before southerners fully utilized the Negro's skill.

Although the Whig's editorials supported Davis' attempts to mobilize manpower, in other areas just as critical to the war effort the paper was harshly critical. During the administration's attempts to mold public opinion and enforce martial law, the Whig proved to be a thorn not an aid. The paper found it easy to ask others--



Secretary Memminger and the slaveowners, for example--to ignore their constitutional beliefs, but it stubbornly refused to accept any restrictions on the press. When the paper perceived governmental encroachment on its prerogatives it never acquiesced. The paper's privileges seemed more important than the survival of the Confederacy.

## CHAPTER VII FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup>Andrews, The South Reports, 506-541 and Coulter, Confederate States, 498-503.

<sup>2</sup>Richmond Whig, March 3, 1862.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., August 29, 1862.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., March 3, 1863.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., August 29, 1862.

<sup>6</sup>John Minor Botts, The Great Rebellion (New York: Harper and Brothers, Publishers, 1866), 281-287.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid.

<sup>8</sup>Richmond Whig, March 3, 1863.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., September 17, 1862.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., September 24, 1862.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., October 1 and October 4, 1861.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., April 14, 1864.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., August 13, 1864.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid., January 18, 1862.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid., August 29, 1863.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid.

<sup>22</sup>Andrews, The South Reports, 192-193 and 161-162.

<sup>23</sup>Strode, Davis, II, 204-226 and 237; Coulter, Confederate States, 313-316; and A. B. Moore, Conscription and Conflict in the Confederacy (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1924), 13-16. According to Moore, Davis wanted to draft (1) to correct the error of short-term enlistments, (2) to have uniformity and regularity in the militia system, and (3) to have a well balanced and coordinated military machine which independent state actions could not create.

<sup>24</sup>Exemptions under the April 16, 1862, draft law included Confederate and state officers and clerks allowed by law; mail carriers and ferrymen on post roads; pilots and persons engaged in the marine service; employees on railroads and telegraph operators; ministers; employees in mines and foundries; printers; presidents and professors in colleges; teachers of the deaf, dumb, and blind; superintendents, nurses and attendants in public hospitals and lunatic asylums; one druggist in each drug store; and superintendents and operatives in wool and cotton factories could be exempted at the discretion of the Secretary of War. These people were declared producers who were needed to keep in operation the agriculture, trade, mechanical arts, and educational process essential to wartime and a "healthy national life." Not until October 1862 were overseers of slaves exempted by Congress. See A. B. Moore, Conscription, 52-82.

<sup>25</sup>Richmond Whig, January 27, 1862.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid., April 1, 1862.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid., August 23 and September 4, 1862.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid., November 1, 1862.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid., August 10, 1863.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid.

<sup>31</sup>Moore, Conscription, 66-67.

<sup>32</sup>Richmond Whig, August 29, 1863.

<sup>33</sup>Ibid., December 28, 1863; January 4, 1864.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid., January 4, 1864.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid. The Whig vigorously opposed the positions taken by Senator A. G. Brown of Mississippi.

<sup>36</sup>Ibid., January 16 and January 19, 1865.

<sup>37</sup>Ibid.

<sup>38</sup>Quoted in A. B. Moore, Conscription, 340.

<sup>39</sup>Moore, Conscription, 336-337.

<sup>40</sup>Ibid.

<sup>41</sup>James G. Randall and David Donald, Civil War and Reconstruction (Boston: D. C. Heath and Company, 1961), 256-257. See also Vandiver, Tattered Flags, 26; Coulter, Confederate States, 120.

<sup>42</sup>Randall, Civil War, 256-257.

<sup>43</sup>Ibid.

<sup>44</sup>Ibid.

<sup>45</sup>Richmond Whig, June 5 and June 8, 1861.

<sup>46</sup>Ibid.

<sup>47</sup>Ibid., June 5, 1861.

<sup>48</sup>Ibid., October 10, 1861.

<sup>49</sup>Ibid., October 24, 1861.

<sup>50</sup>Ibid., October 10, 1861.

<sup>51</sup>Ibid., September 13 and September 26, 1862.

<sup>52</sup>Ibid., September 26, 1862.

<sup>53</sup>Randall, Civil War, 258.

<sup>54</sup>Ibid.

<sup>55</sup>Richmond Whig, March 4, 1863.

<sup>56</sup>Ibid.

<sup>57</sup>Ibid., October 28, 1863.

<sup>58</sup>Ibid., August 7, 1863.

<sup>59</sup>Ibid., October 28, 1863.

<sup>60</sup>Ibid., April 4, 1864.

<sup>61</sup>Coulter, Confederate States; Vandiver, Tattered Flags; and Strode, Jefferson Davis, II.

<sup>62</sup>Richmond Whig, August 10, 1863.

<sup>63</sup>Coulter, Confederate States, 149-182.

<sup>64</sup>Randall, Civil War, 256-264.

<sup>65</sup>James H. Brewster, The Confederate Negro: Virginia's Craftsman and Military Laborers, 1861-1865 (Durham: Duke University Press, 1969), 3-12. This is the best and most recent account of the role of the Negro in Virginia during the war.

<sup>66</sup>Ibid.

<sup>67</sup>Ibid., 7-12. See also Coulter, Confederate States, 257-268.

<sup>68</sup>Ibid.

<sup>69</sup>Ibid.

<sup>70</sup>Ibid.

<sup>71</sup>Ibid.

<sup>72</sup>Ibid.

<sup>73</sup>Vandiver, Tattered Flags, 260-264 and Coulter, Confederate States, 267. Both gave accounts of this event and identified supporters and opponents to the scheme.

<sup>74</sup>Vandiver, Tattered Flags, 261.

<sup>75</sup>Richmond Whig, August 8, 1863.

<sup>76</sup>Ibid.

<sup>77</sup>Ibid., January 20, 1864.

<sup>78</sup>Ibid., February 17, 1865. See also Coulter, Confederate States, 266-268 which identified opponents and advocates.

<sup>79</sup>Coulter, Confederate States, 266-268.

<sup>80</sup>Richmond Whig, February 17, 1865.

<sup>81</sup>Ibid.

<sup>82</sup>Ibid., November 26, 1864.

<sup>83</sup>Ibid., January 19, 1865.

## CHAPTER VIII

### TWISTING THE TRUTH

During the war, the Whig sought to maintain southern morale by putting the best possible light on such matters as southern diplomacy, military developments, and political happenings. To prop up the Confederacy's will to fight the Whig misrepresented facts and virtually ignored, as long as possible, any bad news. When the fighting started and the South rolled up "great" victories, the paper confidently prophesied swift and decisive foreign intervention in behalf of the Confederacy. But unrealistic appraisals of actual events changed nothing.

