

Chapter 101 - Another Race Riot Breaks Out In Cincinnati

Time: Summer 1841

Anti-Slavery Activists Increase Racial Tensions In The City



A Free Black Man Standing Tall

Five years have passed since the border town of Cincinnati was last torn apart by racial violence.

At that time white mobs pillaged black neighborhoods following the publication of inflammatory newspaper articles by the abolitionist, James Birney.

Why the so-called “Queen City of the West” fosters such racial animosity may be explained in a telling observation from the French historian, Alexis De Tocqueville, who visits America in 1831:

Race prejudice seems stronger in those states that have abolished slavery than in those where it still exists, and nowhere is it more intolerant than in those states where slavery was never known.

Ohio is one such state that has never known slavery since entering the Union in 1803.

By 1840, however, the 95% white population in Cincinnati is living alongside 2,240 free blacks, many of whom have earned enough money to purchase their freedom. They have built their own community in the “Bottoms” neighborhood around the Bethel AME and Union Baptist Churches, opened three schools run by The Coloured Education Society, and hold upwards of 90 skilled labor jobs, from barbering to mechanics.

Still, the majority of mainstream white citizens want nothing to do with the Africans.

Not only do they regard blacks as a lesser species – the traditional 3/5th of a full man in the Constitution -- but also as a danger – to both their physical safety and their economic future. For Cincinnati lies directly across the Ohio River from the slave state of Kentucky, where its commercial transactions depend heavily on a willingness to oppose both talk of abolition and support for run-away slaves.

The presence of Lane Theological Seminary in Cincinnati further complicates the matter.

Lane opens in 1829 to train Presbyterian ministers in the west. In 1834 it is the site of fierce debates over slavery, which divides its President, Lyman Beecher, who favors gradual emancipation and colonization, from students led by Theodore Weld, a Finney disciple, who calls for freedom now and assimilation. While Weld's faction transfers to Oberlin College, some 220 miles to the North, abolitionist fervor still lingers in Cincinnati.

One proponent, the lawyer Salmon P. Chase, arouses the ire of local merchants in May 1841 when he wins a court case on behalf of Mary Towns, a runaway slave from Kentucky. This prompts the pro-slavery *Cincinnati Enquirer* newspaper to initiate a campaign against "trouble-makers" riling up the black population.

Time: September 3-4, 1841

Free Blacks Fight Back Against Rampaging White Mobs

As summer rolls on, the city is hit by a prolonged heat wave and drought, which causes the river to fall, along with jobs on boats and wharves. Tensions increase daily and random fights break out.

It's unclear exactly what sparks the riot, but it begins at a candy store on Fifth Street owned by an abolitionist named Cornelius Burnett. Along with his sons, Burnett has recently fought local police who were demanding that he turn over a run-away slave. The incident is not forgotten and a white mob begins their rampage by demolishing Burnett's store before heading into a black enclave, "Bucktown." Once there they begin to pillage black homes and businesses.

But rather than repeating their passive stance during the 1836 riots, blacks this time fight back, with some 50 organized and armed fighters led by 28 year old named Major James Wilkerson, grandson of a Revolutionary War soldier, and elder in the AME church.

After Wilkerson's band initially drives them back on the night of September 3, white forces return with a six pound cannon and resume their reign of terror.

The violence ends when local militiamen step in to enforce marshal law. But the order restored is anything but just for the free blacks. The city authorities arrest 300 blacks and no whites; allow Kentuckians to visit jail cells in search of run-aways; re-institute the 1807 requirement that blacks post \$500 personal bonds; and seize all weapons held by blacks.

Like the race riots of 1824 and 1831 in the Hardscrabble area of Providence, and in Five Points N.Y. in 1834, the Boston violence in 1836 and 1841 set the stage for bloody times to come in America.

Chapter 102 - *Prigg v Pennsylvania* Adds To Mounting Tension Over “Fugitive Slaves”

Time: March 1, 1842

The Supreme Court Upholds The Fugitive Slave Law

Cincinnati is only one of many cities where issues arise over run-away slaves.

In 1842 the spotlight shifts to York County Pennsylvania and a black woman named Margaret Morgan.

Margaret’s parents were slaves owned by a mill owner named John Ashmore, in Hartford County, Maryland, who in 1820 declares that he has “set them free” While Ashmore never signs a formal manumission papers, Margaret believes she is free and marries a free black man, Jerry Morgan.

They start a family and live for several years in Maryland before deciding to move to York County, Pennsylvania in 1832. Ashmore makes no protest regarding the move.

But then, five years later in 1837, John Ashmore dies and a female heir, his niece Margaret Beamis, claims that both Morgan and her children are now her property.

She hires a neighbor, Edward Prigg, to capture and return “the runaways.” While Prigg has a warrant, the constable in York County refuses to act on it, so Prigg forcibly abducts Morgan and her two children, and sells them to a slave dealer, who plans to ship them South.

A grand jury in Pennsylvania indicts Prigg and his three accomplices for violating the state’s 1826 Personal Liberty statute, and asks Maryland to arrest and extradite him. It agrees to do so, with the understanding that, if convicted, he will not be jailed until the U.S. Supreme Court rules on the case.

Prigg is tried in Pennsylvania and found guilty of kidnapping under the state law in question:

If any person...after the passing of this act, by force and violence, take and carry away...any negro or mulatto, from any part or parts of this commonwealth...with a design and intention of selling and disposing of...such negro or mulatto, as a slave or servant for life...his or their aiders or abettors, shall on conviction thereof...be deemed guilty of a felony..

This decision alarms the slave-holding states, especially Maryland, which appeals the decision in May 1840 on behalf of Prigg. It argues that the 1826 Pennsylvania law violates the euphemistic

“Fugitives From Labor Clause” in Article IV of the Constitution, and the subsequent 1793 Fugitive Slave Act:

No person held to service or labor in one state, under the laws thereof, escaping into another, shall, in consequence of any law or regulation therein, be discharged from such service or labor; but shall be delivered up, on claim of the party to whom such service or labor may be due.

While clear about intent, neither law spells out whether enforcement belongs at the state or federal level.

On appeal, the Prigg case finally reaches the Supreme Court, where arguments are heard by Roger Taney and his associates on February 8-10, and a judgment is rendered on March 1, 1842.

Justice Joseph Story issues the overall “Opinion of the Court” which, by an 8-1 majority, strikes down the Pennsylvania law and rules in favor of Maryland and Prigg.

Time: March 1, 1842

A Loophole In the Prigg Decision Leaves Enforcement In Doubt

That apparent unanimity, however, is diminished when seven of the justices feel compelled to publish their own individual interpretations.

One such clarification belongs to Chief Justice Taney, ever a states’ rights advocate and a stickler for detail. He agrees that it is the right of the master to arrest a run-away in any state where found, but objects to the notion that local laws to support the effort have no bearing vis a vis federal statutes.

I concur in the opinion pronounced by the Court that the law of Pennsylvania, under which the plaintiff in error was indicted, is unconstitutional and void, and that the judgment against him must be reversed. But...I do not assent to all the principles contained in the opinion...(and) I agree entirely in all that is said in relation to the right of the master, by virtue of the third clause of the second section of the Fourth Article of the Constitution of the United States, to arrest his fugitive slave in any State wherein he may find him... But, as I understand the opinion of the Court, it goes further, and decides that the power to provide a remedy for this right is vested exclusively in Congress, and that all laws upon the subject passed by a State since the adoption of the Constitution of the United States are null and void...

A second opinion comes from the lone dissenter in the case, the formidable John McLean of Ohio. McLean is nominated to the high court in 1829 by Andrew Jackson and serves for 32 years, while repeatedly being offered various cabinet posts (including by Tyler), and even considered as a presidential candidate.

He is nicknamed the “Politician on the Supreme Court” and is outspoken in his life-long opposition to slavery. His dissent in the *Prigg* decision is one that will be heard in many future run-away cases under the rubric of “once free, forever free.”

Thus McLean contends that Margaret Morgan was de facto a free woman, having lived as such for five years without objection from Ashford in the Free State of Pennsylvania. Hence she was no longer a slave and the plaintiff had no right to abduct her in the first place.

This basic logic will be embraced by abolitionists and repeated over time. McLean himself will rely on it in his 1857 dissent from Taney in the landmark *Dred Scott* case.

None of the ongoing legal debates help either Margaret Morgan or her children. With the verdict in, they are returned to captivity in Maryland, and no records exist as to their subsequent fates.

But ironically the 8-1 decision in *Prigg* is not an entire loss for anti-slavery forces. A close reading of Story’s majority opinion, opens a loophole around enforcing the law. It says that local magistrates will not be bound to cooperate with slave catchers if “prohibited by state legislation” from doing so.

This caveat leads to passage of just such “non-cooperation” statutes across the North which serve to infuriate Southern slave-owners.

Sidebar: The Shifting Size And Make-up Of The Supreme Court

While *Prigg* is decided by a total of nine justices in 1842, that number varies over time. The U.S. Constitution establishes the Supreme Court, but leaves it up to the first Congress to settle on its size. In 1789 that number is set at six. Adams tries to reduce it to five in 1801, but Jefferson bumps it back up to six in his first term and then seven in his second. It stay there until Jackson’s final day in office, when it moves up to nine.

Number of SCOTUS Justices

Date	Legislation	# Justices	President
Summer 1787	U.S. Constitution	TBD	---
Sept 24, 1789	Judiciary Act of 1789	6	Washington
March 2, 1801	Judiciary Act of 1801	5	Adams cuts by one
April 29, 1802	Judiciary Act of 1802	6	Jefferson adds back
Feb 24, 1807	Seventh Circuit Act	7	Jefferson
March 3, 1837	8 th and 9 th Circuit Acts	9	Jackson

From the beginning, Presidents attempt to “stack the court” in favor of judges who share their political views. Federalist-minded judges dominate until Jefferson moves toward Democratic-

Republicans in 1804, aided by the expansion to seven seats. Van Buren completes Jackson's shift toward Democrats achieving a 9-0 majority by 1841. This configuration holds until Fillmore names a Whig in 1851. Lincoln names four Republicans and one Democrat during his tenure. It is not until 1870, under Grant, that the Republicans control the court.

Political Make-Up Of The Justices

President	Ends	# Named	Split at Start	Split at End
Washington	1797	11	6 Federalists	6 Federalists
J. Adams	1801	3	6 Federalists	6 Federalists
Jefferson	1809	3	6 Federalists	4 Fed – 3 Dem/Rep
Madison	1817	2	4 Fed – 3 Dem/Rep	2 Fed – 5 Dem/Rep
Monroe	1825	1	2 Fed – 5 Dem/Rep	2 Fed – 5 Dem/Rep
JQ Adams	1829	1	2 Fed – 5 Dem/Rep	2 Fed – 5 Dem/Rep
Jackson	1837	5	2 Fed – 5 Dem/Rep	2 D/R – 5 Dem
Van Buren	1841	3	2 D/R – 7 Dem	9 Dem
Harrison	1841	0	9 Dem	9 Dem
Tyler	1845	1	9 Dem	9 Dem
Polk	1849	2	9 Dem	9 Dem
Taylor	1850	0	9 Dem	9 Dem
Fillmore	1853	1	9 Dem	8 Dem – 1 Whig
Pierce	1857	1	8 Dem – 1 Whig	8 Dem – 1 Whig
Buchanan	1861	1	8 Dem – 1 Whig	9 Dem
Lincoln	1865	5	9 Dem	5 Dem – 4 Republicans

Over this period, six men serve as Chief Justice, with two of them – John Marshall and Roger Taney – dominating their contemporaries in terms of influence on the cases taken and the final rulings.

Chief Justices Of The Court

Name	Tenure	Nominated By	Politics
John Jay	1789-1795	Washington	Federalist
John Rutledge	1795	Washington	Federalist
Oliver Ellsworth	1796-1800	Washington	Federalist
John Marshall	1801-1835	Adams	Federalist
Roger Taney	1836-1864	Jackson	Democrat
Salmon Chase	1865-1873	Lincoln	Republican

Chapter 103 - The *Prigg* Decision Prompts Lloyd Garrison To Call For Disunion

Time: March 1842

Garrison Tells The Slaves To Free Themselves By Running Away



Abolitionists are shocked by the high court's ruling in the *Prigg* case and none more so than Lloyd Garrison, who characterizes the decision as follows:

The slaveholding power (may now) roam without molestation through the Northern states seeking whomever it may devour.

In typical fashion, Garrison uses the adverse news to notch up his inflammatory rhetoric in *The Liberator*.

His first barrage calls upon the slaves to continue to free themselves by running away from their masters.

Lloyd Garrison (1805-1879)

His inner circle, including Lucretia Mott, support this plea, but others feel that inciting slaves to escape will only lead to greater hardships and repression. Garrison is unbowed. The timid may embrace caution, but he will not.

Time: 1842

He Then Calls For An End To The North-South Union

Thus comes his second salvo – an outright call for Disunion.

Ever the investigative journalist, Garrison has now read Madison's "secretarial notes" on the closed door debates from the 1787 Convention, finally published in 1840, three years after the ex-president's death. He is appalled by the litany of immoral compromises made on slavery to achieve the union.

This was a Union at the expense of our coloured population.

In turn, he throws his outrage directly into the faces of the Boston Brahmins who are ever ready to defend the wisdom and courage of the founding fathers.

The Constitution, he writes, is “the Devil’s pact” and he declares the time has come to break the bond.

The repeal of the Union between Northern liberty and Southern slavery is essential.

Garrison is virtually alone in 1842 in his call for Disunion.

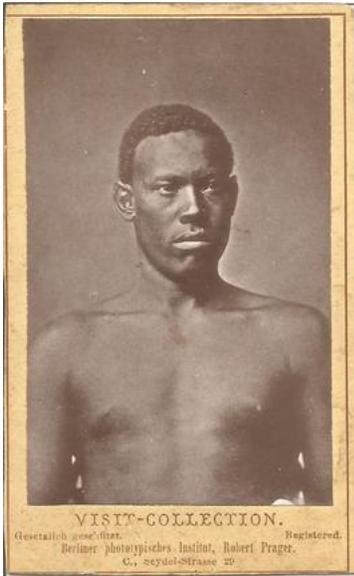
Mainstream Americans, both South and North, dismiss him as a radical trouble-maker – and those within the emerging “political wing” of the abolitionist movement see one more reason to distance themselves from him.

Yet his core supporters, often members of the New England Anti-Slavery Society he founded in 1831, remain loyal. On May 31, 1844, this regional group votes 250-24 in favor of Disunion.

Chapter 104 - The *Creole* Slave Rebellion Leads To Diplomatic And Congressional Conflicts

Time: November 7, 1841 – April 16, 1842

Britain Free Mutinous American Slaves From The Brig *Creole*



An African Man

Three weeks after the *Prigg* decision, another slavery-related controversy is played out in the U.S. House.

This one is reminiscent of the 1839 Amistad affair, again involving a bloody revolt aboard a slave ship.

In this case the vessel is the brig *Creole*, owned by a Richmond firm, and transporting 135 slaves from Virginia to the auction market in New Orleans.

On November 7, 1841, an open hatch allows a band of nineteen captives to come on deck and overpower the ten-man crew, severely wounding the captain, Robert Ensor, and stabbing a slave dealer, John Hewell, to death. During the melee, several others are hurt, including a slave who subsequently dies.

The leader of the rebels is twenty-five year old Madison Washington, a former run-away to Canada, who had been recaptured in Virginia after coming back to retrieve his wife. Once in control of *Creole*, he orders the helmsman to sail east toward the free colony of Liberia, but alters course because the ship lacks the necessary provisions. Instead he turns south and, on November 9, arrives at Nassau, a British-owned island in the Bahamas, where slavery has been banned since 1834.

When the American Counsel, John Bacon, learns of the incident, he assembles a contingent of sailors to board the ship and return it to a U.S. port. The British Governor General, Sir Francis Coburn, who fought in the War of 1812, learns of Bacon's plan and responds by sending local boats to surround the *Creole* in port.



A British Veteran Of the 1812 War

Two days later, on November 14, Coburn finishes an investigation of the rebellion and announces his verdict. Nineteen of the slaves are to be held for possible trial as “pirates,” while the remaining 116 blacks are immediately free to depart on their own.

As a further snub to American slave laws, British authorities subsequently conclude that they have no right to try Americans in their courts, and that there are no “extradition treaties” in place to send Madison Washington and the other rebels to the States. On April 16, 1842, the charges of “piracy” are dropped and all are officially released from custody.

Madison Washington vanishes from history at that moment, only to be remembered and romanticized in the 1852 novella, *The Heroic Slave*, written by Frederick Douglass.

The *Creole* outcome sets off a diplomatic firestorm between the United States and British diplomats, as well as between Southerners and the small band of vocal anti-slavery voices in Congress.

Time: March 23, 1842

Abolitionist Joshua Giddings Is Censured By The House



Joshua Giddings (1795-1864)

The Congressional conflict is sparked by the 75 year old ex-President, John Quincy Adams, the first and still foremost abolitionist in Washington, since rejoining the House in 1833.

Ten weeks have passed since the initial release of the *Creole* slaves in Nassau, and Adams is on the House floor reading a series of “petitions” from his local constituents, again in clear violation of the 1836 “Gag Order.” These range from a demand to dissolve the Union in light of the *Prigg* fugitive slave decision, to censuring John Bacon, the American Counsel in Bahama, for trying to interfere in the *Creole* incident.

When Adams refuses to relinquish the floor, Representative Henry Wise of Virginia moves, on January 25, 1842, to censure him for “plotting with Britain to end slavery in America.” After

cooler heads prevail on behalf of the ex-President, southerners turn their fire on an easier target, Joshua Giddings, who also weighs into the *Creole* case.

On March 21 the Ohio abolitionist presents a nine part argument which asserts that the minute the *Creole* slaves left jurisdictional waters off Virginia, their status was no longer determined by state law.

When a ship belonging to the citizens of a state leaves the waters of that state, and enters upon the high seas, the persons on board cease to be subject to the slave laws of that state and are governed by the law of the United States.

This interpretation mirrors the “once free, forever free” view argued by Associate Justice John McLean’s in the *Prigg* ruling.

But Giddings goes further, saying that slavery violates “natural law” which supersedes municipal law.

Slavery is an abridgement of the natural rights of man (which) can exist only by force of positive municipal law.

Giddings’ argument is much more threatening to the South than was Adams’ in the *Amistad* case, one year earlier. There the slaves were owned by foreigners and found to be Africans by origin, a clear violation of the 1808 ban on international trading. Here the *Creole* slaves are born in America and owned by American citizens.

The Southerners pounce immediately on Giddings.

The only laws that govern the *Creole*, they say, are the Constitution and the Fugitive Slave Act – both declaring that owners are free to transport their human “property” into “Free States” without changing their status as slaves.

They pursue a formal “motion to censure” – first, for “introducing an anti-slavery resolution deemed to be incendiary,” and second, for “upsetting delicate treaty negotiations” between the U.S. and Britain focused on settling the Maine-Canada border disputes.

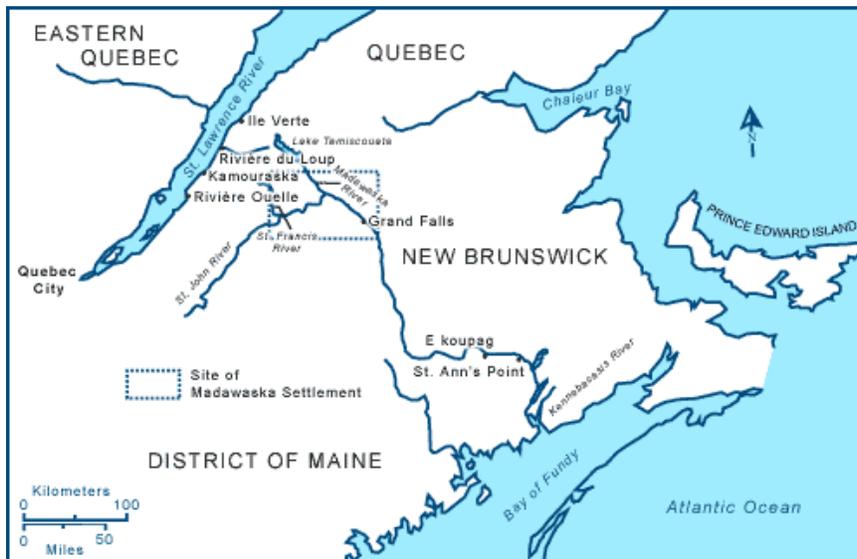
Giddings is given no chance to defend himself and becomes only the second member in House history to be condemned to this degree. After the vote he responds by rising from his chair, walking to JQ Adams desk to shake his hand, and resigning.

This flexing of Southern power is, however, short-lived. Six weeks after exiting the House, a special election in Ohio returns Giddings to the chamber by a vote of 7,469 to 383.

Chapter 105 - The Webster-Ashburton Treaty Resolves A Series Of Disputes With Britain

Time: 1837-1842

Threats Of Another War With Britain Materialize



Map Showing The Area Around Maine And New Brunswick

While the *Creole* incident plays out, negotiations are already under way toward resolving a series of other long-standing disputes between Britain and the United States.

The War of 1812 is a quarter century in the past, but violent confrontations continue to break out, especially along the Canadian border.

In 1837 anti-British protests by farmers in Ontario province lead to a “Republic of Canada” insurgency, which wins support from some Americans living on the Michigan and Ohio borders. In the process of suppressing the rebels, Britain finds that the American steamship *Caroline* has been carrying arms to the enemy. On December 29, 1837, they assault the ship in port, kill a sailor, torch it, and set it adrift on Lake Niagara heading toward the falls.

The drama of its dying plunge over Niagara Falls is captured in newspaper headlines and lithographs which anger the American public and embed “Remember the *Caroline*” in the national lexicon. When formal protests to London from Van Buren are ignored, a retaliatory blow is struck in May 1838 as the British steamship *Sir Robert Peel* is boarded and burned in American waters.

A thornier and more long-standing conflict exists on the east coast.

Its roots go back to the Revolutionary War and the 1783 Treaty of Paris, which fails to spell out the border between Maine and the Maritime province of New Brunswick. The disputed land is rich in timber, and many violent episodes over cutting rights tend to erupt. But for Britain the issue goes beyond commerce to military security – with northern Maine viewed as a roadblock in their direct route from the Atlantic to the crucial citadel at Quebec City.

Tensions rise in 1838 when the British build an east-west road extending across the Aroostook Valley on land claimed by Maine. This leads to a series of clashes between lumber jacks, which escalate into national saber rattling. Congress authorizes a \$10 million expense for Van Buren to enlist 50,000 volunteers in 1839 to drive out the intruders, and Britain declares its intent to fight back as needed. But actual fighting is avoided when Van Buren realizes that U.S. financial problems are already severe enough without adding on a costly war. So ends the so-called “Aroostook War,” with a whimper, not a bang.

In 1840 the two sides are back at it over a post-script to the *Caroline* affair. A Canadian sheriff, Alexander McLeod, who brags about his role in the event, is arrested in New York state and charged with “murdering the sailor” during the raid. When the British learn of the arrest, they threaten war unless McLeod is released, up to the time the trial ends in an acquittal.

Between the *Creole* decision in Nassau, the *Caroline* incident, the Aroostook “war,” and the McLeod arrest, it becomes clear to the leaders of both nations that the time has come for peace talks.

Date: August 9, 1842

The Webster-Ashburton Treaty Resolves The Conflicts



Robert Peel (1788-1850)

The search for resolution is apparently initiated by Sir Robert Peel, a Tory, who begins his second stint as Prime Minister in August 1841, in the fourth year of Queen Victoria’s 63 year reign.

Peel selects the formidable Alexander Baring, 1st Baron Ashburton, to negotiate with the Americans. He is the 67 year old retired Chairman of Baring Brothers & Co, the international merchant banking firm founded by his father in 1762. The firm’s relations with the United States go way back in time, including a central role in closing the 1803 Louisiana Purchase deal. Ashburton’s wife is a

Philadelphia native, and he owns roughly one million acres (1500 square miles) of land in the contested region of Maine, so he is personally motivated to find a border resolution.

Ashburton is also a long-term associate of Secretary of State, Daniel Webster, having hired him to handle various legal matters for Baring Brothers in U.S. courts. In turn, Webster is a lifetime Anglophile, who has been a house guest of Ashburton's on visits to London.



Daniel Webster (1782-1852)

Ashburton arrives in April 1842 and meets with Webster and Tyler, whom he regards as “conceited and weak,” until the President wins him over with his hospitality. The two Americans need the negotiations to work out every bit as much as their guest, given their politically embattled status with the Clay-dominated Congress.

The talks focus on the central bone of contention, the border line between Maine and New Brunswick. Maps and records from the 1783 Treaty of Paris are resurrected in advance by Harvard historian Jared Sparks, who unfortunately concludes that the boundary proposed by the British is probably correct. Still Webster intends to rely on his negotiating talents and relationship with Ashburton to achieve a more attractive outcome.

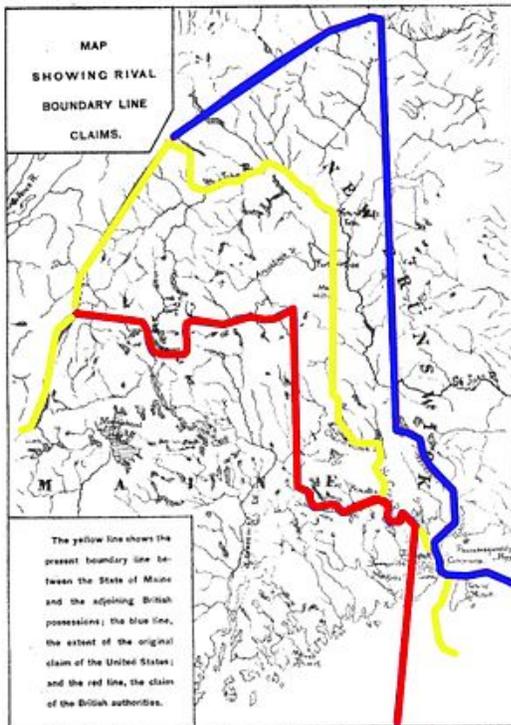
The British are not, however, the only ones who need to be won over. Fierce resistance to any compromise exists in northern Maine, and a secret government “contingency fund” is spent on a propaganda campaign to gin up state support. Some consider this expenditure an impeachable offense, but a later inquiry turns this aside.

The two parties remain at an impasse until Tyler meets personally with Ashburton, pleading that “if you cannot settle (the dispute), what man in England can?” This appeal leads to a final agreement reached on August 9, 1842.

The deal addresses four issues.

First and foremost, is the creation of a new compromise map for the Maine-New Brunswick border. In the deal, British Canada ends up with 5,000 square miles to the north, which satisfies their wish for a more direct passageway in the 650 mile trek from Halifax to Quebec. In return the U.S. gets 7,000 square miles below the British line in Maine, along with 6,500 square miles of land out west in northern Minnesota – the “Mesabi Range,” where vast deposits of iron ore are discovered in 1866.

Those easterners who dismiss the value of the British concession out west are soothed by \$125,000 payments made by Washington to the states of Maine and Massachusetts (the latter at one time having included all of Maine in its boundary).



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The Webster-Ashburton Map, with Red = UK Proposal; Map Of The Masabi Range In Northern Minnesota Ceded To The U.S. Blue = US proposal; Yellow = Final Compromise.

When Webster raises the *Creole* affair, Ashburton initially dodges, saying that he lacks authority on the matter since the Nassau rulings transpired while he was in route to the States. When pushed, however, he reaffirms the British position that any slave reaching UK commonwealth soil will automatically be declared free. This principle – a slave reaching free territory is freed – is precisely what the South fears most, if applied domestically. So Webster persists, earning two concessions in the end: British officials in the West Indies will be instructed to avoid such incidents in the future when possible; and a commission will be set up to discuss compensation (which is later granted to the tune of \$100,000) for owners of the *Creole* slaves.

Ashburton is even less sympathetic when the torching of the *Caroline* is discussed. The message to America is stay out of future internal affairs in Canada, or else. For general face saving purposes the words “regrets” is floated out to the public.

Finally, Tyler proposes and Ashburton accepts a revised plan whereby US and UK ships at sea would avoid future boardings in search of international slave cargoes.

With the four frictions apparently resolved, the negotiators shake hands on August 9.

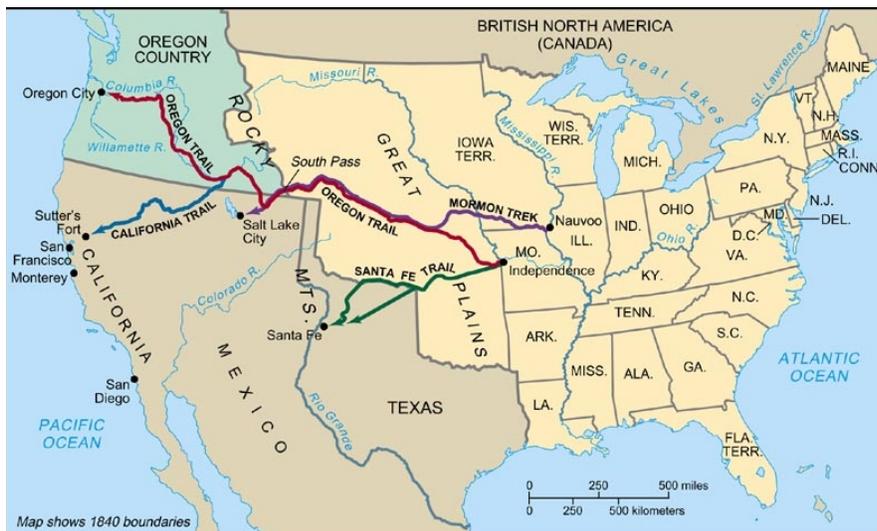
Webster anticipates resistance to several aspects of the treaty within the Senate, and two Democrats in particular – Thomas Hart Benson of Missouri and James Buchanan of Pennsylvania – attack it. But John C. Calhoun supports the deal as does Tyler’s nemesis in Virginia politics, William Rives, Chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee.

On August 20, 1842 the Senate approves the Treaty by a vote of 39-9 – marking the one significant accomplishment that Tyler will achieve in foreign policy during his tenure.

Chapter 106 - America's Drive To Explore The West Picks Up Momentum

Time: 1769 Forward

Western Exploration Milestones Prior To 1840



Map Of The Great Trails Heading West As Of 1840

While Webster and Ashburton are resolving border disputes centered on the Atlantic coast, America continues to turn its attention toward the West, the vast frontier land across the Mississippi, still claimed by Spain.

By 1800 overland routes through the Appalachian range have taken early settlers like Daniel Boone through Kentucky into Missouri. The Scottish fur trader, Alexander Mackenzie, has completed two expeditions across Canada, from Montreal to the Pacific Ocean. Captain Robert Gray of Rhode Island has sailed from Boston around the tip of South America at Cape Horn, and on to what he names the Columbia River in Oregon.

By 1820 Thomas Jefferson's dream of exploring land routes to the west coast has been realized in expeditions led by Meriwether Lewis, William Clark and Zebulon Pike. The allure of great wealth to be had in the fur trade has drawn the likes of John Jacob Astor to establish a commercially viable outpost on the Oregon coast.

Trail blazing follows across east to west pathways founded by America's native tribes. The Oregon Trail to the Pacific Northwest; the California Trail branch leading south to Sacramento; the Santa Fe Trail through New Mexico, then connecting with the Old Spanish Trail to Los Angeles. Along with these trails come settlers and commerce and the prospect of new states to join the Union. Arkansas becomes the second addition west of the Mississippi in 1836, the same year that a brash band of ranchers lays claim to the Republic of Texas.

With the east now tamed, the message to the venturesome is “go west.” The timing and origin of this advice remains in some dispute, but according to the native Vermonter and later day Iowa Congressman Josiah Grinnell, the phrase belongs to Horace Greeley, who tells him in 1833:

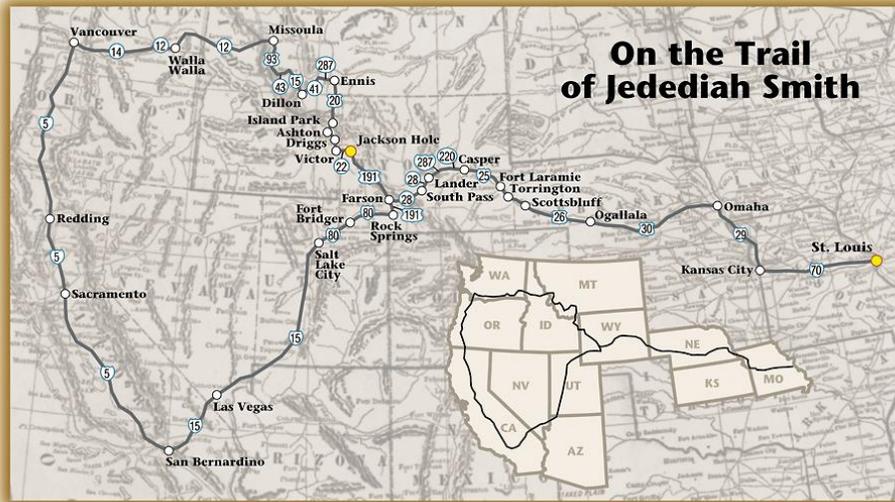
Go West, young man, go West. There is health in the country, and room away from our crowds of idlers and imbeciles.

Americans Exploring the Far West

Date	
1769	Daniel Boone’s expedition crosses the Cumberland Pass
1778	George Rogers Clark travels down the Ohio river to Vincennes, Indiana
1792	Captain Robert Gray of Rhode Island sails to the Pacific northwest, names a river the Columbia after his ship and goes 12 miles inland on it.
1793	Scotsman Alexander Mackenzie crosses Canada to the Pacific for the Northwest Co.
1796	Thomas Jefferson expresses a wish to map the western lands
1799	Boone opens a settlement on Spanish territory in Missouri
1803	Jefferson asks Congress to fund a Northwest Passage exploration
1804	Lewis and Clark set out from Missouri to the Pacific in Oregon
1806	Lewis and Clark arrive back home with maps and other records
1806	Zebulon Pike begins to explore the Arkansas River
1807	Fur trader John Colter discovers geysers at Yellowstone in Wyoming
1808	John Jacob Astor founds his American Fur Co.
1811	The Fort Astoria fur trading outpost is established in northwest Oregon
1821	Missouri trader William Becknell blazes the southwest Santa Fe trail
1822	Jim Bridger leads first trapping expedition into the Rocky Mountains
1822	Jedediah Smith reaches Fort Henry on the Yellowstone River
1823	Stephen Austin opens the first American settlement in Tejas Province
1824	Jed Smith is first to cross the “south pass” in the Rocky’s Jim Bridger reaches Great Salt Lake in Utah
1825	The Erie canal links the Hudson River to Lake Erie
1826	Jed Smith reaches San Diego, California
1828	Jed Smith travels up the west coast from California to Oregon
1830	Jed Smith again crosses the South Pass and onto Oregon
1832	Indian land declared sovereign in <i>Worcester v State of Georgia</i> ruling
1833	Bonneville expedition to Idaho, Nevada and the California Trail
1834	Ft Laramie trading post opens on North Platte river in Wyoming
1836	Arkansas admitted to the Union; Republic of Texas starts up
1837	Michigan admitted to the Union

Time: 1824

Jedediah Smith Locates The “South Pass” And Circumnavigates The West Coast



Westward Loop Explored By Jedediah Smith (1799-1831)

The legendary mountain man, Jedediah Smith, is born in New York in 1799 and explores the west between 1822 and his untimely death in 1831.