The Whig supported Davis' simple plan of implementing "King Cotton" diplomacy to gain European recognition and aid; its editorials said that England and France depended on the South's staple crop and that the European countries planned to take any steps necessary to maintain a supply of cotton.<sup>1</sup> England's quick recognition of the South as a belligerent seemed to support the paper's expectations. Southern diplomats were entertained in England and France (but never officially

accepted as representatives of a sovereign nation).

Although textile factories closed and left thousands unemployed, England refused to recognize the Confederate States.

Why did "King Cotton" fail? For many years the British had led the abolitionist movement; accordingly the country sought to end its dependency on a people who used slave labor. When Lincoln blockaded the Confederacy's ports, England increased her efforts to secure more cotton from Egypt and India. By 1865 the two possessions had greatly increased their production. Prime Minister Palmerston also found neutrality profitable, since his commercial fleets took over much of the United States' carrying trade, which suffered heavy losses from southern raiders.<sup>2</sup> In short, England decided that a war with the United States over cotton was too costly. None of the men picked for the South's diplomatic missions possessed the talents or experience necessary to win recognition of the South as an independent nation. The first important mission sent to Europe included William L. Yancey of Alabama, Pierre A. Rost of Louisiana, and A. Dudley Mann of Georgia. Yancey was an orator, but he lacked patience. Since the Alabamian espoused strong pro-slavery comments, he seemed a poor choice to ask for aid from abolitionist England. Recognition of the South as a belligerent came after the three ambassadors arrived in Europe, but Yancey



and his colleagues had nothing to do with England's decision.<sup>3</sup>

Unaware of the South's economic weaknesses, the Whig's columns praised the power of "King Cotton." When England refused to recognize the Confederacy in the spring of 1861, editorials explained that the bumper crops of 1859 and 1860 provided Great Britain with a large surplus which had to be depleted before England would break Lincoln's blockade. To facilitate that event, the paper advised a complete embargo on cotton until Palmerston's government recognized the Confederacy.<sup>4</sup>

The Whig anticipated that recognition would entail a repudiation of Lincoln's blockade. Actually the closing of the Confederacy's ports by the United States seemed to support the South's contention of independence since a nation normally does not blockade itself. Once Europe recognized the South, the Whig believed that England and France would destroy the blockade to obtain cotton.<sup>5</sup>

Initially most of the South's and the Whig's attention centered on the largest consumer of cotton--England. With so many workers involved in the textile factories, the paper thought that Palmerston needed a constant supply to prevent a social revolution.<sup>6</sup> One incident that buoyed Confederate hopes occurred on November 8, 1861: American Commander Charles Wilkes of

the San Jacinto stopped and boarded the British Royal Mail packet Trent, and seized two Confederate diplomats, John Slidell of Louisiana and James Mason of Virginia, and took them to Boston. A war between the United States and Great Britain appeared imminent.<sup>7</sup>

In November the Whig said little of the affair, but by December the Richmond daily recognized that a war between Great Britain and the United States would insure the South of independence. Since northern papers and politicians celebrated Wilkes' action, the paper hoped that Lincoln would be forced to go to war, particularly because Palmerston demanded full apology and release of the prisoners; for a short time at least, the South expected Lincoln to refuse England to avoid being "humiliated" and "disgraced."<sup>8</sup> But the President disappointed the Confederacy by freeing Mason and Slidell and having Secretary of State Seward write what Palmerston accepted as an apology.

The Whig, shocked and disappointed, still reasoned that England possessed only one choice--eventual recognition of the Confederate states. Whig editors conceded that Great Britain's prejudice still made her avoid war, but thought that when "starvation begins to walk her streets" England would side with the South.<sup>9</sup> Until that happened the editors urged their countrymen, the southerners, to be self-reliant by manufacturing articles normally

imported. They said that "King Cotton" continued to fight for the South and that the staple was the "power behind the throne of Great Britain" since the Whig doubted that India and Egypt would meet England's demand for cotton. The paper advised the South to be patient.<sup>10</sup>

During the spring and summer of 1862, Whig editorials were anxious about aid from England or France. After the Trent affair the Whig called for Davis to concentrate on France and wait for the economic squeeze to force Palmerston's hand. A profitable commercial treaty for France seemed a good way of securing Napoleon's recognition and by offering economic incentives to France, the Confederacy might, suggested the Whig, prompt England to reconsider her refusal.<sup>11</sup> But whatever course the administration chose, the editor counseled Davis not to "let foolish pride . . . stand in the way" of obtaining freedom from "Old and New England."<sup>12</sup>

The South soon learned that Napoleon planned to intervene only with the cooperation of England; therefore the efforts spent on France had little prospect of success unless Palmerston shifted his position and that appeared less and less likely. Even McClellan's defeat on the peninsula proved insufficient to bring about recognition, and by August the Whig's editorials hinted that foreign aid might never come. The paper reasoned that England wanted to avoid war with the United States because of a

"fear of Russia and a general war in Europe," while Russia wanted the United States to remain strong in order to be a counterpoise against Britain and France.<sup>14</sup>

In the winter of 1862 and throughout 1863 the Whig still contended that Napoleon wanted to aid the South, but the paper stressed that England desired to see the Civil War drag on until democratic government died.<sup>15</sup> The Whig encouraged Davis to make tempting offers of commercial treaties to obtain recognition and aid. "By exclusive privileges in trade to France, we could benefit both ourselves and a friend, and deal a deadly blow to England."<sup>16</sup> When French troops arrived in Mexico, the editor surmised that they "would be the forerunner of some active movements on the part of the Emperor in our behalf."<sup>17</sup>

England, by mid-summer 1863, again became the main target of some angry editorials. Warning England that she would have to pay for her unfair actions, the Whig blamed Palmerston for extending the bloody war. Editorials pointed out that the British government did nothing while northern agents recruited Irishmen for Lincoln's army, although such practices violated England's Neutrality Act. The Whig also complained that England continued to recognize a paper blockade and refused to allow southern vessels to enter English ports to sell prizes captured at sea. Finally, after the

British Ministry stopped delivery of the Laird Rams, the Whig supported Davis' recall of Confederate diplomats.<sup>18</sup> Now even the Whig confessed that "King Cotton failed us." The editor rationalized that the South ought to try to win the war with no outside help to insure the Confederate states against subservience to a foreign nation. Common sense required the South to accept the fact that "we stand alone."<sup>19</sup> As the Whig chose to do so often, it pretended that a major setback was really a blessing in disguise.

Out of all the efforts to acquire recognition the South succeeded with only one man--Pope Pius XI. In a letter to the President the Pontiff referred to Davis as the President of the Confederate States of America. Although the Pope's recognition had little real value, the Whig hoped that the letter was a signal to Catholic nations to aid the South.<sup>20</sup> But as the South's military position deteriorated in 1864, no European government seriously contemplated intervention.

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When diplomacy failed to secure southern independence, the Whig understood that the battlefield remained the final arbitrator. To succeed the South had to avoid the annihilation of its armies or destroy the will of the North to continue the war. Unfortunately, the fortunes of the South in foreign affairs reflected the Confederacy's

deteriorating military fortunes; consequently, the feeling of isolation coupled with heavy casualties made morale a serious concern. To combat the problem the Whig played up every success--no matter how small--and ignored the harsh truths of defeat.