Smith’s destiny is fixed as a youth by pouring over a copy of Lewis and Clark’s journals and landing a job on a Lake Erie boat, where he first encounters the fur trade. This lures him west to St. Louis, where, in 1822, he signs on as a member of the Rocky Mountain Fur Company.

The company is owned by General William Ashley and Major Andrew Henry, both veterans of the War of 1812. The men they recruit become famous as “Ashley’s Hundred,” known for their exploratory daring and their success with fur trapping and trading.

Two of Ashley’s men become famous throughout the region – one is Jim Bridger (1804-1881), the other is Jedediah Smith.

Both men travel up the Missouri River in 1822 to the mouth of the Yellowstone River in North Dakota. After a winter of trapping in the area, twelve members of the party are killed by Arikawa tribesmen while traveling back down the river. Both Smith and Bridger survive, and later mount a reprisal attack alongside their Lakota Sioux allies. The sobriquet “Captain Smith” is granted for Jedediah’s bravery in action, something further attested to by a reported life and death struggle he survives with a grizzly bear.

Smith's greatest contribution as a western explorer occurs in 1824 when, with guidance from local Crows, he becomes the first white man to cross the Rocky Mountains at the "South Pass" – which subsequently serves as the principal pathway to Idaho, Nevada and California.

Smith's prowess as a trapper leads to business partnerships, first with Ashley and later with William Sublette, who goes on to found Ft. Laramie, the re-supply depot for future travelers along the Oregon Trail.

Between 1824 and 1830, Jedediah Smith executes a vast circumference of the west, from the South Pass down through Utah and Nevada to San Bernadino, California, then up the entire coast to Vancouver, and back west via Montana and Wyoming to the Rockies crossing.

This journey marks him as the first white man to cross Nevada and the Sierra Range, and to transverse the coast.

He departs St. Louis on April 10, 1831 with a party of 74 men, carrying goods to trade in Santa Fe. They proceed some 670 miles west to Wagon Bed Springs, Kansas. At a camp there, Smith breaks off from the group to scout for water, and is never seen again.

Several months later, however, some of his personal belongings show up in Santa Fe in the hands of a local "comanchero," a Mexican who trades with the Comanches. This leads to speculation that Smith was probably killed by their tribesmen.

Time: 1833-1834

The Bonneville Expedition Opens A New Path Into California



General Benjamin Louis Eulalie de Bonneville (1796-1876)

Benjamin Louis Eulalie de Bonneville is a Parisian by birth who arrives in America in 1803 at age seven, courtesy of an Atlantic crossing paid for by his godfather, the patriot pamphleteer, Thomas Paine. He graduates from West Point in two years and serves at several frontier outposts – Ft. Smith (Arkansas), Ft. Gibson (Oklahoma) and the Jefferson Barracks (Missouri).

Like Jed Smith, he is bitten by the exploration bug, and asks for a two year leave of absence from the army to join an expedition to the "Oregon Country," sponsored by the tycoon John Jacob Astor and his American Fur Company. The time is 1832 and the boundaries within.

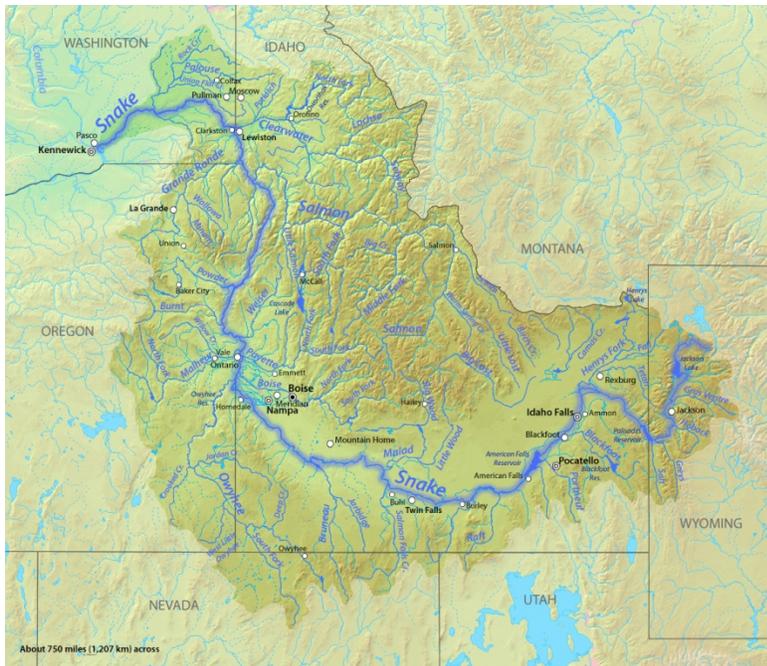
Oregon are still hotly disputed between Britain and the United States Bonneville's leave is granted on the condition that he reports back to his commanders on the situation he finds out west.

He assembles a party of 110 men and departs from Missouri in May 1832. He heads across Missouri to the Platte River and follows it through Nebraska and into Wyoming, where he builds a fur trading post along the Green River dubbed Fort Bonneville, and remains there through the winter of 1832-33.



Ft. Bonneville (red dot) Along The Green River in Wyoming

In the Spring of 1833, Bonneville continues west into Idaho, following the Snake River route.



The Snake River Route Across Idaho

With Utah and the Great Salt Lake sitting due south of his route, he makes what will prove to be a crucial decision – by splitting his party in two. His personal charge is to continue west to the “Oregon Country,” but he either senses, or has been encouraged by the army, to also find a route into California.

Whatever the cause, on July 27, 1833, he breaks off a contingent of fifty – led by his right hand mountain man, Joe Walker – to explore the Great Salt Lake region and search for a path to Alta California.



Bonneville Heads West Along The Snake River While Walker Cuts South Toward The Humboldt

Walker’s journey pays off. He drifts southwest through Utah and finally picks up the Humboldt River which runs horizontally through Nevada to the base of the Sierra Mountains. Once there, his band ascends the Virginia Creek to the Virginia Lakes, followed by a final 1700-foot climb to the summit at Mono Pass, some 10,600 feet above sea level. The journal kept by one Zenas Leonard says they cross the snow-covered pass in mid-October 1833.

The descent down the western slope of the Sierra range is treacherous and they are soon slaughtering their own horses for food. As Leonard records:

Twenty-four of our horses died since we reached the top of the mountain, seventeen which we eat the best parts....We searched for a place that was a smooth and gradual in the descent as possible...and by fastening ropes around (our horses) let them down one at a time without doing them any harm.

Each day is spent searching for a path through the remaining, albeit smaller, mountains. They encounter great sequoia (redwood) trees along the way, and finally follow an Indian path to the Stanislaus River, which takes them into the Great California Valley, some 75 miles south of Sacramento. The Spanish town of Monterrey is their final destination and they remain there until February 14, 1834, when they head back home.



In locating the Humboldt River path and weaving through the Sierras, Walker contributes to what becomes known as the “California Trail” -- travelled over by thousands of Americans after gold is discovered fifteen years later, in 1848. Walker himself lives on to 1876, leading John C. Fremont’s third expedition west in 1845, and then mounting a successful search for gold around Prescott, Arizona.



The “California Trail” Discovered By Joe Walker

Meanwhile Bonneville's main party backtracks into Wyoming to conduct fur trading with the Shoshone tribe, and ends up at the fort he constructed on the way out. He stays there until January 1834, when he resumes his trek west across the Snake River and into Oregon, stopping in March 1834 in tribal territory at Ft. Nez Perce, owned by the rival Hudson Bay Company.

He will make two separate attempts to trade with the Hudson firm at the fort, but is turned away both times. The British simply want nothing to do with their long-time rival, JJ Astor. This same rejection repeats itself when he heads further west toward Ft. Vancouver – and, discouraged, he turns back east, staying the rest of the winter in upper Utah, again trading with the Shoshones. In April 1835 Bonneville heads home, arriving at Independence, Missouri in August.

Once there he finds that his army commission has been revoked after overstaying his two year leave by almost fifteen months. He is, however, well connected and makes his appeal to John Jacob Astor and Andrew Jackson's Secretary of War, Lewis Cass, who reinstates him. After service at various western forts, he fights in the Mexican War at Veracruz, is promoted to Colonel, and given command over the Department of New Mexico. At the start of the Civil War, he is breveted as Brigadier General and helps recruit troops in Missouri. He dies in the state in 1871, age eighty-two.

Chapter 107 - John Fremont's First Expedition Reaches The "South Pass"

Time: May 22, 1842

The 1842 Fremont Expedition To The "South Pass" Is Organized



Between 1842 and 1854, frontiersman, topographical engineer and future presidential candidate, John C. Fremont will complete five separate expeditions to the west.

By the time Congress sets aside \$30,000 to fund his first trip west, the main routes he will follow – along the Oregon and Santa Fe Trails – have been thoroughly “blazed” by a host of prior tribesmen and trappers alike.

However, as of 1842, none of them have produced reliable maps or detailed descriptions of the trails. Fremont lays out the scientific process required.

John C. Fremont (1813-1890)

There was a mass of astronomical and other observations to be calculated and discussed before a beginning on [a map] could be made. Indeed, the making of such a map is an interesting process. It must be exact. First, the foundations must be laid in observations made in the field; then the [mathematical] reductions of these observations to latitude and longitude; afterward the projection of the map, and the laying down of positions fixed by the observation; then the tracings from the sketch-books of the lines of the rivers, the forms of the lakes, the contours of the hills. Specially, it is interesting to those who have laid in the field these foundations, to see them all brought into final shape--fixing on a small sheet the results of laborious travel over waste regions, and giving to them an enduring place on the world's surface.

The tasks will fall to Freeman and his various companions.

The initial 1842 expedition is led by three men, each uniquely qualified for the journey.

In overall command is 2nd Lt. John Fremont, who joins the U.S. Army Topographical Engineers Corp in 1838. His background is anything but conventional.

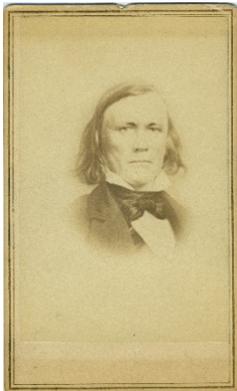
His mother, Anne, is the daughter of a wealthy Virginia planter whose estate is dissipated, leaving her to fend for herself. She marries an elderly Richmond man, then carries on an affair with a French ex-patriot, Charles Fremon, who had fought for the monarchy. Together they have an out-of-wedlock son, John Fremon, in 1813. After two years at The College of Charleston,

Fremont embarks on a military career, teaching mathematics aboard a naval sloop. His interests shift to topographical engineering and, in 1838, he begins to survey land west of St. Louis, where the Missouri River, flowing eastward from the Rockies, empties into the Mississippi River.

In 1840, Fremont (who has added a “t” to his name) is in Washington, D.C. to report on his survey, where he meets Jessie Benton, the 15 year old daughter of Senator Thomas Hart Benton. Jesse has been reared like a son by her powerful father, Missouri’s first senator since 1821, a fierce Jackson man, and a leading advocate of U.S. territorial expansion. Much to his chagrin, the ever willful Jessie elopes with Fremont in 1841.

Reconciliation follows banishment, and in 1842 Benton secures a commission for Fremont to begin “mapping the west,” a journey that will eventually lead on to his sobriquet as “The Pathfinder” and to future fame.

As his designated expedition “guide,” Fremont selects Christopher “Kit” Carson, who grows up in Franklin, Missouri, along the Santa Fe Trail, on land his father purchases from Daniel Boone. He is a restless youth, and in 1826, at age 17, sets out West with a band of trappers. Over the next 15 years, he becomes a well-known “mountain man,” hunting and trading up and down the Rocky Mountains, while often living among the various Indian tribes. Like Fremont, his mapping expeditions will secure him lasting fame.



Kit Carson (1809-1868)

The third key figure is Charles Preuss, who is born in Germany in 1803, studies geodesy (the science associated with measuring the earth), and becomes a surveyor and mapmaker for the government of Prussia. He immigrates to America in 1834 and is hired on by Fremont for his science -- to accurately measure longitudes and latitudes, temperatures and barometric pressures -- and for his artistic talent, to create visually attractive maps.

Fremont rounds out his band with 21 others, mostly experienced French trappers who are familiar with the routes and are known by various native tribes and outpost proprietors along the way. Foraging for game will be crucial, so he hires an Illinois hunter named Maxwell. He also adds Randolph Benton, the twelve year old son of his powerful father-in-law senator, “for development of mind and body which such an expedition would give.”

Together they set out from St. Louis on May 22, 1842., heading west 240 miles by steamboat along the bend of the Missouri River to Independence, where America’s two great early highways converge – the Santa Fe Trail drifting southward New Mexico and the Oregon Trail headed to Oregon in the north.

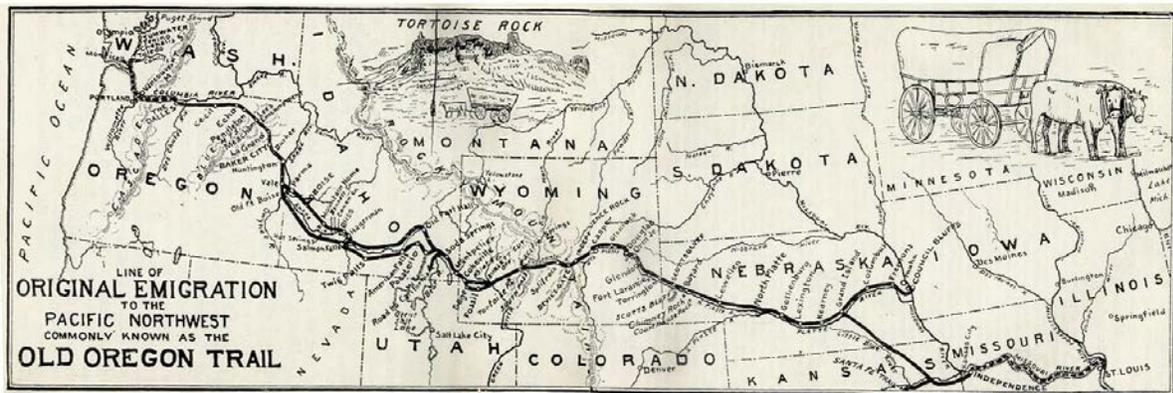
Time: July 1842

The Party Reaches The Platte River In Early July

Once at Independence, Fremont further outfits the expedition with wagons, livestock, provisions and scientific gear for the overland trip ahead.

The goal for their trip is fairly modest in scope – to reach the South Pass break in the Rocky Mountains in Wyoming and then turn around and come home with detailed maps and descriptions in hand.

They will follow the Oregon Trail, originally blazed by predecessors including the Native American tribes, Lewis and Clarke and Colter, Jim Bridger, Jedediah Smith, de Bonneville and others.



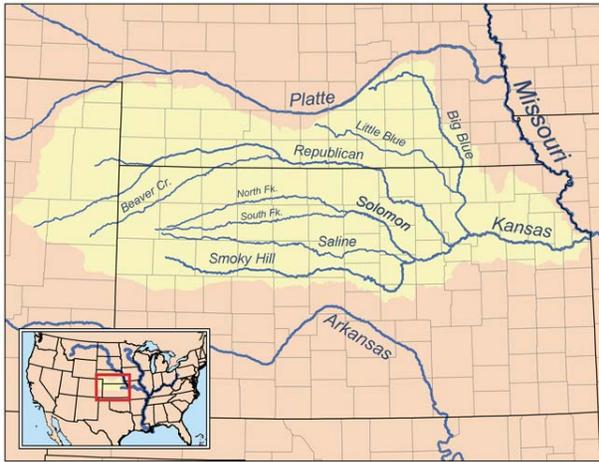
Map of the Old Oregon Trail Leading All The Way Back To St. Louis, Missouri

On June 10, they pick up the trail heading due west alongside the Kansas River. They arrive at the approximate future site of Lawrence, Kansas, on June 12, and Topeka on June 14. From there they turn north toward the Nebraska Territory, on a route that parallels the Big Blue River. On June 17, they mingle with a local Indian tribe. Fremont, who speaks French fluently, observes this moment in time.

A number of Kansas Indians visited us today...(and) I found one sitting on the ground among the men, gravely and fluently speaking French...as any of my party, nearly all of French origin."

They move up the Big Blue into the Nebraska Territory to the Platte River, making roughly 20 miles on an average day, and again shift west to the head of the Little Blue River, which they reach on June 22. Fremont captures their daily routine.

During the day...making astronomical observations...to lay down the country...(and) keep up our map regularly in the field.



Map of the Kansas and Big Blue Rivers Heading to the Platte

Along with basic survey work comes detailed descriptions from the realm of earth sciences – plants and flowers, soil content and geologic formations, types of timber and grassland, species of animals.

The landscapes opening up before their eyes are breathtaking. On June 30 – in language that will later capture the imagination of the American public – Fremont describes his initial sighting of the Plain's buffalo herds:

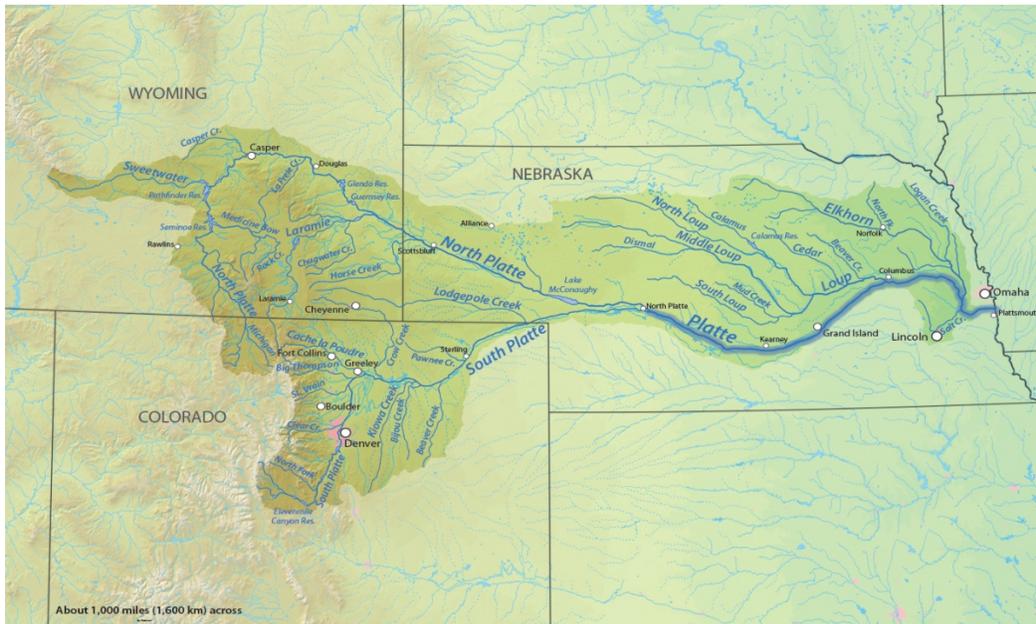
June 30th. First view of buffalo. The air was keen the next morning at sunrise, the thermometer standing at 44 degrees and it was sufficiently cold to make overcoats very comfortable. A few miles brought us into the midst of the buffalo swarming in immense numbers over the plains, where they had left scarcely a blade of grass standing. Mr. Preuss, who was sketching at a little distance in the rear, had at first noted them as large groves of timber.

In the sight of such a mass of life, the traveler feels a strange emotion of grandeur. We had heard from a distance a dull and confused murmuring, and when we came in view of their dark masses, there was not one among us who did not feel his heart beat quicker. It was the early part of the day when the herds are feeding, and everywhere they were in motion. Here and there a huge old bull was rolling in the grass and clouds of dust rose in the air from various parts of the bands, each the scene of some obstinate fight. Indians and buffalo make the poetry and life of the prairie and our camp was full of their exhilaration.

On July 1, Fremont further captures the spirit of adventure around a hunt for cow meat.

*My horse was a trained hunter, famous in the West, under the name of Proveau...in a few minutes he brought me alongside the cow, and rising in my stirrups, I fired at a distance of a yard, the bullet entering at the termination of the long hair **and** passing near the heart...felling her.*

July 2 brings the party to the branch of the Platte River, with the North branch some 2,250 feet wide and the South branch a mere 450 feet. The main party heads up the North artery, their destination being the fur trading outpost at the Laramie, in the Wyoming Territory.



The Platte River Branching North Along The Oregon Trail And South Along The Santa Fe Trail

Time: August 1842

They Reach Their South Pass Destination

On July 9, excitement builds as their final destination finally comes into view.

This morning we caught the first faint glimpse of the Rocky Mountains, about sixty miles distant.

Their exuberance, however, is tempered by dwindling supplies, especially foodstuffs, where their diaries bemoan a lack of coffee, salt, sugar, bread, macaroni and cow meat in particular.

The taciturn map-maker, Charles Preuss, emerges as the chief grumbler among the crew, often critical of Fremont's leadership, especially as it relates to what he considers foolish gambles.

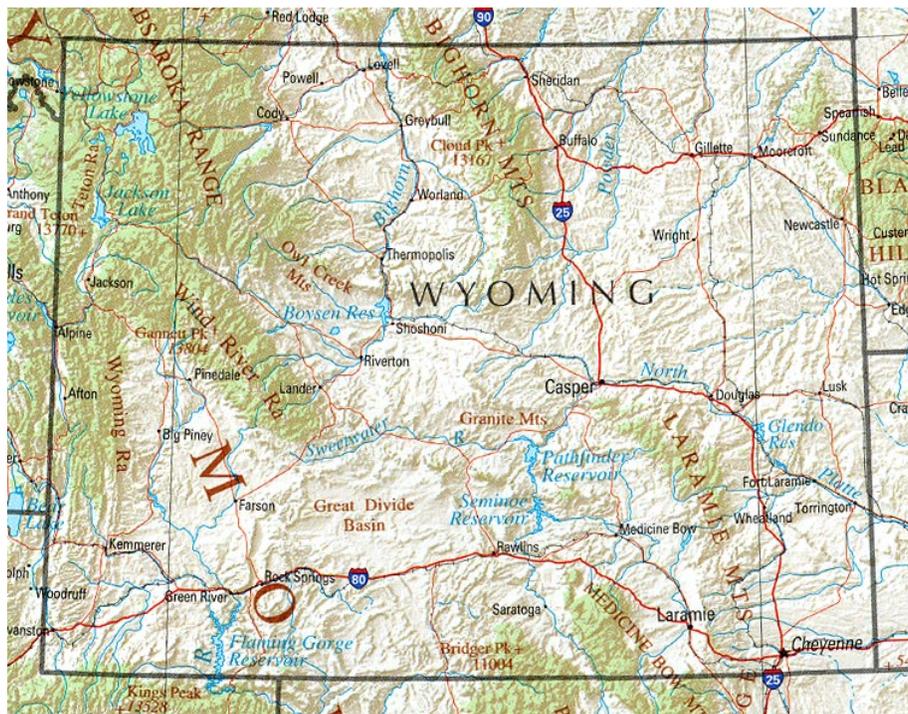
It is ridiculous (of him) to risk lives to find the elevations of every mountain range.

At 4PM on July 13 the weary travelers arrive at the fur trading outpost at Laramie. The site is first developed in 1815 by a French trapper, Jacques La Ramee. It is converted into an actual fort in 1834 by the Kentucky native, William Sublette, who names it Fort William in his own honor. In 1841 John Jacob Astor's firm buys the land and rechristens it Fort John. But all along it is referred to as the fort at the Laramie River -- and thus it becomes Fort Laramie in 1849, after the U.S. Army buys it for \$4,000 to support and protect settlers heading toward the gold fields of California.

By 1842, the structure itself has been modified from a modest 80 x 100 feet log enclosure to a much more expansive quadrangle, made of clay, with walls reaching 15 feet high, and reinforced inside by a square tower with rifle ports. On occasion it has been tested by local Sioux and Cheyenne raiding parties.

Their stay at Fort Laramie lasts for eight days, from July 13 to July 20. They use this time to rest up and refit their caravan for the winding 320 mile uphill climb toward the Rockies which lies ahead.

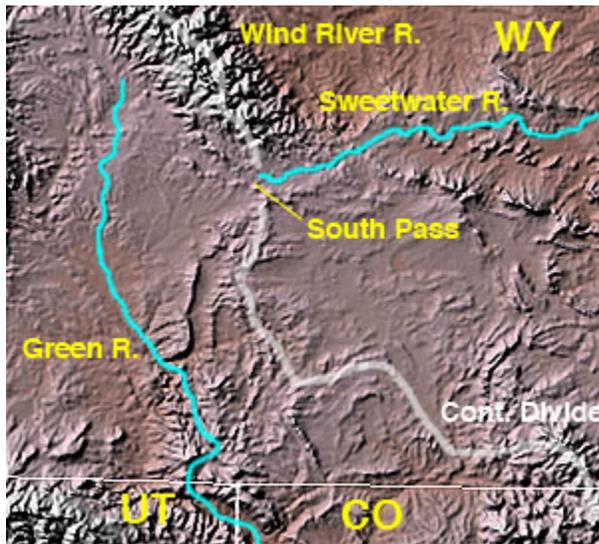
On July 21 they begin their ascent across the High Plains of Wyoming, heading northwest along the Platte, then swinging back southwest along the Sweetwater River toward the summit of the South Pass.



Map Showing Fremont's Fort John (Laramie) – Platte – Sweetwater – South Pass Route

By July 28 they are one week into their trudge and encountering the effects of a severe drought. The ground is now covered daily by swarms of grasshoppers and other insects, which devour the grass needed for grazing. This depletes the buffalo herds, threatens the Plains Indian tribes with starvation, and raises the specter of hostile raiding parties. Some argue in favor of turning back, but Fremont brushes them aside and plunges onward.

On August 7 they reach the mouth of the Sweetwater River and on August 8 they are at their destination, the summit of the South Pass, where they are almost immediately greeted by “a severe storm of hail.”



Map Of The South Pass

When Fremont arrives there, the South Pass is less well known than its northern counterpart, the Lemhi Pass, which Lewis and Clark followed in their 1805 “water-route” sortie to the Pacific coast.

Both Passes are roughly 7,400 feet above sea level – or half the height of the typical Rocky Mountain range.

The South Pass is 35 miles wide. Those previously crossing it include the Astorian trapper, Robert Stuart, in 1811, the fur merchant, W.H. Ashley, in 1824, and the colorful army Captain, Benjamin Louis de Bonneville, born in Paris and a West Point graduate, who leads a 100 man train caravan through in 1832.

Once at his planned destination, Fremont is amazed by the grandeur that surrounds him at daybreak.

The scenery becomes hourly more scenic and grand...the sun has just shot above the wall, and makes a magical change. The whole valley is growing and bright, and all the

mountain peaks are gleaming like silver...the pines on the mountain seem to give it much additional beauty.

While he reckons that the party has come 950 miles from the Kansas River, once Fremont views the Wind River Mountains to his north, he can't resist the temptation to conquer them.

I left the valley a few miles from our encampment intending to penetrate the mountains as far as possible.

Time: August 15 – October 17, 1842

Fremont Plants His American Flag On A Wind River Mountain Peak

The Wind River Mountain slashes some 100 miles in a northwesterly fashion from the entrance to the South Pass.

The range is split down the middle by its portion of the Great Continental Divide, the series of mountains running the length of North and South America from the Bering Straits to the Strait of Magellan – with rivers to the west running to the Pacific Ocean and those to the east seeking the Atlantic.



The Wind River Range With Fremont's Peak (Actually About 80% Up The Spine)

On his ascent, Fremont encounters an idyllic lake.

Winding our way up a long ravine, we came unexpectedly in view of a most beautiful lake, set like a gem in the mountains. I have called it the Mountain Lake.

The natural beauty of the place draws him onward. On August 12 he writes:

Of all the strange places on...our long journey none left so vivid an impression on my mind as this place.

On August 13, he reflects on the “savage sublimity of the naked rock” all around him, and compares its “wildness” to the unbound, pioneering character of the American people.

It is not by the splendor of far off views, which have lent such a glory to the Alps, that these impress the mind; but by a gigantic disorder of enormous masses, and a savage sublimity of naked rock, in wonderful contrast with innumerable green spots of a rich floral beauty, shut up in their stern recesses. Their wildness seems well suited to the character of the people who inhabit the country.

His band finally settles on scaling a high promontory point they spot, about three-quarters of the way up the spine of the ridge. On August 15, 1842 they reach their objective and celebrate by planting a flag.

I sprang upon the summit, and another step would have precipitated me into an immense snow field 500 feet below. (Once there) we fixed a ramrod in a crevice (and) unfurled the national flag to wave in the breeze where never a flag waved before.

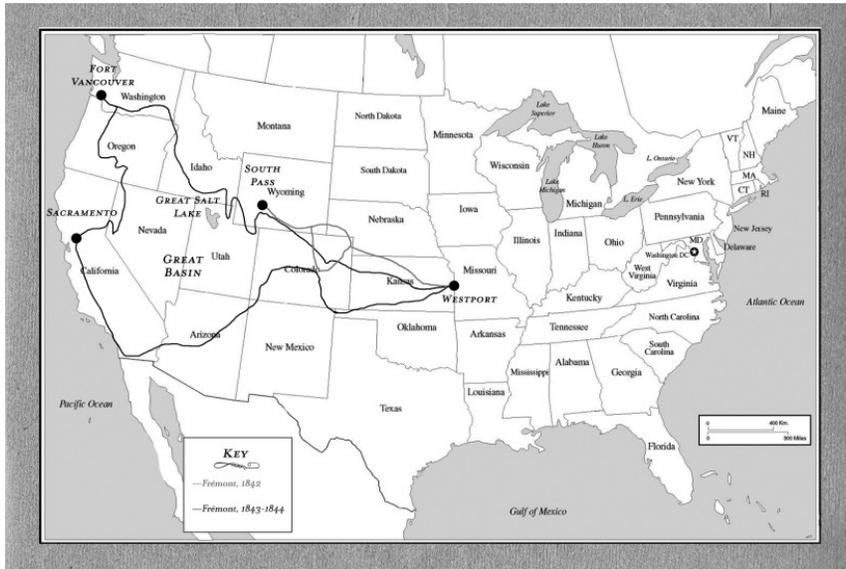
Thereafter this site will become known as *Fremont's Peak*.

Having more than accomplished their duties, the band begins their two month journey back home. Fremont arrives in St. Louis on October 17, where he learns of a new challenge coming his way.

Chapter 108 - Fremont's Second Expedition Explores The West Coast

Time: May 29, 1843 – August 1844

A Second Fremont Journey Extends South Along The California Coast



Map of Fremont's Second Expedition

No sooner has Fremont returned from his first journey than preparations begin for a second.

His assignment this time is to finish up mapping of the entire Oregon Trail route, pushing beyond the South Pass and heading northwest all the way to Fort Vancouver.

Fremont reassembles his roughly thirty-man crew, again including both Kit Carson and Charles Preuss, and sets out from St. Louis on May 29, 1843.

The outward trip is relatively uneventful, with the party reaching the Great Salt Lake on September 6 and Fort Vancouver in early November. At this point Fremont's orders are to turn around and return home by the same route he has just completed. Instead he ignores tribal warnings about the winter ahead, and decides to swing south, heading along the eastern face of the Sierra Nevada range toward Sacramento, California. It is a decision which almost proves fatal.



Map Of The Sierra Nevada Range Heading South

By January 27, 1844, the expedition – some 27 men, 67 horses and mules, and a wheeled cannon -- is strung out and stymied in the mountains. Charles Preuss captures the moment.

We are now completely snowed in. The snowstorm is on top of us. The wind obliterates all tracks which, with incredible effort, we make for our horses. The horses are about twenty miles behind and are expected to arrive tonight, or rather, they are now no longer expected. How could they get through? At the moment no one can tell what will really happen. It is certain we shall have to eat horse meat.

Indeed they do end up eating their horses, before being saved by Kit Carson who finally finds a pass across to the west slope of the Sierras and safety. The guide carves his initials into a tree marking the location, henceforth known as *Carson's Pass*.

Another two week struggle finally ends on March 6, 1844, as they limp into Fort Sutter, east of Sacramento and soon to be famous for the nearby discovery of gold. A three week rest there prepares them for the trip home, which takes them through the San Joachim Valley to the Old Spanish Trail through the Rocky's in Utah.

Their fourteen month journey ends in August, when they arrive back in St. Louis.

Upon his return, Fremont is breveted to the rank of captain by the army, receives national publicity from the press, and is transformed into the "Great Pathfinder" by an adoring public. He is thirty-one years old, with a future ahead that will find him repeatedly in America's spotlight over the next four decades.

Time: 1842-1844

Impact Of Fremont's First Two Expeditions To The West

In reality, casting Fremont as the “Great Pathfinder” is more the product of publicity than performance – since almost all of the trails he takes have been “blazed” by many others before him.

Still his impact on America's drive to “open the West” is profound.

For the first time, thanks to Fremont's band, those eager to move across the continent have access to accurate maps to guide their way. These will prove invaluable in a few short years, first for the Army as west coast conflicts with Mexico and Britain materialize, and later when a flood of “forty-niners” head to the gold fields of California.

But beyond the sheer utility of the maps lies the magic of Fremont's often poetic descriptions of the natural beauty he encounters from one camp to the next. How much of this prose springs from his pen versus that of his wife and co-author, Jesse, remains unknown. Its effect, however, on the imaginations of the American public is undeniable.

For the first time those living east of the Mississippi can sense the vastness of the Great Plains, the majesty of the Rocky Mountains, the fertile California vineyards, the mighty roar of buffalo herds, rushing rapids, the Pacific Ocean.

Any early stirrings about expansion that the politicians and public might have felt since the Louisiana Purchase are suddenly amplified by Fremont's first two expeditions. In that sense, he becomes an important pathfinder of America's commitment to manifest destiny.

Sidebar: Births And Deaths Of Frontiersmen



It is not surprising that Americans who abandoned hearth and home on their own precarious journey across the Atlantic would form a love affair with the frontiersmen who ventured overland to the Pacific.