Exaggeration characterized most of the Whig's appraisal of the South's battles, including First Manassass. Proclaiming a "Glorious Victory" and the greatest battle "since that of Waterloo," the Whig declared that the engagement revealed the superiority of southern "volunteers": Yankees were "humbugs" and the "white people of the slaveholding states" were the true masters.<sup>21</sup> The brief career of the Merrimac also prompted the Whig to declare that a glorious victory had ended the northern blockade. But when the Monitor checked the ironclad and secured the blockade, gloom descended. Similarly, the battle at Malvern Hill during the Peninsula Campaign became, in the editorial column, a "decisive" victory; Lee's invasion of Maryland was the beginning of a "new era." The editors also predicted that volunteers would fill Lee's ranks as he moved northward to defeat McClellan. Even after Antietam and Lee's retreat back across the Potomac, the Whig refused to admit that the South's first major offensive had failed.<sup>23</sup>

When victories became scarce, the editorials put the best face possible on the defeats. Rather than dwell

on the southern losses at Gettysburg, the editor wrote of Lee's "orderly retreat" and the great damage done to the North's army. Lincoln's new draft call seemed to offer credence to the editor's wishful thinking, but no editorials could lessen the sorrow and grief that came to Richmond when the casualty lists arrived from Gettysburg. Hopes raised by early reports of a victory in which Lee supposedly took forty thousand prisoners and had pursued the enemy towards Baltimore changed to gloom. Refusing to accept the fact that the fall of Vicksburg permanently divided the Confederacy, the Whig maintained that supplies could be transferred across the Mississippi River; actually after July 1863 there were two separate confederacies, one commanded by Davis and the other by General Kirby Smith.<sup>24</sup>

In the fall and early winter of 1863, the Whig gave praise (which it later retracted) to Bragg for his exploits in Tennessee and congratulated him on securing the area essential for the South's manufacturing. A few months later Bragg's apparent victories turned into defeat, but editor McDonald then contended that a new commander could rectify the situation and that Bragg had ruined his soldiers' morale.

What the Whig failed to realize was that Bragg represented only one of the commanders of the South unable to stop the revitalized Union army. By early 1864

Grant was General-in-Chief of all the North's forces and William T. Sherman had begun his march through Georgia.<sup>26</sup> These two generals proved to be quite different from McClellan; they were fighters. As Sherman forced Joseph E. Johnston (now commanding the Army of Tennessee) south towards Atlanta, the Whig pleaded for someone to attack Sherman. When John B. Hood replaced Johnston, McDonald claimed that at least Hood would make a stand; he was the "gallant young chieftain" the South needed to stop the "insolent foe."<sup>27</sup>

But the Whig's tone changed, though reluctantly, when Hood's tenure resulted in disaster. Twice his men charged into battle against Sherman, but Sherman repulsed the rebels and forced Hood to evacuate Atlanta on the second of September. Pulling the remnants of the Army of Tennessee together, Hood marched north towards Chattanooga hoping to strike at the Union base at Nashville. By December he applied a partial siege on Nashville, but General George Thomas quickly broke the siege and Hood's army; bits and pieces of it fled away--never to be reassembled. At that point the Whig lamely called for J. E. Johnston to replace Hood though just a few months earlier it had demanded Johnston's removal because he refused to make a stand. Now the editorials recalled only that Johnston had never lost a battle,<sup>28</sup> and hoped that Johnston could organize enough troops to perform a



miracle by stopping Sherman, a hope that was never realized. But Sherman entailed only part of the Whig's worries because in the Shenandoah Valley another part of Grant's war machine, led by General Philip H. Sheridan, was about to reduce the South's ability to carry on the war. Sheridan's troops had the job of destroying the Confederacy's breadbasket and by October 1864 they appeared ready to complete their task.

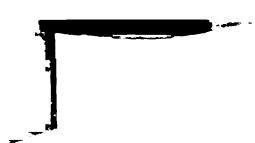
On October 19, however, Early surprised Sheridan's troops and easily routed them, an action that the Whig would have loved to report. But after their initial success, Early's troops stopped to plunder the goods left behind by the enemy and allowed Sheridan to reorganize and counterattack and turn defeat into victory. On Sheridan's return from a conference with Lincoln, he heard the battle ahead and raced to regroup his men and turn defeat into victory. Rather than credit Sheridan with a success, however, the Whig stressed that Early stopped the Union's movement to the East and that five to six thousand Yankee soldiers died in the battle.<sup>29</sup>

During the last year of the war, the Whig's editorials frequently evaluated Grant's and Sherman's maneuvers. When Grant assumed command of the Union forces, the editor warned his readers not to belittle Grant's fighting capacity. He had demonstrated on numerous occasions that he liked to "follow-up a victory in spite of

natural obstacles," a task few other generals attempted. The editor cautioned against expecting bad roads to stop the enemy; such calculations seemed "suicidal."<sup>30</sup> While the Whig respected Grant, it underrated Sherman; it described the general's dash to Atlanta as impetuous and assumed that Sherman would be isolated and destroyed.

With the collapse of Atlanta's defense less than a month away, McDonald declared that Sherman was cornered in Georgia and unable to "escape except through gross default of our own." Surely, reasoned the paper, the invader had reached the end of "his tether." Though the Union army took Atlanta and pushed on to Savannah, the Whig remained optimistic. Reasoning that Sherman lacked communication to the rear, the editorials concluded that the general occupied a position similar to that of Lord Cornwallis in the Revolutionary War. Even after Sherman took both Savannah and Columbia, the Whig editor predicted that Johnston would stop the enemy and wishfully added that "Sherman will be lucky if he escapes at all."<sup>31</sup>

The Army of the Potomac, under the personal direction of Grant, created another concern for the Richmond paper. After bloody clashes in the Wilderness, Spotsylvania Courthouse, and Cold Harbor, the Whig surmised that Grant was a blessing in disguise. He appeared ready to destroy the Union army by sending mass assaults against fortified positions. When Grant shifted his force to



Petersburg, the editor believed that the change indicated the complete failure of the Spring Campaign; by surrounding Petersburg, Grant would only delay "the humiliation of acknowledged defeat." The Whig conceded that Grant's control of the waterways provided him a way of saving "a remnant of the might force . . . but Sherman cannot escape."<sup>32</sup>

In an attempt to maintain morale and avoid defeatism, the Whig issued optimistic year-end appraisals. In December of 1864 it said that "in our estimation, our cause is far stronger today than it was on the 31st of December, 1863."<sup>33</sup> Trying to support that contention the Whig pointed out that Grant had lost one hundred twenty-five thousand men between the Rapidan and James Rivers, and that the invasion of Texas had ended in failure.