Daniel Boone heading through the Cumberland Gap into Kaintucky. John Jacob Astor chasing fur pelts across Canada to the west coast. George Clark and Meriwether Lewis blazing the Oregon Trail. Zeb Pike finding his 14,000 foot high peak in the southern Rockies. Tennessee Congressman Davy Crockett and Jim Bowie losing their lives on behalf of the Republic of Texas. The Missouri trader, William Becknell, who first blazes the Santa Fe Trail. The mountain men, Jedediah Smith, William Ashley, Jim

Mountain Man Seth Kinman (1815-1888)

Bridger and William Sublette making their living in the Rockies, crossing the Mojave Desert, reaching into southern California. Ceran St. Vrain and William Bent with their trading post near Taos, New Mexico, and John Sutter, whose sawmill in Coloma, California, will spark the 1849 Gold Rush. John Fremont, Kit Carson and Charles Preuss, whose maps will prove invaluable to all who follow. The host of largely unknown native tribesmen who were there first and often guided the way.

These are America’s very own explorers, their names on towns and monuments, their deeds forever memorialized in literature and songs, their spirit embedded in the psyches of those about to realize the vision of “manifest destiny” in the latter half of the 19th century.

Name	Birth	Death
Daniel Boone	Oct 22, 1734	Sept 26, 1820
George Rogers Clark	Nov 19, 1752	Feb 13, 1818
Robert Gray	May 10, 1755	July 1806
John Jacob Astor	July 17, 1763	March 29, 1848
Alexander Mackenzie	1764	March 12, 1820
Touissant Charbonneau	1767	1843
William Ashley	1770	Mar 26, 1838
Meriwether Lewis	Aug 18, 1774	October 11, 1809
John Colter	1774	Nov 22, 1813
Zebulon Pike	Jan 5, 1779	April 27, 1813
Davy Crockett	1786	1836

William Becknell	1788	April 30, 1865
Sacagewea	1788	1812
Stephen Austin	Nov 3, 1793	Dec 27, 1836
Benjamin Bonneville	April 14, 1796	June 12, 1878
James Bowie	1796	Mar 6, 1836
Charles Wilkes	April 3, 1798	Feb 8, 1877
William Sublette	Sept 21, 1798	July 23, 1845
Joseph Walker	Dec 13, 1798	Oct 27, 1876
Jedediah Smith	Jan 16, 1799	May 27, 1831
Ceran St. Vrain	May 5, 1802	Oct 28, 1870
John Sutter	Feb 20, 1803	June 18, 1880
Charles Preuss	1803	1854
Jim Bridger	March 17, 1804	July 17, 1881
Kit Carson	Dec 24, 1809	May 23, 1868
William Bent	May 23, 1809	May 19, 1869
John Grizzly Adams	1812	1860
John C. Fremont	Jan 21, 1813	July 13, 1890
Seth Kinman	Sept 29, 1815	Feb 24, 1888
Jim Baker	1818	1898

Chapter 109 - The Wilkes Expedition Adds Luster To America's Global Reputation

Time: 1838-1842

Lt. Charles Wilkes' "Exploratory Expedition" Sails Around The World



Charles Wilkes (1798-1877)

On June 10, 1842, just as Fremont is starting his journey west in Kansas, another adventurer, naval commander, Lt. Charles Wilkes, sails into New York harbor after completing a four year trip to navigate the globe.

The eventual "Wilkes Expedition" has been a long time in the making. President JQ Adams initiated the idea in 1828, but failed to convince Congress for the funding needed. Andrew Jackson picks up the cause and gains approval in 1836. Still, two more years are needed to organize the six ship flotilla and outfit it properly with some 342 sailors and scientists and necessary provisions. It is officially named the U.S. Exploratory Expedition, abbreviated as the "Ex Ex."

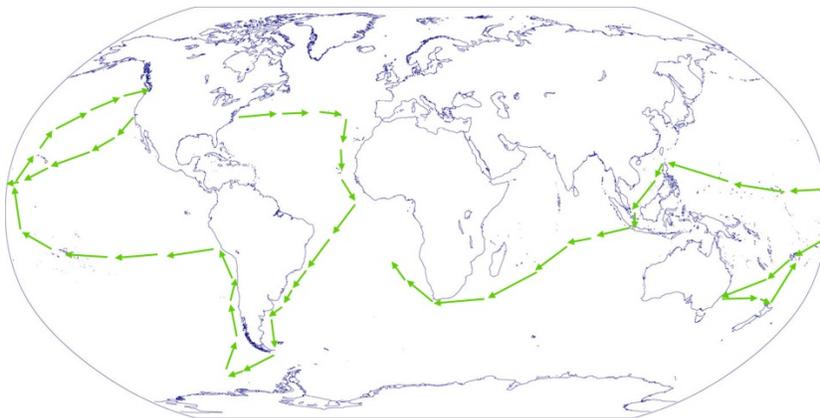
Overall command belongs with forty year-old Lt. Charles Wilkes, whose surveys of the Narragansett Bay lead to his position as head of the Navy's Department of Charts and Measurements.

Wilkes' main objective lies in exploring and mapping the Pacific Ocean, and collecting various earth science data and artifacts at stops along the way. He is aided by all the "modern" tools available to the mariner of his time, to plot exact positions across the oceans.

For millennia, sailors had been relying on celestial navigation – sighting on stars above them at night – to approximate their locations in open water. Around 1730 the first crude sextant is invented to more accurately record the position of the stars at the time of measurement. This enables a ship to determine its latitude, or how far north or south it lies relative to the earth's Equator. In 1764, the Englishman, John Hadley, solves the other half of the ship location puzzle, by building the first chronometer, a precise marine clock. It enables an accurate measure of longitude, or how far east or west they sit relative to the Prime Meridian, the line leading from the North Pole through the city of London and on to the South Pole. Together these two devices enable the expedition to deliver on their mapping priority.

Wilkes's crew totals 346 men, including nine scientists, ranging from naturalists to plant biologists, mineralogists, a taxidermist, and an expert in languages. Naval personnel are assigned the tasks associated with collecting positional data and converting it into accurate maps.

On August 19, 1838, the fleet heads out to the open seas from Hampton Roads, Virginia. Since the entire flotilla consists of sailing ships, their course will be determined by the winds they encounter. Thus while their first destination is Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, they are blown directly east to the Madeira Islands before they can tack south. What was to be a six week first leg turns into a frustrating 95 day detour.



Map Of The Wilkes Expedition's Four Year Route Around The World

Over the next four years the Exploratory Expedition will zig zag its way around the globe, creating detailed maps that will support navigation of future naval vessels and merchant ships alike. It will also spark additional interest in America's west coast, which Wilke's explores briefly in the summer of 1841.

Route Taken By The Wilkes's Expedition

1838	Locations
September 16	Blown east cross Atlantic to Madeira Islands
November 23	Back along South American coast to Rio de Janeiro
1839	
Early	Around Cape Horn and north to Chile and Peru
Later	Across Pacific to Sydney, Australia
1840	
January 25	Fleet reaches "ice island" of Antartica
July	Fiji Islands where two killed in conflict with natives
1841	
April	Head north to the Gilbert Islands then east toward U.S.
July	In Oregon & head south along coast to San Francisco Bay
Later	Back west to Pacific and Wake Island
1842	
Early	Further west into Philippines, Singapore, Polynesia
Then	Past the Cape of Good Hope in southern Africa
June 10	Arrive back home in New York harbor

The scientists aboard are also busy at every stop doing experiments and collecting artifacts that will describe what they see on the journey. The breadth of the specimens is remarkable.

Scientific and Cultural Specimens Catalogued and Brought Home

Role	Name	Specimens Brought Back From Voyage
Naturalists & Horticulturalists	Charles Pickering, Titian Peale, Wm. Brackenridge, William Rich	10,000 species of pressed plants, 1,000 live plants, 648 seeds, 2150 stuffed birds, 134 mammals, 588 species of fish and 5300 species of insects
Geologist	James Dana	300 fossils, 400 coral, 1000 crustacea
Linguistics and Ethnographist	Horatio Hale	4000 pieces, from Fiji war clubs to feathered baskets, carved rattles, fishhooks, art work, etc.
Artists	Alfred Agate, James Drayton	Tracings of collections using new "camera lucida" to project images onto paper

Of the 342 voyagers who set out in 1838, a total of 223 return either on the expedition ships or other American vessels. Fifteen have died along the way, 62 have been discharged for cause, and another 42 have deserted.

For Wilkes the homecoming sadly brings additional trials. First, his claim to being the first seaman to reach Antarctica is challenged by both English and French explorers who are in the same region in January 1840. Then complaints about his authoritarian rule throughout the voyage lead to a Naval Court of Inquiry. He is acquitted in July 1842 of all charges save one, for administering more than the maximum twelve lashes to six sailors accused of stealing liquor.

Despite these setbacks, Wilkes finishes up his written record of the voyage, which runs to five volumes and is finally published by Congress in 1845. It is a tedious rendition and fails to earn the fame that Fremont enjoys from the Journals he publishes, perhaps with some ghost-writing help from his talented wife, Jesse.

Meanwhile the collections from the trip are hailed by its sponsors and by the scientific community, both eager to demonstrate America's capacity to rival Europe in the arena of basic research and the creation of new knowledge.

As the vast amount of cargo is being off-loaded, the question arises as to where it will be housed. The answer will eventually be America's first national museum, The Smithsonian Institution.

Sidebar: The Smithsonian Institution Houses The "Ex Ex" Treasures



Original Smithsonian Institution Sitting Alone On The Future Mall

The challenge of housing artifacts brought back from the Exploratory Expedition provokes an end to the back and forth political haggling about how best to utilize a monetary windfall arriving in America in 1835.

The windfall is 104,960 gold sovereigns, packed in sacks and valued at \$500,000, willed to the U.S. Treasury by a British citizen named James Smithson, who dies at age 64 in 1829.

Smithson's life has been filled with adventure. He is the illegitimate son of an English Duke and a widowed royal mother, who leaves him a sizable inheritance. He uses part of

the money to study chemistry and mineralogy at Oxford, where he becomes friends with noted scientists of his era, including Henry Cavendish, famed for his discovery of hydrogen. He travels broadly and is known to have published some twenty-seven scholarly papers, focusing especially on the chemical properties of a zinc ore known as calamine. His work earns him admission to the prestigious Royal Society in London.

When the initial heir to his estate dies without offspring, a clause in Smithson's will directs the money across the Atlantic to the American government.

I then bequeath the whole of my property, . . . to the United States of America, to found at Washington, under the name of the Smithsonian Institution, an Establishment for the increase & diffusion of knowledge among men.

The motivation behind Smithson's gift remains a mystery. While books in his library include references to the U.S., he has never traveled there, nor does it appear he even met anyone from America. Speculation tends to focus on possible "wounds" in Britain related to his illegitimacy and a sense that the impact of his gift might be greater in a vigorous new nation just beginning to assert its role in science.

Whatever the cause, America is delighted to receive the bounty, which arrives in 1838, only to be lost when an investment in Arkansas bonds goes bust. This injustice is finally righted by JQ Adams who persuades his House colleagues to restore the fund and spend it according to Smithson's directive.

In August 10, 1846, Tyler's successor, President James Polk, signs legislation to establish The Smithsonian Institution as a perpetual government trust.

While collections from the Wilke's Expedition (or the "Ex Ex") eventually end up at the Smithsonian, they are initially stored at the new Patent Office, secured by physician and ex-Secretary of War, Joel Poinsett, an early proponent of America's scientific development.

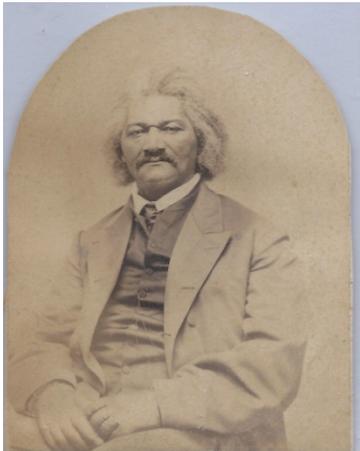
Unfortunately the first curator at The Patent Office totally mishandles the coding of the material before being fired for incompetence. Order is eventually restored first by his initial replacement, Charles Pickering, the lead naturalist on the Ex Ex, and then by Commander Wilke's himself who christens the Great Hall with a sign in gold letters reading "Collection Of The Exploring Expedition."

The original Smithsonian building – known as The Castle – is finally completed in 1855 on what is an isolated site about 1.3 miles west of the Capitol., before becoming anchored to the Mall as America's first national museum.

Chapter 110 - Two Powerful Black Abolitionists Make Their Voices Heard

Time: Summer 1843

Frederick Douglass Becomes A National Spokesman For The Abolitionist Movement



Frederick Douglass 1818-1895

On Nantucket in August 1841, the leader of the abolitionist cause, Lloyd Garrison, recognizes the powerful effect that Frederick Douglass could have on breaking through to white audiences about the evils of slavery.

It was at once deeply impressed upon my mind, that, if Mr. DOUGLASS could be persuaded to consecrate his time and talents to the promotion of the anti-slavery enterprise, a powerful impetus would be given to it, and a stunning blow at the same time inflicted on northern prejudice against a colored complexion

He invites Douglass to formally join the movement and Douglass accepts, immediately throwing himself into his destined mission.

In 1843 he joins the “One Hundred Conventions” tour at twenty-five as a lecturer. This is a grueling affair which takes him from upstate New York through Pennsylvania, Ohio and Indiana. Danger accompanies him at all stops. In Pendleton, Indiana, he is beaten by a white mob and ends up with a broken right hand that is never again fully functional.

Speaking mostly to white audiences, he recounts his own life experiences to establish his main themes:

- Blacks who are given a fair chance in America will, like himself, succeed and become good citizens.
- But slavery shuts off that opportunity by reducing Men to the status of Brutes.
- In the process of debasing blacks, whites commit atrocities that tarnish their immortal souls.
- They are often reinforced here by white churches that fail to live up to Christ’s teachings.
- The “slavery problem” can be solved if blacks are taught to read and write and given their freedom.
- Douglass himself is living proof of what is possible for America’s slave population.

The South quickly views the eloquent Frederick Douglass as a threat to their narrative about Africans as a separate species from whites, universally and irretrievably inferior, potentially violent, and best kept in captivity.

Douglass violates those stereotypes, as do other free blacks now intent on making themselves heard.

Time: August 1843

Black Preacher Henry Highland Garnet Urges Slaves To Resist Their Oppressors

While Frederick Douglass is initially intent in 1843 on using moral persuasion to convince white masters to end slavery, the black preacher, Henry Highland Garnet is calling for physical resistance as the only option left.

Like Douglass, Garnet is a run-away slave, smuggled out of Maryland at nine years old, by his parents, George and Henrietta Trusty, who settle in New Hope, Pennsylvania before moving to New York City in 1824. Once there, the family name is changed from Trusty to Garnet, in order to throw off possible pursuers.

George finds work as a shoemaker and is able to enroll Henry in the African Free School when he is eleven. He soon falls in with a handful of other youths who will become leaders in the abolitionist movement: the future Episcopal minister, Alexander Crummel; college professor, Charles Reason; the MD, James McCune Smith. Together they found the Garrison Literary and Benevolent Society, in honor of the white reformer.

In 1829 slave-catchers in New York temporarily scatter Garnet's family, and he ends working on a Long Island farm. He suffers a severe leg injury there while playing sports which leaves him on crutches and eventually ends with amputation. The disability turns him more inward, and soon both his studies and his church-going pick up. In 1835 he joins the First Colored Presbyterian Church and falls under the sway of the renowned Reverend Theodore Wright, co-founder of The American Anti-Slavery Society.

Later that year, Garnet attends an academy in New Hampshire run by the controversial utopian "perfectionist," John Humphrey Noyes. After protestors destroy the schoolhouse, he moves to graduate from the Oneida Institute.

In 1840 he moves to Troy, NY, where he completes his education under the direction of Reverend Nathan Beman, one of Charles Finney's "New School" converts. A year later he marries a Boston school teacher, begins preaching at his Liberty Street Presbyterian Church, and edits *The National Watchman*, a black themed newspaper.

Garnet's fame as a preacher spreads, and in August, 1843, he is asked to address the National Negro Convention in Buffalo, an annual gathering of black leaders searching for ways to free their enslaved brethren. The speech he delivers sounds the same moral outrage and call to arms as David Walker's 1829 "Appeal To Colored Citizens."

He opens by declaring that prior attempts to end slavery have been in vain.

Brethren and Fellow Citizens:—Your brethren of the North, East, and West have been accustomed to meet together in National Conventions, to sympathize with each other, and to weep over your unhappy condition. ...But, we have hoped in vain. Years have rolled on, and tens of thousands have been borne on streams of blood and tears, to the shores of eternity.

In particular the Christian Churches have stood idly by and watched.

...Two hundred and twenty seven years ago, the first of our injured race were brought to the shores of America. ...The first dealings they had with men calling themselves Christians, exhibited to them the worst features of corrupt and sordid hearts; and convinced them that no cruelty is too great, no villainy and no robbery too abhorrent for even enlightened men to perform, when influenced by avarice and lust.

. The bleeding captive plead his innocence, and pointed to Christianity who stood weeping at the cross. ...But all was in vain. Slavery had stretched its dark wings of death over the land, the Church stood silently by, the priests prophesied falsely, and the people loved to have it so..

The colonists tried to blame slavery on Britain, but then embraced it on their own.

The colonists threw the blame upon England. ..But time soon tested their sincerity.

In a few years the colonists grew strong, and severed themselves from the British Government..., did they emancipate the slaves? No; they rather added new links to our chains.

The time has come to recognize that God views it as sinful to continue submitting to this oppression.

...He who brings his fellow down so low, as to make him contented with a condition of slavery, commits the highest crime against God and man. Brethren, your oppressors aim to do this. They endeavor to make you as much like brutes as possible.