But not even the Whig could obscure the South's severe setbacks forever; rather than face the fact that the Confederate states faced a superior power, the paper preferred to label one man responsible for the South's reversals--General E. K. Smith. He commanded the Confederacy's forces in the trans-Mississippi region, and after the fall of Vicksburg Smith became a virtual dictator in the western sector. The Whig complained that Smith played the role of a "spectator" while Grant and Sherman squeezed the East; the opportunity to retake New Orleans slipped through Smith's fingers because he was

afraid to attack. The general's inefficiency explained to the Whig why "so much gloom" had spread over the Confederacy.<sup>34</sup> Alarmed by the development of a defeatist attitude, the Whig warned that the South could recover from the military losses, "but it cannot survive the decay of spirit and the loss of determination on the parts of its people."<sup>35</sup>

The implementation by Lincoln of a total war seemed to break the South's will to fight, in spite of the Whig's warning that "this is a war of extermination." A modern war made heavy demands on the civilians and wrought destruction to private property; Sheridan's devastation in the Valley and Sherman's march to the sea revealed Lincoln's determination to cripple the South's war-making capacity. Southerners realized, notwithstanding the Whig's efforts, that the Confederacy lacked the power needed to carry the war north to make the enemy's population suffer. Since little hope of a negotiated settlement existed, southerners faced the dismal prospect of total defeat.<sup>36</sup>

When optimistic editorials failed to reinvigorate the citizens, the Whig tried to frighten and shame the people into continuing the war. Recalling that everyone pledged at the start of the war to risk everything for the "cause," the paper warned that if the army's needs were neglected the "Yankees" would occupy Richmond homes

and direct everyone's lives. It reminded readers that defeat for the South entailed a revolution "socially and morally" at the direction of the abolitionists as well as a loss of identity similar to that of Ireland.<sup>37</sup>

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As casualties increased southern peace parties became a threat to southern determination to continue the war. The Whig labeled these groups "Croakers" which were "unquestionably tainted with treason" because they sought to weaken the South by arraying "the rich against the poor." Talk of reunion delayed peace, editorialized the Whig, because the North viewed such activities as signs of weakness. The paper said that peace would come only when the North understood the impossibility of reconstruction. Northern willingness to continue the fight would collapse, predicted the editor, if the adversary saw that the South was not discouraged and planned to continue "the most colossal struggle of history."<sup>38</sup>

In January 1865 speculation of a peace conference raised hopes for a quick end to the war. Francis P. Blair, the old Missouri Democrat and confidant of Andrew Jackson, slipped into Richmond to arrange a high level meeting between Lincoln and the Davis administration. Hearing of Blair's arrival the Whig charged that the mission was designed to arouse a southern "peace mania," and when the South rejected the request for "absolute submission,"

Lincoln would use the Confederacy's refusal to stimulate the United States' military fervor. He wanted to negotiate because he knew his "strength was declining" and he hoped that the South was exhausted. "It is plain that the enemy cannot longer carry on the war"; consequently the Whig advised Davis to meet Lincoln, reject his proposals for surrender, and return to the fighting.<sup>39</sup>

When Davis announced the Confederacy's delegates to the ill-fated Hampton Roads Conference (Alexander H. Stephens, R. M. T. Hunter, and Judge Campbell), the Whig said that the three men represented the Congress' different factions and that they knew how to handle the "wily and unprincipled enemy." Lincoln went to the meeting determined to accept only reunion while the Confederates sought only independence; when the meeting broke up with nothing accomplished as the paper had expected, it reported that "the tragedy goes on again."<sup>40</sup>

Political developments in the North continually interested the South. McDonald and most other editors eagerly reported Lincoln's suspension of the habeas corpus and the social disruptions which tended to support the thesis that the Republicans lacked public support. Early in 1862 the editor said that Lincoln faced insoluble problems: inevitable war with Great Britain, refusal of the banks to make any more loans, dissensions in the Cabinet, and McClellan's inactivity which caused

"rumbling in the North." The Whig also stiffened the South's resolve to resist the northern army by reporting that Lincoln recruited Poles, Hungarians, and Germans-- "the worst population in Europe."<sup>41</sup>

When Lincoln issued his Emancipation Proclamation, McDonald made a predictable response: "This abolition proclamation is the last resort of a defeated, perplexed and desperate government." Lincoln's scheme to foster slave insurrections marked, for the Whig, an end to "civilized warfare." To make Lincoln regret his action, the paper urged Davis and the Congress to set Jeb Stuart, Nathan Bedford Forrest, and other cavalry units loose to fire northern cities. The Proclamation made an "inhuman barbarous war" unavoidable.<sup>42</sup>

The Whig also reported, quite accurately, that the abolition issue alienated many voters in the northwest states of Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, and Ohio: accordingly, it suggested that those states might be willing to draw up treaties of amity and commerce. If the Northwest wanted to join the Confederate states, the Whig saw no reason to oppose it on a trial basis. Henry Foote, Congressman from Tennessee, endorsed the idea and informed the paper that only a few "army contractors" desired to extend the war.<sup>43</sup>

For a while the support given Clement L. Vallandigham in Ohio offered encouragement to peace



advocates like Henry Foote. The Whig reported the Ohioan's speeches which attacked Lincoln's "usurpations" though it also admitted that too few voters in Ohio listened to that "fearless man." But Vallandigham's pleas only partially suited the rebels. Objections to Lincoln's dictatorial orders played into the hands of southerners, but an insistence on reconstruction made Vallandigham less useful to the South. Peace groups which sought separation as well as an end to hostilities enjoyed the support of many editors, including the Whig's, but any talk of reunion amounted to treason. Eventually, Vallandigham's arrest and banishment in May 1863 and the poor showing of the peace candidates in state elections cooled the Whig's hopes for a coalition with the Northwest.<sup>44</sup>

New York City's draft riots of July 1863 pleased the Whig's editor, but he correctly stated that the unrest did not foretell the reign of anarchy in the North. The Republicans, he said, sought to blame the peace party for the crisis and to frighten the "timorous property holders" into favoring strong government. He believed that the 1864 elections promised more hope for a change in policies than the New York turmoil.<sup>45</sup>

Vallandigham's return to Ohio from his banishment indicated to the Whig that the northern Democrats planned to use force against force if necessary to defeat Lincoln

in 1864. When the Democrats postponed their national convention to August, the editor thought that the delay aided the peace advocates by giving them more time to organize a peace platform acceptable to the public. By August the paper hoped that the North's financial disasters and the unsuccessful campaigns of Sherman and Grant would be sufficiently well known to make a peace candidate more acceptable to the North. "Better follow than lead public opinion."<sup>46</sup>

The Whig was also concerned by possible repercussions from a northern peace party. What if southern peace parties increased their support?<sup>47</sup> The paper feared that talk of peace by Confederates would only strengthen Lincoln's war party, and to guard against such a development, the Whig reminded its readers that not all peace Democrats wanted the Union to remain separated. McDonald believed that the election of a man like McClellan offered little hope for a satisfactory peace.<sup>48</sup>

The Democratic peace plank reinforced the editor's concern. He found not "the remotest intimation of separation" and he doubted that many Democrats contemplated peace short of restoration. George McClellan's nomination for the presidency further frustrated the Whig because men like Horatio Seymour of New York and Millard Fillmore, a former President, more properly met the South's idea of a peace candidate. The Whig said that

McClellan merely opposed the conduct of the war, not the goal.<sup>49</sup> After the Democratic Convention, the paper considered the election academic because both the Republican and Democratic candidates would carry on the war.