...TO SUCH DEGREDATION IT IS SINFUL IN THE EXTREME FOR YOU TO MAKE VOLUNTARY SUBMISSION..... Your condition does not absolve you from your moral obligation. The diabolical injustice by which your liberties are cloven down, NEITHER GOD, NOR ANGELS, OR JUST MEN, COMMAND YOU TO SUFFER FOR A SINGLE MOMENT. THEREFORE IT IS YOUR SOLEMN AND IMPERATIVE DUTY TO USE EVERY MEANS, BOTH MORAL, INTELLECTUAL, AND PHYSICAL THAT PROMISES SUCCESS.

Brethren, it is as wrong for your lordly oppressors to keep you in slavery, as it was for the man thief to steal our ancestors from the coast of Africa. You should therefore now use the same manner of resistance, as would have been just in our ancestors when the

bloody foot prints of the first remorseless soul thief was placed upon the shores of our fatherland. ...

In turn, the time has come for the slaves to “strike the blow” for themselves!

Brethren, the time has come when you must act for yourselves. It is an old and true saying that, "if hereditary bondmen would be free, they must themselves strike the blow." You can plead your own cause, and do the work of emancipation better than any others.

...The combined powers of Europe have placed their broad seal of disapprobation upon the African slave trade. But in the slave-holding parts of the United States, the trade is as brisk as ever. They buy and sell you as though you were brute beasts. ...Look around you, and behold the bosoms of your loving wives heaving with untold agonies! Hear the cries of your poor children! Remember the stripes your fathers bore. Think of the torture and disgrace of your noble mothers. Think of your wretched sisters, loving virtue and purity, as they are driven into concubinage and are exposed to the unbridled lusts of incarnate devils.

It is better to “die freemen than live to be slaves.”

...Then go to your lordly enslavers and tell them plainly, that you are determined to be free. Appeal to their sense of justice, and tell them that they have no more right to oppress you, than you have to enslave them... If they then commence the work of death, they, and not you, will be responsible for the consequences. You had better all die immediately, than live slaves and entail your wretchedness upon your posterity. If you would be free in this generation, here is your only hope. However much you and all of us may desire it, there is not much hope of redemption without the shedding of blood. If you must bleed, let it all come at once—rather die freemen, than live to be slaves.

Escape is impossible – with Garnet presciently citing free Mexico as an expansionist target for the South.

It is impossible like the children of Israel, to make a grand exodus from the land of bondage. The Pharaohs are on both sides of the blood red waters! You cannot move en masse, to the dominions of the British Queen—nor can you pass through Florida and overrun Texas, and at last find peace in Mexico. The propagators of American slavery are spending their blood and treasure, that they may plant the black flag in the heart of Mexico and riot in the halls of the Montezumas.

Fellow men! Patient sufferers! behold your dearest rights crushed to the earth! See your sons murdered, and your wives, mothers and sisters doomed to prostitution. In the name of the merciful God, and by all that life is worth, let it no longer be a debatable question whether it is better to choose Liberty or death.

Then comes a litany of heroes of freedom – Vesey, Turner, Cinque, Washington – noble men and heroes.

In 1822, Denmark Veazie [Vesey], of South Carolina, formed a plan for the liberation of his fellow men. In the whole history of human efforts to overthrow slavery, a more complicated and tremendous plan was never formed. ...That tremendous movement shook the whole empire of slavery. The guilty soul thieves were overwhelmed with fear. It is a matter of fact, that at that time, and in consequence of the threatened revolution, the slave States talked strongly of emancipation. But they blew but one blast of the trumpet of freedom and then laid it aside.

The patriotic Nathaniel Turner followed Denmark Veazie [Vesey]..., and future generations will remember him among the noble and brave...Next arose the immortal Joseph Cinque, the hero of the Amistad...Next arose Madison Washington that bright star of freedom, and took his station in the constellation of true heroism. He was a slave on board the brig Creole,

Noble men! Those who have fallen in freedom's conflict, their memories will be cherished by the true hearted and the God fearing in all future generations; those who are living, their names are surrounded by a halo of glory.

Like David Walker fourteen years earlier, Garnet ends with plea to the Four Million to “strike for your lives and liberties” against those “defiling your wives and daughters.”

Brethren, arise, arise! Strike for your lives and liberties. Now is the day and the hour. Let every slave throughout the land do this, and the days of slavery are numbered. You cannot be more oppressed than you have been—you cannot suffer greater cruelties than you have already. Rather die free—men than live to be slaves. Remember that you are FOUR MILLIONS!

It is in your power so to torment the God cursed slaveholders that they will be glad to let you go free.... But you are a patient people. You act as though, you were made for the special use of these devils. You act as though your daughters were born to pamper the lusts of your masters and overseers. And worse than all, you tamely submit while your lords tear your wives from your embraces and defile them before your eyes. In the name of God, we ask, are you men? Where is the blood of your fathers? Has it all run out of your veins? Awake, awake; millions of voices are calling you! Your dead fathers speak to you from their graves. Heaven, as with a voice of thunder, calls on you to arise from the dust.

Let your motto be resistance! resistance! RESISTANCE! No oppressed people have ever secured their liberty without resistance. What kind of resistance you had better make, you must decide by the circumstances that surround you, and according to the suggestion of expediency. Brethren, adieu! Trust in the living God. Labor for the peace of the human race, and remember that you are FOUR MILLIONS.

Everything about Garnet's speech is anathema to the South. It recalls decades-old memories of the Vesey and Turner attacks, and the more recent adverse legal decisions in the *Amistad* and *Creole* cases. It calls out politicians who would expand slavery into Texas and Mexico, along with Christian clergymen who would defend it where it already exists.

It reminds owners of the blood already on their hands and invokes the image of blood to be spilled by four million angry Africans seeking revenge.

As such, it will soon provoke a backlash across the South, led in part by the clergy.

Chapter 111 - Public Attitudes Toward Slavery Begin To Shift In The North

Time: 1840's



Lucretia Mott(1793-1880)
An Anti-Slavery Social Founder

In the early 1840's public opinion in the North about slavery begins to gradually shift.

The shift is not about discarding convictions that blacks are an inferior and dangerous race or supporting the Abolitionist's demand that all slaves be immediately freed.

Instead it is a growing sense that chattel slavery is inconsistent with the vision and values laid out by the Founding Fathers. How can a nation based on freedom for all keep some 4 million blacks in captivity?

This question surfaces for most out of their own religious reflections associated with the Second Great Awakening. It is then reinforced by a variety of perfectionist movements and high profile events.

The 1833 founding of the American Anti-Slavery Society attracts many members who would shy away from the "too radical" Abolitionists. Public testimonials by black spokesmen like Fred Douglass heighten awareness of, and empathy toward, the plight of those enslaved. Newspaper accounts of race riots and the breakdown of law and order are frightening – and resistance hardens against bounty hunters searching private homes for run-aways.

So more and more Northerners are becoming convinced that slavery is a moral stain on the nation and that something must be done about it. But the question is what?

Soon enough the search for answers turns to America's churches who prove one again that they are not up to the task.

Chapter 112 – The Slavery Issue Causes A Schism Within The Protestant Churches

Time: 1607 Forward

The Christian Churches Have Been A Unifying Force In America's History



Savanah Church

The notion of looking to religion and the clergy for moral guidance goes back to the colonial period.

The French visitor DeTocqueville observes this phenomenon in his journals:

America is...the place in the world where the Christian religion has most preserved genuine powers over souls; and the country where (Christianity) exercises its greatest empire is at the same time the most enlightened and most free.

Almost all Americans are active in their churches, either as formal members or as regular attendees at Sunday worship services.

For many, these gatherings are the centerpiece of their moral, intellectual and social lives.

Attendance cuts across a vast variety of denominations, the most dominant in the early nineteenth century being the Methodists, Baptists and Presbyterians.

Number Of Churches In America

	1790	1860
Methodist Episcopalian	700	20,000
Baptist	900	12,000
Presbyterian	700	6,000
Roman Catholic	NA	2,500
Jewish Synagogues	NA	77

Mark Knoll, *The Civil War As Theological Crisis*

The clergymen who oversee these churches are likely trained at one of the nation's sixty universities, almost all founded and run by the clergy.

American Universities Founded By Churches

Name	Year	Church Affiliation
Harvard	1636	Congregationalist
William & Mary	1693	Church of England
Yale	1701	Congregationalist
Princeton	1746	Presbyterian
Columbia	1754	Church of England
Penn	1757	Anglican/Methodists
Brown	1764	Baptist
Rutgers	1766	Dutch Reformed
Dartmouth	1769	Congregationalist

Each denomination develops its own doctrines, governing hierarchies and liturgies – and each is focused on solidifying and expanding its membership rolls.

Despite doctrinal differences, most church-goers hear a fairly common message from the pulpit. Read “the good book;” live according to the Golden Rule; band together to make America into St. Augustine’s “shining city on a hill,” a beacon of God’s light for the rest of the world to see and to emulate.

America’s churches and divinity schools and clergymen are there to insure, as De Tocqueville says, that the “soul” of the country remains enlightened and dedicated to “essential goodness.”

They are also there to preserve the Union. The old world has been torn apart by religious conflicts, but America has always found in its churches a powerful source of national unity.

Time: 1825 - 1840

The Second Awakening Begins To Fray Church Bonds

This church unity, however, begins to fray in response to the religious revivals of the 1825-1840 period known as the Second Great Awakening.

At first the turmoil centers on religious doctrine, mainly within the Presbyterian denomination. It pits the so-called “Old School” ministers such as Charles Hodge and Lyman Beecher, often associated with the Princeton Theological Seminary, against the “revivalist” preachers of the “New School,” such as Charles Finney and the Unitarians.

At stake, according to the “Old Schoolers,” is the very essence of Calvinism, which shuns the notion of individual men interpreting the Bible on their own, “reforming their own way” to salvation, or mixing religious and secular affairs.

Doctrinal Debate Among The Presbyterians

	“Old School”	“New School”
Salvation open to:	The Elect	Everyman
Based upon:	Predestination	Free Will
Bible interpretation:	Literal	Figurative
Final authority:	Church Hierarchy	Each Individual
Preaching style:	From The Pulpit	In The Crowd
Symbols:	Charles Hodge Lyman Beecher	Charles Finney The Unitarians

As “New School” revival meetings win more converts, it becomes clear that differences here are irreconcilable.

At their 1837 general assembly, the Old School faction carries a vote to oust the four main New School synods, thus effectively dividing the Presbyterians for good.

But the effects of the Second Awakening extend far beyond internal debates over Presbyterian doctrine.

Instead they foster a new generation who believe that every man is capable of achieving eternal salvation by striving for Christ-like “moral perfection” – reforming both themselves and their society as a whole.

Soon enough these “reformers” band into organized movements. Some promote temperance; others try to strike down abuses directed at child labor, the indigent or the incarcerated; a few seek greater rights for women, especially related to suffrage.

But one “cause” soon takes center stage – putting an end to slavery in America.

In large part this results from the work of one man in particular, the Presbyterian New School preacher Charles Grandison Finney – who directly touches the hearts and minds of many of the most important white abolitionists of the time, including Lloyd Garrison, Theodor Dwight Weld, Arthur and Lewis Tappan, Gerritt Smith and James Birney.

Together these and other reformers begin to pressure the Protestant churches to take a stand on slavery.

Time: 1830's - forward

Laymen Critics Blast Church Silence Over The Slavery Issue

The only on-going church opposition to slavery has come from the Quakers and from black clergymen.

The others have simply chosen to look the other way.

This evasion is now challenged by white reformers like Lloyd Garrison who call on the churches to play a decisive role in ending slavery.

Nothing but extensive revivals of pure religion can save our country. Emancipation has to be from Christianity.

By 1836, however, Garrison concludes that the institutional church has substituted “legal righteousness and ritual observance” for the true meaning of the Gospel. His wrath is particularly directed at the passivity of churchmen like his fellow Bostonian, Old School Pastor Lyman Beecher, who he says...

Sides only with the rich and powerful, goes with the South, lulls conscience-ness, aligns with traffickers in souls.

Garrison is not alone in his castigation of the white churches. Another very visible critic is the fiery Stephen Symonds Foster.

Foster grows up in New Hampshire, in a family which speaks out against slavery. He decides to do missionary work and attends Dartmouth College, where he invites the abolitionist Angelina Grimke to speak to the Young Men’s Anti-Slavery Society. After graduation, he enrolls at Union Theological Seminary, but leaves when the administration tries to silence his dissent. Henceforth he will embrace the label of a “come outer,” after the biblical admonition “come out from among them...and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you.”

In 1839 Foster becomes an itinerant lecturer for the New Hampshire Anti-Slavery Society, and is nearly beaten to death three years later by a mob in Portland, Maine, intent upon silencing his demand for emancipation.

In his 1843 book, *The Brotherhood of Thieves: A True Picture of the American Church and Clergy*, Foster skewers the church clergy.

Taken together they are apologists and supporters of the most atrocious system of oppression beneath which humanity has ever groaned – while Southerners perpetuate slavery for the sole purpose of supplying themselves concubines from among the hapless victims.

Foster is also famous for delivering his attacks by standing up during Sunday services and aiming his opinion directly at the minister in the pulpit, a practice which gets him ousted from his own Congregational church.

Later in life, Foster marries the reformer, Abby Kelley, and together the two crusade on for abolitions and for female equality and suffrage.

Time: 1840 forward

The Anti-Slavery Societies Also Call For Church Action

Pressure on the churches also comes from the American Anti-Slavery Societies at both the local and national level.

By 1836, the Society has grown to over 500 chapters in the three short years since its founding through the combined efforts of Lewis Tappan and Lloyd Garrison and their inner circles.

Chapter resolutions related to church positions on slavery multiply quickly.

A New England convention in 1836 asks whether opposition to slavery should become a necessary sign of “the true and real church of God.” A year later this same group adopts a call to “urge the necessity of ex-communication for slave owners.”

The 1839 national convention passes a proposal to “push the slave question in churches, to abolitionize them if possible, and if not, to secede from them.”

The Massachusetts Society in 1840 holds that “a man who apologizes for slavery, or neglects to use his influence against it, has no claim to be regarded as Christ’s minister, and churches who do not take a stand against slavery should not be supported.”

Both the national and local groups continue to call for the hierarchy within all churches to take a formal stand in favor of abolition and to cleanse their ministries of all slave-owners.

The effects of these efforts will soon be felt in America’s two largest churches.

Time: June 1844

The Methodist Episcopal Church Breaks Apart Over Slavery

In the summer of 1844, the Methodist Church breaks apart over a challenge to clergymen owning slaves.

The church founder, John Wesley, speaks out against slavery way back in 1774. While his followers tend to agree, they conclude that the issue is too divisive to pursue at that time.

This official passivity continues for six decades, until three New England ministers fire up the internal debate.

One is the Vermonter, Reverend Orange Scott, who is ordained at twenty-two, and rises steadily in the church hierarchy from then on. Scott is dedicated to reinfusing the spirit of John Wesley by founding in 1843 the Wesleyan Methodist Connexion, "a new anti-slavery, anti-intemperance, anti-every-thing wrong, church organization." His words echo Garrison and Foster in offering a ringing indictment of those who would compromise in the presence of slavery.

...Though public opinion commanded Mr. Wesley to desist through the medium of mobs, still he stood it out! Shame on his compromising sons! The Methodists in all parts of the United States have braved, and, finally, to a considerable extent, changed public opinion. Every man's hand has been against us, and yet we have stood firm.

But now comes up the new doctrine of compromise! Let it be banished from the breast of every patriot, philanthropist, and Christian... Shall we turn our backs upon the cause of suffering humanity, because public opinion frowns upon us? No! Never!!

...The principle of slavery—the principle which justifies holding and treating the human species as property, is morally wrong—or, in other words, that it is a sin. The principle, aside from all circumstances, is evil, ONLY EVIL, and that CONTINUALLY! ...no hand could sanctify it—no circumstances could change it from bad to good. It was a reprobate—too bad to be converted—not subject to the law of God, neither indeed could be... Circumstances might palliate, and circumstances might aggravate, but no circumstances could justify the principle." "He who has made of one blood, all nations of men to dwell on the earth' [Acts 17:26] must look with disapprobation upon such a system of complicated wrongs, as American slavery...

In 1842, Scott officially withdraws from the Methodist Episcopal Church, to protest what he considers a refusal by the bishops to even allow open discussions of slavery at annual gatherings. He is joined at that time by two other vocal anti-slavery ministers, La Roy Sunderland and Jotham Horton.

The debate over slavery comes to a head at the quadrennial General Conference of church leaders which convenes in New York City on May 1, 1844. Three weeks into the meeting, regional tensions flare when two Northern elders offer a resolution "affectionately asking" that Bishop James Andrew of Georgia either divest his slaves or resign from the church.

This places Andrew in the awkward positioning of defending himself in public. He says that he never bought nor sold a slave on his own. Instead his first slave was inherited, while another four have come his way through two marriages. While Georgia law prohibits manumission, he claims that all have been told to "live wherever they so choose."

After making his plea, a vote goes against Andrew - and he volunteers to resign to quell the firestorm.

The Conference spends the next twelve days trying to find a compromise solution. Some argue that a judicial trial is needed to remove a bishop. Others propose that a final decision be delayed until the next meeting in 1848.

Along the way, however, attendees also learn that Andrew’s case is not unique, that another 1200 or so Methodist clergymen are current slave owners.

At this point the conflict ratchets up, with Southern bishops digging their heels in to support Andrew, citing the now familiar arguments that slavery is sanctioned in the Bible and is a “positive good” for society.

This tactic finally pushes the Northern contingent over the edge. On June 8 they offer a “Plan of Separation” which passes, splitting the church into two wings.

Henceforth there will be the Wesleyan Methodist Church of the North and the Methodist Episcopal Church – South.

It will be ninety-four years before this breach is finally healed for the Methodists.

Time: May 1845

The Baptist Church Also Divides

Within a year of the Methodist schism, the Baptist Church also suffers a schism over a similar slavery-related issue.

The Church is founded in 1638 with a strong missionary tradition that sees it expanding rapidly beyond its original home base in Rhode Island. By the 1830’s its membership ranks second in the nation, trailing only the Methodists.

The sect becomes especially strong across the South and on plantations – where some owners regard slave baptisms as proof of their virtue in bringing salvation to their black charges.

Because of this membership tilt toward the South, the Baptists are especially inclined to avoid controversy over slavery for as long as possible. But this strategy breaks down, as various Northern ministers begin to attack the institution.

One of them is Abel Brown, an intensely religious youth, who becomes a Baptist minister after studying at Hamilton College. His first cause is intemperance, and his approach to stamping out “demon drink” is to cite the names of known offenders in a public forum. For this he is attacked by a mob and run out of town in Auburn, New York. He turns his attention to slavery in 1838, speaking against it from the pulpit, carrying through to action by helping run-aways escape across the Ohio River near his home in Pennsylvania. He characterizes his efforts in military terms:

I have been in close action with the enemy. Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, was one continued row. A mob drove me from the house on Friday night. Saturday night I could

not get to the house unless through showers of stones, and Sunday, the house was found nailed up.

Brown eventually becomes a leading figure in operating the Underground Railroad, joins the Liberty Party in 1840, and serves as an itinerant lecturer on behalf of abolition before his premature death in 1844 at age thirty-four.

A second Baptist opponent of slavery is Reverend Elon Galusha, whose father and uncle have both served as Governors of Vermont. Galusha takes up the ministry after studying law, and serves his first sixteen years in Oneida County, New York, the hotbed of early revivalism and abolitionism. In 1839 he becomes the first president of the Baptist Anti-Slavery Society, whose constitution calls for the church to repent for its participation in sin:

Slavery is utterly at variance with the gospel of Jesus Christ....(It) is a sin in which the churches have largely and criminally participated, we feel it our duty to do all we can to induce repentance and by kind, prudent, prayerful, and persevering measures endeavor to exert a purifying influence upon the churches with which we are associated.

In 1840 the Society turns up its rhetoric:

As Christians we can have no fellowship with those who, after being duly enlightened on the subject, still advocate and practice its abominations and thus defile the church of God.

In response, Southern Baptist ministers fire back.

Our brethren at the South with great unanimity deprecate the discussion as unwarranted, the measures pursued as fatal to their safety and complain of the language occasionally employed as cruel and slanderous.

An immediate crisis is delayed by the fact that governance of the Baptist Church is far less centralized than in other denominations. Each local church is free to operate as it chooses, as long as the principle of “baptism of professed believers through total immersion” is maintained.

The closest thing to a forum on national policy is a triennial “General Convention of the Baptist Denomination in the United States.” It is formed to seek consensus on which missions – both domestic and foreign – the membership wishes to fund in the next three year period.

In 1841 the anti-slavery forces try to force the Triennial body to ban slave holders from holding missionary positions, but their pleas are brushed aside as too inflammatory. In 1843 a Northern Baptist Missionary Society is formed to continue to agitate for change.

As the 1844 cycle rolls around, Southern members decide to “test” the will of the Triennial board. They do so in April of that year through a Georgia Convention recommendation to appoint Elder George Reeves to a Home Missions position. The application states that Reeves is a current slave-owner.

The Alabama Convention follows by demanding a Triennial policy making slave-owners eligible for any missions being funded in part or whole by Southern members.

The Home Missions council is now forced to make a decision – and they choose to ignore the Reeves nomination on the basis that their policy is to remain neutral on any and all controversies over slavery.

This deflection hardly satisfies the Southern contingent.

In May 1845, they gather in Augusta, Georgia, and vote to abandon the Triennial Convention for good. Gentler souls depart in sadness:

With no sharpness of contention, with no bitterness of spirit, . . . we part asunder and open two lines of service to the heathen and the destitute.

Others depart in anger:

We are no longer willing to work in societies where slave holders are called sinners and reviled as thieves.

Further efforts to repair the breach fail, and future governance of the church is split between The Southern Baptist Convention and the North's Triennial Convention.

Time: 1845

The Church Schisms Preview The Growing North-South Divide

By 1845 all of the dominant Protestant denominations have divided over slavery.

While the Methodists and the Baptists are most visibly split along North – South lines, similar tensions also strike the Presbyterians and the Congregationalists.

Even families and friends diverge.



Harriet Beecher Stowe, Lyman Beecher, and Henry Beecher

The conservative “Old School” Presbyterian icon, Lyman Beecher, witnesses his son and daughter, swing sharply to the abolitionist cause. The Unitarians are aligned in their opposition to slavery, but not on the remedy. The abolitionists are “too showy, too noisy” for Ellery Channing and “they would jeopardize peace with the South.” Meanwhile younger hardliners such as Theodore Parker and Thomas Higginson begin to line up alongside those calling for effective, even violent, action over mere intellectual hand-wringing.

All of the church schisms have been played out in a relatively short time, largely between the 1833 founding of the American Anti-Slavery Society and the national convocations of 1844.

All appear to be over relatively minor policy matters.

It is not as if the Northern churchmen are demanding that the South free its slaves.

Nor does it signal any wish in the North to invite freed slaves into their midst, to embrace them and make them citizens. The schisms are not about abolition and assimilation. They are not about abandoning the anti-black stereotypes entrenched in American culture since Jamestown.

Instead they are more about appearances than substance. Perhaps the churches should not seem to be condoning ownership of slaves by its officials. So say the Northerners.

This is a subtle shift, but still sufficient in the climate of 1844 to blow apart the bonds of good will that have held the three major churches together.

As such, the church break-up presages the eventual collapse of the political Union.

Both Henry Clay and John Calhoun sense this outcome.

Clay says at the time:

The sundering of the religious ties which have hitherto bound our people together, I consider the greatest source of danger to our country.

Calhoun’s observation is even more ominous:

Now nothing will be left to hold the states together except force.

Twenty years later, Abraham Lincoln wonders how the war has come when...

Both sides read the same Bible and pray to the same God.

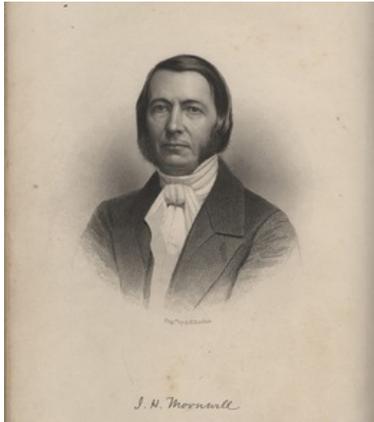
If the churches cannot hold, the political center cannot. It is now just a matter of time.

Chapter 113 - James Thornwell & Other Clergymen Offer A Biblical Defense Of Slavery

Time: 1843-1850

Reverend James Henley Thornwell Emerges As A Southern Spokesperson

Perhaps the leading defender of slavery among the Southern clergy is Presbyterian minister, James Henley Thornwell.



Reverend James Henley Thornwell
(1812-1862)

Thornwell is born to modest means in 1812 in the Pee Dee River region of Marlborough County, SC. His father dies when he is 8 years old, and his mother is too poor to support his education. But his intellectual prowess is apparent to a lawyer named William Robbins, who becomes his benefactor. He attends Charaw Academy, exhibits remarkable scholarship, and at sixteen decides to abandon a legal career to become a preacher.

A chosen vessel of the Lord, to bear His name before the Gentiles and kings, and the children of Israel;" to assert eternal Providence and justify the ways of God to men.

In 1829 he enrolls at South Carolina College, described as follows by a fellow classmate:

In personal appearance he was, perhaps, the most unpromising specimen of humanity that ever entered such an institution. Very short in stature, very lean in flesh, his manners were unpolished, but his air was self-reliant. He was evidently conscious of the mental power within him, which would- make him more than a match for most men, and would throw into the shade his physical defects.

He is initially drawn to Calvinism and to the Presbyterian church when he happens to read the Westminster "Confessions of Faith."

I felt that I had met with a system which held together with the strictest logical connection; granting its premises, the conclusions were bound to follow.

After graduating at the top of his class in December 1831, he wanders for eighteen months between scholarly studies and writing essays. This uncertainty end on May 13, 1832, when he joins the Concord Presbyterian Church, a life-changing moment he recalls as follows:

O God! I have to-day made a public profession of my faith in the blessed Redeemer, and taken upon me the solemn covenant of the Church.' I would not impute to myself any merit on this account, as I have only done, and that, too, after a long delay, what was

expressly enjoined on me in Thy holy Word. But, O God! I feel myself a weak, fallen, depraved, and helpless creature, and utterly unable to do one righteous deed without Thy gracious assistance. Wilt Thou, therefore, send upon me Thy cheering Spirit, to illumine for me the path of duty; and to uphold me, when I grow weary; to refresh me, when I faint; to support me against the violence of temptation and the blandishments of vice. Let me, I beseech Thee, please Thee in thought, word and deed. Enable me to go on to perfection, support me in death, and finally save me in Thy kingdom; and to the glorious Three-in-one be ascribed all the praise. Amen. "

In 1832, at 22 years old, he is ordained as a pastor, and heads off first to Andover and then to Harvard Divinity School to continue his studies. There he aligns himself with the "Old School" Presbyterians against the "New School" Cambridge Unitarians who embrace "free will" over "determinism."

It is an open defiance of all the established laws of exegesis; and the doctrines, which need such miserable subterfuges to support them, cannot come from God. No, my friend, we are never safe in departing from the simple declarations of the Bible. The Unitarian will tell you that experimental religion is all an idle dream; but, my friend, believe not the tale. It is no such thing.

Like John Calvin in 1540, Thornwell's belief system springs from his literal reading of the Bible.

It tells him a hard and unswerving truth – that all men are depraved sinners who are assigned their places in life according to God's providential plan, and are granted or denied salvation by grace alone.

Thornwell soon returns to South Carolina, where his fame as a preacher and scholar quickly spreads.

In 1835 he marries Nancy Witherspoon, a member of one of the oldest and most prestigious families in South Carolina. Her father is Colonel James Witherspoon, ex-Lieutenant Governor of the state, and master of "Thorntree" Plantation, a 300 acre estate utilizing slave labor to grow indigo. In giving his daughter away, the Colonel overlooks Thornwell's meager finances in favor of his growing reputation as the "John C. Calhoun of the Pulpit."

Through the marriage, Thornwell acquires, for the first time, both wealth and slaves of his own.

Time: 1840's forward

Thornwell Asserts That Slavery Is Part Of God's Plan For Mankind

Thornwell's life now revolves around his plantation, his speaking engagements, and his continued scholarship at South Carolina College, where he serves as Chaplin and as Professor of Sacred Literature and Evidence of Christianity.

His sermons become famous for their pristine logic and their emotional impact. Later in his career, none other than Daniel Webster, the senate spellbinder, will call him "the greatest pulpit orator I ever heard."

As northern reformers increase their attacks on slavery, Thornwell focuses his analytical mind on formulating a foolproof defense, one that the South will employ over the decades ahead.

Slavery, he asserts, is part of God's plan for mankind.

He arrives there by "reasoning his way" from Calvinist religious principles to a belief that the institution is sanctioned by the Bible and therefore morally proper.

He argues that the unknowable will of God shapes man's destiny and that, from time immemorial, the practice of slavery has been a part of this destiny. The Old Testament verifies slavery, from Genesis 9:25 ("Cursed be Canaan, a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren") to the enslavement of the patriarch, Joseph, the concubine Hagar, and the entire people of Israel. The fact that Christ, living amidst Roman slavery, failed to condemn it in his preaching, further proves its historical legitimacy.

He theorizes that slavery may have originally come into the world as a punishment, perpetual in nature, with the children of slaves becoming slaves themselves. But it has always been a reality in God's plan.

Then comes a remarkable departure by Thornwell from the conventional Southern narrative!

In no way does slavery reflect on the slave's ultimate worth. Thornwell absolutely rejects the notion that Africans are biologically or morally inferior to whites. They are like everyman, searching equally for salvation. They have simply been handed their place in the social order, under a biblically approved system. Their duty is to render obedience and service to their master in exchange for needed provisions and fair treatment.

Slavery is also essential, he says, to the progress of civilization and of industry. The notion that all men play an equal role in advancing society is patently false. Some are meant to lead by the power of their minds; others to follow, lending the sweat of their brows to completion of their assigned tasks.

Slavery is a needful stimulus to industry; all enterprise would stagnate without it.

Furthermore, the duty of slave-owners is to be just. Any abuses of slaves reflects negatively on the masters and not on the system itself. Among the highest duties of the master is to facilitate religious enlightenment – and this, Thornwell says, is one of the great blessings, the positive good, of slavery in America:

Slavery is the state in which the African is most effectually trained to the moral end of his being.

Thus Thornwell admonishes masters to construct places of worship for slaves, so they can learn about salvation and commit their life to seeking it. Lacking freedom of the body in no ways inhibits the quest for freedom of the soul. Each man's fate is in the hands of God.

There you have it, according to Thornwell.

Slavery is sanctioned in the Bible and it exists as a part of God's unknowable plan for mankind, with both slave and master playing out their assigned roles, each with an equal chance at what counts, eternal salvation.

Time: 1840's

Southern Clerics Align Behind The “Biblical Defense” Of Slavery

Other Southern clergy also rally behind the Biblical defense of slavery.

The Presbyterian preacher, Robert Dabney, sums up the matter as follows:

We must go before the nation with the Bible as the text, and “thus sayeth the Lord” as the answer. We know that on the Bible argument the abolition party will be driven to unveil their true infidel tendencies. The Bible being bound to stand on our side, they have to come out and array themselves against the Bible.

Stephen Elliott, the Harvard trained Episcopalian Bishop of Georgia, asserts that “slavery is ordained by God.”

Baptist pastor and slave-owner, Dr. Richard Furman, of South Carolina, also cites scripture:

...the right of holding slaves is clearly established in the Holy Scriptures, both by precept and example... Had the holding of slaves been a moral evil, it cannot be supposed that the inspired Apostles ... would have tolerated it for a moment in the Christian Church. In proving this subject justifiable by Scriptural authority [Luke 12:47], its morality is also proved; for the Divine Law never sanctions immoral actions.

Methodist pastor Samuel Dunwoody finds textual support for the notion that “some of the most eminent of the Old Testament saints were slave holders,” including Abraham, Jacob, Isaac, and Job. Given this it cannot be evil.

Thus, God, as he is infinitely wise, just and holy, never could authorize the practice of a moral evil. But God has authorized the practice of slavery, not only by the bare permission of his Providence, but the express provision of his word. Therefore, slavery is not a moral evil.

Thornwell sums it up by asserting that there is no room for religious debate over slavery. God sanctioned the practice in the Bible, and those who question it stand on the side of Evil.

He says the parties in the conflict are not merely abolitionists versus slaveholders—they are atheists, socialists, communists, red republicans, Jacobins, on one side, and the friends of order and regulated freedom on the other. The world is the battleground—Christianity and Atheism the combatants; and the progress of humanity at stake.

Opponents, he says, are the same “New School” ministers – like the Unitarians and Charles Finney’s Evangelicals --who risk the salvation of their flocks by straying beyond the literal words of the Bible into their own speculations.

If the spirit of speculation on theological subjects should once become propagated among them, there is no telling where the evil would stop.”

Likewise they distort the message of the New Testament by failing to understand that Jesus Christ was not sent here to make social reforms, but to help mankind atone for its total depravity.

Thus the message from the Southern pulpit to Northern reformers becomes loud and clear:

Leave (slavery) where God has left it, and deal with it as God has dealt with it.

Chapter 114 - The Question Of Texas Annexation Again Assumes Center Stage

Time: 1836-1843

Texas Annexation Stalls Between 1836 And 1843

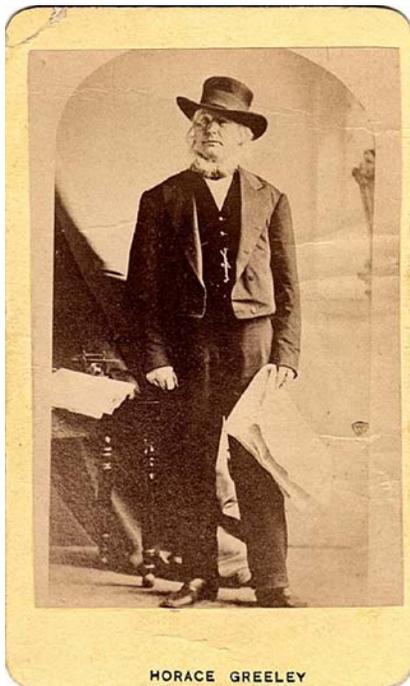
As John Tyler nears the end of his “accidental” term as President in 1844, he makes a decision that will eventually lead to the dissolution of the Union.

It involves the lingering question of whether or not to annex the Republic of Texas.

Eight years earlier, in 1836-37, Presidents Andrew Jackson and Martin Van Buren, both committed expansionists, decide against this move, after Henry Morfit, emissary to the Texas leader, Sam Houston, warns that annexation will result in war with Mexico and renewed national controversy over slavery.

The courtship, however, carries on. The Texans have solidified their territorial hold by March 1837, when the United States officially recognizes them as an independent nation. In January 1838 South Carolina Senator William Preston introduces a bill to negotiate an annexation treaty with Mexico and Texas, but it is vigorously opposed in the House by John Quincy Adams, citing his opposition to warfare and to slavery.