Lincoln's success in the election sealed the South's fate, and the Confederacy had no choice other than to surrender or drag the war out for a few more months. With the successes of the Union armies, hope for outside intervention also collapsed. At this time even the Whig admitted that Richmond had to face the possibility of being overrun. But despite these facts the paper encouraged those who were beyond enemy control to continue the struggle and wage guerilla warfare if the Capitol fell.

Epilogue.--On the first Sunday in April Davis and what remained of the Confederate government evacuated Richmond. For a brief period Davis escaped capture but in the following three weeks the last resisting groups laid down their arms.

All but one member of the Whig's editorial staff fled the city on Sunday evening, but on Tuesday, April 4, the Whig resumed publication with the proprietor, William Ira Smith, acting as editor. The Military Governor, General Shepley, allowed the resumption on the condition that the Whig become a "Union paper." The Whig promised

that "the sentiment of attachment to our 'whole country,' which formerly characterized it as a journal, will again find expression in its columns, and whatever influence it may have for the restoration of the nation's authority will be exerted."<sup>50</sup>

In the coming weeks the Whig's editorials remained true to its pledge. The editor blamed fiery secessionists for deluding the South and bringing it "to ruin, desolation, and woe." Believing that the best interests required the re-establishment of business intercourse with the North, the Whig hoped that the New South would "hereafter invite, rather than repel" Yankee energy, industry, and capital. Once the nation regained the era of good feeling, the new Union convert forecasted prosperity and contentment everywhere. It pleaded with southerners to dismiss rancor from their hearts; "the brethren of the North desire to live with them [southerners] in the bonds of peace." Since defeat removed slavery, the editor encouraged his readers to assist not resist the switch to a free labor system. For the Negro, the Whig suggested the policy of industry and good temper.<sup>51</sup>

Expectations that the paper entertained for an easy transition faded when John Wilkes Booth assassinated Lincoln. The editor called it the heaviest blow to befall the South. Although the secrecy of the conspiracy convinced the Whig that only a few knew the scheme, it

believed that the deed threatened to rekindle excitement and inflame passions. Later events proved the editor's concerns unfounded.<sup>52</sup>

## CHAPTER VIII FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup>Richmond Whig, May 20, 1861 and July 9, 1861.

<sup>2</sup>Frank Lawrence Owsley, King Cotton Diplomacy (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1931), 1-50.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Richmond Whig, May 20 and July 9, 1861.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., April 24 and July 15, 1861.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., May 5 and June 1, 1861.

<sup>7</sup>For good accounts of the Trent Affair see Owsley, King Cotton Diplomacy, 72-75. And also see Vandiver, Tattered Flags, 98-101 and Martin Duberman, Charles Francis Adams (Boston: The Riverside Press, 1961).

<sup>8</sup>Richmond Whig, December 18 and December 20, 1861.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., January 1 and January 7, 1862.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., January 16 and January 25, 1862.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., February 27, March 4, March 7, June 30 and August 30, 1862.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., February 27, 1862.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., August 30, 1862.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., November 24, 1862; May 28 and June 23, 1863. The May editorial also contended that England expected to increase her commerce at the expense of the United States.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., March 3, 1863.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., July 18, 1863. The editor believed that Napoleon wanted to gain control over Central America and build a canal which the editor would accept if aid was

given to the South. Spain's reoccupation of Santo Domingo also received the Whig's blessing since Spain advocated slavery (see editorial of May 10, 1861). England, thought the Whig, wanted the North to win so that Lincoln would apply the Monroe Doctrine to France in Mexico (editorial of August 4, 1863).

<sup>18</sup>Richmond Whig, May 28, June 24, August 6, September 22, October 14 and October 17, 1863.

<sup>19</sup>Doubts about cotton's power began to appear in November 1862 and increased until a final break came on August 14, 1863.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid., August 27 and August 28, 1863; February 5, 1864.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid., July 22 and July 23, 1861.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid., March 11, 1862.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid., September 10 and September 24, 1862.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid., July 1, July 6, July 7, July 10 and July 14, 1863.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid., September 23, November 2, November 27, November 30, December 8 and May 27, 1863. After the near miss at Chickamauga in September Davis visited Bragg's Army and debated on whether to replace the general. In October the President decided he had no better choice except to keep Bragg.

<sup>26</sup>Grant and Sherman drove Bragg from Lookout Mountain and Missionary Ridge in November 1863 thereby securing Chattanooga as a base from which to attack the deep South.

<sup>27</sup>The Whig believed that William J. Hardee deserved the command because of his experience and seniority. The paper suspected that Hood was too rash, but anyone was preferred to Johnston. See Richmond Whig, July 20, July 25 and December 21, 1864.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid., December 21, 1864.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid., October 27, October 29 and November 4, 1864. Bruce Catton's The Army of the Potomac (New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1952) gave a good account of this action.

<sup>30</sup>Richmond Whig, December 3, 1863.

<sup>31</sup>Ibid., August 16, October 19, November 25, November 29 and December 2, 1864; March 7 and March 25, 1865.

<sup>32</sup>Ibid., June 8, August 1, August 3 and August 4, 1864.

<sup>33</sup>Ibid., December 31, 1864.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid., January 12, 1865.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid., January 17, 1865. In the spring of 1863 Richmond experienced the "Bread Riot." Hundreds of women rioted and stole food and clothing from the supply houses before the militia stopped the looting. The Confederacy told the papers to hush the story to prevent damage to morale. The Whig obeyed but at a later time objected and said that an open policy on reporting would have been better (yet the Whig often twisted the truth). Since the looters took mostly luxury items, not necessities, the Whig contended they were common criminals.

<sup>36</sup>Ibid., July 21, October 14, October 15 and November 21, 1864. For a description of the Civil War as a modern war see Walter Millis, Arms and Men (New York: New American Library, 1956), 103-116, 120-121 and 268.

<sup>37</sup>Ibid., July 17, 1863; June 14, April 2 and August 6, 1864.

<sup>38</sup>Ibid., June 3, 1864 and January 10, 1865.

<sup>39</sup>Ibid., January 14, January 30 and February 1, 1865.

<sup>40</sup>Ibid., January 30 and February 6, 1865.

<sup>41</sup>Ibid., May 2, May 13, May 31, June 15, June 17, June 19 and August 3, 1861; January 14 and April 26, 1862.

<sup>42</sup>Ibid., September 29 and October 22, 1862.

<sup>43</sup>Ibid., March 6, March 7 and March 19, 1863.

<sup>44</sup>Ibid., July 20, 1861; March 7, March 25, April 2, April 11, May 18, May 19 and November 11, 1863.

<sup>45</sup>Ibid., July 20, August 15 and August 18, 1863.



<sup>46</sup>Ibid., June 27, June 30 and August 16, 1864.

<sup>47</sup>The Whig had justification for its worry. In December 1864 Henry Foote went across the Rapidan and surrendered to General Sheridan. The Congressman wrote letters to Secretary of State William H. Seward and to Lincoln stating that many "conservatives of the South" were ready to rejoin the Union. To accomplish this Foote believed only one obstacle had to be overcome--slavery. Foote reported that by 1890 the South could end slavery. Realizing that he would no longer be welcomed in Richmond Foote requested permission to stay in a northern city or to go abroad. After Lincoln rejected the proposals for reunion, Foote went to London. See H. S. Foote, War of the Rebellion (New York: Harper and Brothers, Publishers, 1865), 377-413.

<sup>48</sup>Ibid., August 16, 1864.

<sup>49</sup>Ibid., September 5, 1864.

<sup>50</sup>Ibid., April 4, 1865.

<sup>51</sup>Ibid., April 11, April 12 and April 15, 1865.

<sup>52</sup>Ibid., April 17, 1865.

## BIBLIOGRAPHICAL ESSAY

### Newspapers and Journals

The Virginia State Library in Richmond, Virginia possesses an almost complete file of the Richmond Whig. The Congressional Library and the University of Virginia Library contain the few missing issues. Other important southern Whig papers which helped to put the Richmond Whig's editorials in perspective include the Nashville True Whig, Knoxville Whig, Raleigh Register, Greenville Southern Patriot, Columbus Enquirer, Natchez Daily Courier, and the New Orleans Bee. They generally espoused a moderate pro-Union policy, yet they also revealed the rough no-holds-barred style that was typical of nineteenth century political journalism. Besides the papers J. D. B. DeBow's Commercial Review of the South and West (DeBow's Review), which began in 1846 and continued through the Civil War, provided another good source on southern views. Since the editor strove to open his columns to men of varied opinions, his journal offered a variety of articles contesting most of the major issues facing the pre-war South.

Public Documents and Contemporary  
Accounts

Certainly the Congressional Globe, 30 volumes (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Globe Printing Company, 1833-1861), an official record of the United States Congress for the period, is a valuable source. The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies, 128 volumes (Washington, D.C.: General Printing Office, 1880-1901), is an indispensable collection of documents on the war effort of both sides.

For a contemporary view of the ante bellum South see Henry A. Wise, Seven Decades of the Union (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott and Company, 1872). Since Wise became such a powerful force in Virginia politics prior to the War, his account contained many detailed descriptions of meetings with Democratic leaders as well as encounters with Whig politicians including an editor of the Richmond Whig. In Casket of Reminiscences (Washington D.C.: Chronicle Publishing Company, 1874), Henry S. Foote wrote an inside account of many of the crises that faced the nation during the thirty years preceding Fort Sumter. While he magnified his role out of proportion and erred in dating some events, he produced good accounts of the crisis in 1850 and of political opposition to Jefferson Davis in the Confederate congress. Cotton is King, and Pro-Slavery Arguments (Augusta: Pritchard,

Abbott and Loomis, 1860), edited by E. N. Elliott, contains some classic defenses of the South's "peculiar institution" as well as David Christy's article which popularized the slogan "Cotton is King." For an excellent story of what hardships a Virginian opposing slavery met, see Moncure Daniel Conway, Autobiography, Memories and Experiences of Moncure Daniel Conway, 2 volumes (New York: Houghton Mifflin and Company, 1904). Frederick Law Olmsted's A Journey in the Seaboard Slave States (New York: P. P. Putnam's Sons, 1904) also gave details of life in Virginia.

A Full Report Embracing All the Evidence and Arguments in the Case of the Commonwealth of Virginia Versus Thomas Ritchie, Jr. (New York: Burgess, Stinger and Company, 1846) also related how dangerous it was to be a moderate on slavery. The Report described the duel between John Hampden Pleasants and Ritchie in which the former received fatal wounds.

A scathing and bitter attack on secessionists and Confederate leaders came from W. G. Brownlow, Sketches of the Rise, Progress, and Decline of Secession; with a Narrative of Personal Adventures Among the Rebels (Philadelphia: George W. Childs, 1862). As in many of his editorials, he hurled vivid and sarcastic insults at his adversaries accusing the southern leadership of stupidity. Although Edward A. Pollard was a rebel, he too criticized

Confederate leadership, especially Jefferson Davis in Lost Cause (New York: E. B. Treat and Company, 1867).

After the War Jefferson Davis offered a defense of his performance in The Rise and Fall of Confederate Government, 2 volumes (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1881). Another sympathetic account came in J. B. Jones, A Rebel War Clerk's Diary at the Confederate State Capitol, 2 volumes (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott and Company, 1866). He also gave sketches of the cabinet members, their weaknesses and strengths, and an analysis of the South's weaknesses. A reprint of Davis' The Rise was made by Sagamore Press, Incorporated in 1858 and a reprint was also made of Jones' Diary by J. B. Lippincott and Company in 1935.

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information on the difficulties Davis faced when he tried to coordinate the Confederate efforts. For a brief documentary account of the Civil War see Henry Steele Commager (ed.), Fifty Basic Civil War Documents (New York: D. Van Nostrand Company, Inc., 1965). His book offers excerpts of the major documents from the North and South.

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#### Journalism

Frank Luther Mott presented good general information on newspapers and their origins for the period under study in his American Journalism; A History of Newspapers in the United States (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1941). In Editors Make War (2nd ed.; Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 1970), Donald E. Reynolds surveyed the southern press of all parties to locate geographical and political patterns in editorials during the secession crisis of 1860. Three other studies on southern journalism of value included Virginus Dadney, Liberalism in the South (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1932); Clement Eaton, Freedom of Thought in the Old South (Durham: Duke University Press, 1940); and Earl E. Thorpe, Eros and Freedom in Southern Life and Thought (Durham: Seeman Printery, 1967). The first two concluded that freedom of editors to write freely on abolition diminished from the 1830's on because of a

negative public reaction in the South to northern abolitionists. Thorpe contended unconvincingly that historians have exaggerated the retardation of southern liberalism in the three decades prior to the Civil War.

Two histories of southern papers that shed light on the Whig presses of the nineteenth century were Earl S. Bell and Kenneth C. Crablee, The Augusta Chronicle, Indomitable Voice of Dixie 1785-1960 (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1960); and Robert Neal Elliott, The Raleigh Register 1799-1863 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1955). Both papers were important and, like the Richmond Whig, espoused unionism.

For the Civil War years two studies were of special interest. J. Cutler Andrews, The South Reports the Civil War (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970), detailed the difficulties southern reporters faced in trying to determine the significance of military battles. He produced a well researched and thoughtful analysis. Less useful was Hodding Carter, Their Words Were Bullets: The Southern Press in War, Reconstruction, and Peace (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1969). In a very brief section on the War he emphasized the role of the press in encouraging regional narrow-mindedness, but he also correctly pointed out the need for more study of individual papers.

Unfortunately there are few useful analytical histories on the city of Richmond. But two, Alfred Hoyt Bill, The Beleaguered City, Richmond 1861-1865 (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1946); and W. Asbury Christian, Richmond: Her Past and Present (Richmond: L. H. Jenkins, 1912), were at least helpful in chronicling events. Bill also presented a clear picture of despair and hardship in the Confederate capitol.

### Virginia Politics

#### The Rise of the Whigs in Virginia, 1824-1840

(Richmond: The William Byrd Press, Inc., 1929), written by Henry H. Simms, provides a brief but informative account of the formation of a group opposed to Andrew Jackson. Even though only two chapters dealt specifically with Virginia politics, a more recent study by James Roger Sharp, The Jacksonians Versus the Banks (New York: Columbia University Press, 1970), offered an unusually clear and valuable description of the bank controversy in state politics. Two biographies of John Tyler also revealed some useful insights on the Jacksonian period of Virginia politics. A Whig Embattled, the Presidency Under John Tyler (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1954) by Robert J. Morgan is a sympathetic history of Tyler's years as President. A biography of his whole life appears in Oliver Perry Chitwood's



John Tyler Champion of the Old South (New York: D. Appleton-Century Company, 1939). He gave a more balanced view, pointing out Tyler's errors in judgment and weaknesses.

A thorough study of the most influential Democratic press in Virginia, the Richmond Enquirer, appears in Charles Henry Ambler's Thomas Ritchie, A Study in Virginia Politics (Richmond: Bell Book and Stationery Company, 1913). Ambler related Ritchie's constant efforts to strengthen the party and to help Virginia regain her former position of power and prestige in national politics. Another biography, John Letcher of Virginia (University: University of Alabama Press, 1966) by F. N. Boney, gave a good account of the public career of Virginia's war governor.

Another work on state politics and sectionalism is Sectionalism in Virginia from 1776-1861 (New York: Russell and Russell Incorporated, 1964) by Charles Henry Ambler. His effort is useful in identifying issues that divided the state, but a reader must exercise caution before using his statistics. Often he made generalizations about who could and could not vote without consulting the tax rolls. Julian A. C. Chandler wrote two interesting articles on Virginia's constitutional conventions and the debates on changing the basis for representation in the legislature and suffrage requirements.

His major contribution rested with his summary of the debates prior to and in the conventions. His articles are "Representation in Virginia," Johns Hopkins University Studies in Historical and Political Science, edited by Herbert B. Adams (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1896), XIV; and "History of Suffrage in Virginia," Johns Hopkins University Studies in Historical and Political Science, edited by Herbert B. Adams (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1896), XIX.

For an excellent analysis of the turmoil resulting from Nat Turner's revolt see The Road from Monticello, A Study of the Virginia Slavery Debate of 1832 (Durham: Duke University Press, 1941) by Joseph C. Robert. Robert discussed the rebellion, presented excerpts of the debates on slavery, and reported the votes on the main questions that confronted Virginia's legislature in 1832. "The Ruffner Pamphlet of 1847: An Antislavery Aspect of Virginia Sectionalism," The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography, LXI (July, 1953), written by William Gleason Bean, also pertained to slavery in Virginia. This article described Henry Ruffner's views on abolition as well as the hostile reaction to them.

When the Whig Party splintered, many Virginia Whigs joined the Know-Nothing Party and for a good accurate description of that group see Philip Morrison Rice, "The Know-Nothing Party in Virginia, 1854-1856," The Virginia

Magazine of History and Biography, LV (December, 1947).

For the role of the Richmond Whig's editor in the party see "Alexander Moseley: Political Editor Extraordinaire," Virginia Cavalcade, XVIII (July, 1969).

### Economics

Good accounts of the state's economic difficulties appear in Avery O. Craven, Soil Exhaustion as a Factor in the Agricultural History of Virginia and Maryland, 1606-1860 (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1926); Joseph C. Robert, The Story of Tobacco in America (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1949); and Wayland Fuller Dunaway, History of the James River and Kanawha Company (New York: Columbia University Press, 1922). While none is exciting reading, each provides details about the state's attempts to improve its financial position.

The most thorough account of southern agriculture appears in History of Agriculture in the Southern United States to 1860, 2 volumes (Washington, D.C.: The Carnegie Institute of Washington, 1933), by Lewis Cecil Gray. While these volumes are at times ponderous reading, Gray covered his topic thoroughly. J. Carlyle Sitterson, in Sugar Country, The Cane Sugar Industry in the South 1753-1950 (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1953), described the techniques used to produce sugar and also pointed out the determination of Louisiana planters to

secure tariff production for their crops. For an analysis of the importance of cotton to the South and the world see David Cohen, The Life and Times of King Cotton (New York: Oxford University Press, 1956); and James A. B. Scherer, Cotton as a World Power, A Study in the Economic Interpretation of History (New York: Frederick A. Stokes Company, 1916). Both stressed the importance that southerners placed on cotton by picturing almost all southern leaders in the 1850's as advocates of the "King Cotton" doctrine.

Scholarly studies of the controversy over the Second National Bank are in Ralph C. Catteral, The Second Bank of the United States (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1902); and Thomas Payne Govan, Nicholas Biddle, Nationalist and Public Banker, 1786-1844 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1959). They did a good job in identifying the weaknesses of the United States monetary system in the 1830's as well as evaluating the importance of Andrew Jackson and Biddle in the debates on the banking system.

#### The Ante Bellum South

For general works on the ante bellum period see Clement Eaton, A History of the Old South (2nd ed.; New York: Macmillan Company, 1966); and Francis Butler Simkins, The South, Old and New, 1820-1947 (New York:

A. A. Knopf, 1947). Eaton presented the most balanced view. Of less value are William E. Dodd, The Cotton Kingdom (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1921); and R. S. Cotterill, The Old South (California: The Arthur H. Clark Company, 1936). Dodd assumed that all in the planter class supported secession and Cotterill offered little evidence to support his broad generalizations.

Charles Sydnor, The Development of Southern Sectionalism, 1819-1848 (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1948); and Avery O. Craven, The Growth of Southern Nationalism (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University, 1953), are two excellent studies of the national issues that divided the North and South. Both offer excellent explanations of the controversies of the period. Another author, Jesse T. Carpenter in The South as a Conscious Minority, 1789-1861 (New York: The New York University Press, 1930), identified the defenses used by the South to protect its political power in the national government. John Hope Franklin stressed the combativeness of southerners in his The Militant South (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1956).

Useful works on the South's politics appear in W. Darrell Overdyke, The Know-Nothing Party in the South (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1950); and Arthur Charles Cole, The Whig Party in the South (Washington, D.C.: American Historical Association, 1913).

Some of Cole's contentions such as the thesis that Clay and the Whig Party were primarily responsible for settling the crisis of 1850 are questionable. Holman Hamilton, in Prologue to Conflict (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1964), argued forcefully that Stephen A. Douglas and the Democrats brought about the settlement.

Three of the most pertinent studies of the secession movement for this dissertation were Dwight L. Dumond (ed.), Southern Editorials on Secession (New York: The Century Company, 1931); Henry T. Shanks, The Secession Movement in Virginia, 1847-1861 (Richmond: Garrett and Massie Publishers, 1934); and Ralph A. Wooster, Secession Conventions (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1962). All of these books accurately related events that took Virginia out of the Union. Dumond's work was the most valuable because he presented the many different ideas and positions of southerners on secession that persisted right up to Fort Sumter.

#### Diplomacy and Expansion

In foreign affairs Robert H. Ferrell, American Diplomacy, A History (Revised and Expanded Edition; New York: W. W. Norton and Company, Inc., 1969); and Julius W. Pratt, A History of United States Foreign Policy (New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1955) are concise and reliable general works. Efforts primarily concentrated

on the nineteenth century include Albert Katz Weinberg, Manifest Destiny; A Study of Nationalist Expansion in American History (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1935); Frederick Merk, Manifest Destiny and Mission in American History (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1963); and Norman A. Graebner, Manifest Destiny (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1968). Weinberg concentrated on the ideas and philosophical arguments underlying the continental expansion of the United States. Whereas Weinberg was critical of American policies, Merk explained the United States expansion as simply an attempt by people to carry out the mission of spreading democracy. Graebner, on the other hand, offered an economic interpretation by stressing the government's desire to obtain possession of the West Coast to facilitate trade with the Far East. In The War with Mexico, 2 volumes (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1919), Justin Harvey Smith argued that Great Britain's supposed interest in Texas spurred American annexation of the Lone Star Republic.

H. G. Soulsby, in The Right of Search and the Slave Trade and Anglo-American Relations, 1814-1862 (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1933), offered hard-to-find information on proposed treaties affecting the maritime slave trade.

## Civil War

A detailed general survey of the Civil War appears in J. G. Randall and David Donald, The Civil War and Reconstruction (2nd ed.; Boston: D. C. Heath Company, 1961). The best analysis of the beginning of the war and the confrontation at Fort Sumter is Richard Current, Lincoln and the First Shot (New York: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1963). The latest and probably the best study of the Confederacy is Frank E. Vandiver, Their Tattered Flags (New York: A Harper's Magazine Press Book, 1970). He offered a good balance between military and political events. Another but less useful account is E. Merton Coulter, The Confederate States of America: 1861-1865 (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1950). He falters by stressing the decline of southern morale as a cause of the Confederacy's collapse without considering military defeats which precipitated the morale problem. Similarly Charles William Ramsdell in Behind the Lines in the Southern Confederacy (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1944), overstated morale as a cause of southern defeat. Frank Lawrence Owsley blamed the Confederacy's states' rights doctrine for the South's failure in States Rights in the Confederacy (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1925).

Although numerous studies of Jefferson Davis have appeared, two illustrate the debate over the Confederacy's



President. Hudson Strode, in Jefferson Davis: Confederate President, 3 volumes (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1959), characterized Davis as a saintly figure while H. J. Eckenrode, Jefferson Davis, President of the South (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1923), concluded that Davis' personal weaknesses and error in strategy insured Confederate defeat. For brief descriptions of Davis' cabinet see Burton J. Hendrick, Statesmen of the Lost Cause (New York: The Literary Guild of America, Inc., 1939).

For informative specialized studies of Confederate politics and life see Frank Lawrence Owsley, King Cotton Diplomacy: Foreign Relations of the Confederate States of America (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1932); Robert C. Black, The Railroads of the Confederacy (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1932); Wilfred Buck Yearns, The Confederate Congress (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1960); A. B. Moore, Conscription and Conflict in the Confederacy (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1924); James H. Brewster, The Confederate Negro: Virginia's Craftsman and Military Laborers, 1861-1865 (Durham: Duke University Press, 1969); Ella Lonn, Foreigners in the Confederacy (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1940); and Bertram Wallace Korn, American Jewry and the Civil War (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1951). The

latter two agreed that Jews became the South's scapegoats and were the targets of many irate congressmen.

### General

Other more general works which provided needed background included Alfred Kelly and Winfred A. Harbison, The American Constitution, Its Origins and Development (4th ed.; New York: W. W. Norton and Company, Inc., 1970); Edward S. Convin, The President: Office and Powers (3rd revised ed.; New York: New York University Press, 1948); and Edward Stanwood, A History of the Presidency from 1788 to 1897 (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1926). The first two give good insight into the development of the presidency especially during the terms of Jackson and Lincoln. Stanwood compiled a list of presidential election results which saves a researcher much time.

Though more oriented towards events in the North than in the South, Allan Nevins' Ordeal of the Union, 2 volumes (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1947); and Roy Franklin Nichols' two studies The Disruption of American Democracy (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1948) and The Stakes of Power, 1847-1861 (New York: Hill and Wang, 1961), are necessary to understand the turmoil of the 1840's and 1850's. Nevins retold most of the political battles while Nichols stressed the importance of the struggle for power between the slave and free states

in the national government. And finally David M. Potter, in Lincoln and His Party in the Secession Crisis (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1942), contended that Lincoln overestimated union sentiment in the South.

Three biographies of Henry Clay also proved useful. They are Clement Eaton, Henry Clay and the Art of American Politics (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1957); Carl Schurz, Henry Clay, 2 volumes (New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing Company, 1968); and Glyndon G. Van Deusen, The Life of Henry Clay (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1937). Eaton's book was much more sympathetic to Clay than Van Deusen's and Schurz's. The latter included in his study a discussion of the debates over the Panama Mission which the more recent biographies usually ignore.

An exceptionally fine biography is James K. Polk, Jacksonian 1795-1846, 2 volumes (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957-1966), by Charles Sellers. He wrote not only of Polk's career but also a history of the many divisive issues confronting Congress. Three other studies revolved around subjects who opposed the trend of sectionalism in the South. Frank Freidel, in Francis Lieber (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1947), presented an interesting account of how this professor at South Carolina College struggled against the rising tide of pro-slavery arguments. Two strong

unionists are well treated in William G. Brownlow, Fighting Parson of the Southern Highlands (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1937), by E. Merton Coulter; and Joseph Howard Parks, John Bell of Tennessee (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1950).

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