In early January 1839, the Texans finally break off unification talks and decide to go it alone as an independent Republic.



Horace Greeley (1811-1872)

The reaction in Mexico is one of growing hostility toward the American intruders. On September 11, 1842 the Texas town of San Antonio is attacked and occupied. A year later, on August 23, 1843, President Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna openly warns the U.S. that annexation would be regarded as a declaration of war.

This warning fails to deter Tyler, who continues to add Texas as another accomplishment in his legacy. He is swept along in this regard by a rising tide of public interest in opening the west.

Among Southern slave owners, such a move is an economic necessity, to grow more cotton and sell more slaves.

For others, the expansionary fervor seems to build off publicity surrounding the Fremont expeditions and cheerleading from journalists such as Horace Greeley and John L. O’Sullivan.

Time: 1839

John O’Sullivan “Manifest Destiny” Vision Resonates With The Public

The cheerleader for westward expansion is John L. O’Sullivan is an Irish immigrant who arrives in the States in 1813 as an infant. He graduates at age eighteen from Columbia University, and takes up law before settling on a career in journalism. In 1837 he founds the *United States Magazine and Democratic Review*, based in Washington.

The paper unabashedly supports Andrew Jackson and O’Sullivan first articulates his own views on the subject in an 1839 article titled “The Great Nation of Futurity.”

He begins by asserting that the United States represents a fundamental break with the past – the beginning of a new history for mankind in the realm of moral, political and national life.

The American people having derived their origin... on the great principle of human equality...have, in reality, but little connection with the past history of any (other nations).... On the contrary, our national birth was the beginning of a new history...which separates us from the past and connects us with the future only; and so far as regards the entire development of the natural rights of man, in moral, political, and national life, we may confidently assume that our country is destined to be the great nation of futurity.

Unlike prior societies where humanity was oppressed, America’s core values make it “destined for better deeds.”

What friend of human liberty, civilization, and refinement, can cast his view over the past history of the monarchies and aristocracies of antiquity, and not deplore that they ever existed?

America is destined for better deeds. It is our unparalleled glory that we have no reminiscences of battle fields, but in defence of humanity, of the oppressed of all nations, of the rights of conscience, the rights of personal enfranchisement.

Its “destiny” lies in “manifesting to mankind the excellence of divine principles.”

The far-reaching, the boundless future will be the era of American greatness. In its magnificent domain of space and time, the nation of many nations is destined to manifest to mankind the excellence of divine principles; to establish on earth the noblest temple ever dedicated to the worship of the Most High -- the Sacred and the True.

Given this calling, America will become the “great nation of futurity.”

For this blessed mission to the nations of the world, which are shut out from the life-giving light of truth, has America been chosen.... Who, then, can doubt that our country is destined to be the great nation of futurity?

O’Sullivan’s themes mirror those of the Puritan preacher, Jonathan Edward, one hundred years earlier.

He goes on to amplify his vision through-out the 1840’s – most notably some six years later in a second more famous article titled “Annexation.” It steps into the realm of foreign policy with an argument that becomes known as Manifest Destiny – the notion that to realize its full potential, America must extend its national borders all the way to the Pacific.

It is by the right of our manifest destiny to overspread and to possess the whole of the continent which Providence has given us for the development of the great experiment of liberty and federated self-government entrusted to us.

O’Sullivan’s call, however, is not for warfare – rather an expectation that other nations, like Mexico, will recognize the exceptional character of America’s democracy and choose to unify peacefully.

Time: April – June, 1844

Benton Momentarily Foils Tyler’s Attempt To Annex Texas

By 1844, Tyler is convinced that annexation of Texas will be popular with the public, and pave the way for his independent party candidacy in the upcoming election.

He order his Secretary of State, Abel Upshur, a Virginian Whig dedicated to the cause of expanding slavery to the west, to open a new round of treaty negotiations with Sam Houston, President of the Texas Republic.

Houston’s primary aim is to avoid conquest by a militarily superior Mexico.

After the 1836 Alamo defeat, he looks to the US as a savior, and certainly the average Texan always favors that solution. But other political leaders disagree. One is the powerful Miramar Lamar, a Georgian by birth, who wants to rid Texas of Comanches and Mexicans alike and make it a new and independent nation, with borders extending to the Pacific. Over time, Houston is also tempted by this vision, which includes a potentially explosive component -- an alliance between Texas and Britain.

Negotiations are well along when Upshur is killed suddenly by the explosion of a naval gun on the USS Princeton being demonstrated during a celebratory outing on the Potomac. To the amazement of all, Tyler names John C. Calhoun, another man without a party, to take Upshur’s place.

Calhoun quickly closes on a proposed treaty, with several key terms, applauded across the South:

- Texas would enter the Union as a state, and not a territory;
- It would be allowed to retain slavery;
- The U.S. would assume its national debts, in exchange for its public lands; and
- The U.S. would be obligated to defend Texas against any attacks by Mexico.

Tyler submits the treaty to the U.S. Senate for approval, on April 22, 1844, first arguing that it is essential to keeping Texas out of the hands of the British. Opponents counter by downplaying this threat, especially in relation to the near certainty that annexation would provoke a costly war with Mexico.

The President now bumbles forward, alienating various constituencies. When he offers to placate Mexico by forgiving \$6 million in debt, he undermines the Texan's standing as an independent republic. From there he plays up the benefits of acquiring new slave territory and voting power for the South, immediately alienating Northern congressmen. Calhoun secretly pushes the point even further, suggesting that the matter comes down to "Texas or Disunion."

When the treaty debate begins in May, it is the Missouri Senator, Thomas Hart Benton, who leads the opposition.



Thomas Hart Benton (1782-1858)

Benton is a Southerner, a loyal Democrat, Jackson man and ardent expansionist. He is also a slave-holder, albeit beginning his shift away from support for the institution. Still he cannot stomach what seems like outright theft of land rightfully belonging to Mexico.

The treaty, in all that relates to the boundary of the Rio Grande, is an act of unparalleled outrage on Mexico. It is the seizure of 2,000 miles of her territory without a word of explanation with her, and by virtue of a treaty with Texas, to which she is no party.

The vote on the treaty occurs on June 8, 1844, and it provides the Whigs, who dominate the Senate, with one more chance to humiliate Tyler. Needing a two-thirds majority for passage, the treaty garners only 16 ayes against 35 nays, with all but one of the 29 Whigs in opposition.

At this point, Texas annexation again feels like a dead issue.

But that is about to change as the election of 1844 nears.

Sidebar: Thomas Hart Benton

Thomas Hart Benton will make his presence known in American politics across nearly four decades – forever on the side of protecting the Union against all external and internal threats.

He is born on a plantation in North Carolina in 1782. As a young man he moves to Tennessee to oversee his family's 40,000 acre estate, studies law and passes the bar in 1805.

When the War of 1812 breaks out, he volunteers and serves as an aide on the staff of General Andrew Jackson.

Both men share volatile tempers, and Benton is quick to blame Jackson for apparently provoking a duel involving his brother, Jesse. The time for vengeance arrives on September 4, 1813 when Jackson, bullwhip in hand, calls out the two brothers in a Nashville bar. Both draw their guns and fire at Jackson, shattering his left shoulder and almost causing him to bleed to death.

But, remarkable as it seems, the two strong-willed combatants will subsequently make up and become loyal friends for life.

Benton soon moves to St. Louis, where he builds his legal reputation and becomes editor of the *Missouri Enquirer* newspaper. In 1817 his short-fuse again leads to violence, and he kills Charles Lucas, an opposing attorney, in a duel.

Still his popularity continues to grow across Missouri, and when the state is admitted to the Union in 1821, he becomes its first Senator.

From then on, he is a leading force in Congress, intent on passing Democratic Party legislation, especially in opposition to a federal bank and in favor of hard money. These traits earn him the nickname "Old Bullion," and explain this reminiscence about his one-time foe:

General Jackson was a very great man. I shot him, sir. Afterward he was of great use to me, sir, in my battle with the United States Bank.

His sharp mind will forever be matched by an equally sharp tongue and a willingness to push his rivals over the edge -- as evidenced by a Mississippi colleague who points a pistol at him on the floor of the senate.

Despite his many controversies, Thomas Hart Benton will also be remembered as a principled man, prone to question his own moral compass, especially later on around the propriety of the Mexican War and the practice of slavery. His opposition to expanding slavery into the new west will end his senate career in 1851.

Chapter 115 - Three Parties Nominate Candidates For The Pivotal 1844 Election

Time: Fall 1842

The Whigs Suffer Big Set-Backs In The Mid-Year Elections

Whig Party anxiety mounts as the 1844 election approaches, and for good reason.

With Harrison dead after only one month in office, and the apostate Tyler in charge since then, almost none of Clay's American System policies have escaped the veto pen. In turn, the economic recovery promised by the Whigs in 1840 has failed to materialize – with GDP trends falling back into negative territory by 1842.

Short-run Economic Trends

GDP	1840	1841	1842
Total (\$000)	1574	1652	1618
% Change	(5%)	5%	(2%)
Per Cap	92	94	89

Vetoes notwithstanding, the country signals its displeasure with the Whigs by returning overwhelming control of the House to the Democrats in the 1842 mid-term election.

Off Year Congressional Election Of 1842

House	1840	1842	Chg
Democrats	98	148	50
Whigs	144	73	(71)
Anti-Masonic			
Conservative			
Other		2	2
Senate			
Democrats	22	23	1
Whigs	29	29	NC
Anti-Masonic			
Conservative			
Other			
President	Harrison	Tyler	

Time: April 1, 1844

The Liberty Party Again Nominates Abolitionist James Birney



Salmon Chase (1808-1873)

The anti-slavery Liberty Party is first to hold a nominating convention in 1844, meeting in the western New York town of Arcade.

Its delegates are drawn from the New York and Ohio wings of the abolitionist movement, as distinct from the Boston-based supporters of Lloyd Garrison.

Both groups seek an end to slavery, but they differ fundamentally on the means required. Garrison remains committed to writing and speaking out against the slave-holders, the churches and the federal government – most recently calling the Constitution “an agreement with hell” and urging people not to vote. The Liberty Party men view Garrison as naïve, and argue that only through political action will their end be achieved.

The party’s first foray into politics occurs in 1840 and it is a fiasco, with nominee James Birney winning less than 7,000 votes nationwide in the election. This time around, they intend to do better.

Leading their political thinking and strategy is the Ohioan, Salmon P. Chase, who joins the cause in 1837, after Birney is attacked in Cincinnati by anti-abolitionist mobs. For the next seven years, Chase attempts to build the Liberty Party into a national force.

As a highly skilled lawyer, Chase recognizes that the Constitution and the Northwest Ordinance affirm the lasting presence of slavery in the Southern states east of the Mississippi. But, he argues, that principle does not extend to other new states admitted to the Union. Stopping its spread is not the full answer sought by the Garrison forces, but Chase regards it as a solid starting place to bring politics and law to bear on the South.

Over time this strategy – stopping the future expansion of slavery – will fuel the Republican Party and lead to Southern secession and civil war.

But in 1844 the Liberty Party still lacks a political candidate capable of competing on the national stage. It again is left with James Birney to head the ticket, along with Tom Morris, ex-Senator from Ohio, as his running mate.

Together they will garner a paltry 2% of the popular vote in the upcoming election – although many will later argue that their showing in New York actually costs Henry Clay a victory.

Time: May 1, 1844

The Whigs Again Call On Henry Clay

Despite the mid-term losses, the Whigs continue to believe the public, both North and South, will again support their platform for building the country's infrastructure.

They are heartened by party solidarity against the annexation of Texas in the Senate – even though over half of all Whigs in the chamber are from slave-holding states.

Likewise in the House, where one of their emerging spokesmen, Alexander Stephens of Georgia, dismisses the Tyler-Calhoun treaty proposal as a “humbug,” designed simply to weaken Whig unity.

Instead of promoting costly, and dangerous, military schemes to expand America, the Whigs want to consolidate and improve the capacities of states already in the Union. As Clay says:

I think it is far more wise an important to compose and harmonize the present confederacy, as it now exists, than to introduce a new element of discord and distraction (i.e. Texas) into it.

This has been the Whig's message since their origin in 1828.

America's greatness will follow from its ability to create an economic juggernaut, advantaged over the rest of the world. Successful international trade is one aspect of this, but vital “home markets” are its essence. The efficient production and distribution of goods from the East coast to the Mississippi will guarantee the “American dream” for all citizens.

It will result from the Whig's “American System” of investments in infrastructure and education, a sound currency and reliable banks, and sensible regulations and tariffs.

And no one speaks for this system better than its founder, Henry Clay.

Though thoroughly beaten by Jackson in 1832 and rejected in favor of the war hero, Harrison, in 1840, Clay is certain his time has come to succeed Tyler in the White House.

The Whigs signal their confidence in him through a brief, mostly perfunctory, national convention in Baltimore on May 1, 1844, where he is nominated by acclaim, and ex-New Jersey Senator Theodore Frelinghuysen, is chosen as his running mate.

Time: 1840's

The “Young America” Movement Re-shapes The Democrat Party

For the Democrats, the 1840 loss to Harrison serves as a wake-up call to transition from the Jackson-Van Buren era to a new generation of national leaders.

The path they choose is the “Young America Movement,” patterned after similar “young” initiatives materializing across Europe. The author Cornelius Matthews describes it in a speech he delivers on June 30, 1845:

Whatever that past generation of statesmen, law-givers and writers was capable of, we know. What they attained, what they failed to attain, we also know. Our duty and our destiny is another from theirs. Liking not at all its borrowed sound, we are yet (there is no better way to name it,) the Young America of the people: a new generation; and it is for us now to inquire, what we may have it in our power to accomplish, and on what objects the world may reasonably ask that we should fix our regards.

In the hands of the politicians, the message is one of “American Exceptionalism.”

It is marked by a rugged assurance that the nation is destined by history to lead the world in everything, government to commerce, intellectual to cultural advances.

It embraces free trade across the globe, certain that it will profit most by opening new markets.

It welcomes wide open borders, with immigrants from all over given a chance to share in life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness – while also joining the Democratic Party.

It breaks beyond the constraints of the agrarian-centric economy and supports industrialization, infrastructure upgrades, even modest tariffs to support domestic manufacturing.

And it is absolutely committed to expanding the nation’s borders to the west coast, and even into the Caribbean and Central America.

Time: 1840's

Stephen A. Douglas Symbolizes The Young Americans Movement

In 1843 a new figure leaps onto center stage in Congress, representing the Young America Movement and dedicated to restoring Democratic Party control in Washington. That figure is Stephen A. Douglas, of Illinois.

Stephen Douglass (he later drops the second “s”) is born in Brandon, Vermont in 1813 to a sixth generation New England family. His father is a physician who dies suddenly at age thirty-two when he is only two months old. He is raised by his mother and her bachelor brother (his uncle) on their combined family farms. He is also influenced as a youth by his grandfather, Benajah Douglass, an outspoken five term member of the Vermont General Assembly.

His early formal education is very limited, only 3-4 months of schooling whenever his duties on the farm allow. At age fifteen, he is fed up with his situation and decides to move out on his own, some 14 miles away to the town of Middlebury, where he apprentices as a carpenter. While he is there for only eight months before moving back home, it is during the 1828 presidential campaign, a moment where he first becomes enthralled with politics and aligns himself with the Democratic Party principles of Andrew Jackson.

Douglas remains in Brandon for two more years, working as a carpenter and attending grade school. When his mother marries a man from Canandaigua, New York, he accompanies her there in December 1830, and enrolls in the Canandaigua Academy. He is known as a diligent student, who actively engages in the debate club and is seen as a future politician by his peers.

Upon graduating, Douglas sets his sights on becoming a lawyer, but recognizes that the standards for passing the bar in New York State require four more years of study. This prompts his decision to head out west, where no such academic rigor is demanded. In June 1833 he begins a six month journey which includes brief stops in Cleveland and St. Louis before finally settling down in Winchester, Illinois. Once there, he runs a grade school for 40 students to earn a living, while adding enough bits and pieces of legal know-how to pass a brief oral exam and secure a law certificate.

In 1834 Douglas opens a practice in Winchester, but quickly finds that his true calling lies in the political arena. He dedicates himself to organizing a vibrant Democratic Party in Morgan County, 36 miles west of Springfield, which becomes the state capital in 1839. He attends sessions of the Illinois General Assembly as a lobbyist, and persuades legislators to pass a bill whereby states attorneys in Illinois are chosen by the people rather than appointed. In turn, he is elected to his first official office on February 10, 1835, as States Attorney for the First District, riding the circuit across eight counties, meeting voters, initiating his moniker as “Judge Douglas.”

From there his career gains momentum. In August 1836 he is elected to represent Morgan County in Illinois’s Tenth General Assembly, which includes Abraham Lincoln, James Shields, Edward Baker, James Semple and other future political leaders.

In March 1837, his campaign work on behalf of Van Buren’s presidential election lands him a patronage job paying \$3,000 a year as Registrar of the Springfield Land Office. In November of that year his Democratic Party nominates him to run for the U.S. House – but he loses in 1838 by 36 votes (out of 36,495 cast) to John Stuart, a Whig and law partner of Abraham Lincoln.

On March 2, 1839 he resigns as Registrar and devotes himself to strengthening his party and re-electing Van Buren in his race vs. Harrison. This leads to the first series of public debates against

his local rival, Abraham Lincoln, to be repeated nearly twenty years later when both vie for a U.S. Senate seat. One topic where they already disagree is over a bill to ban abolition societies in Illinois. The bill passes 77-6 with Douglas supporting it and Lincoln in the minority.

All in all, Douglas makes some 207 speeches around the state on behalf of the Democrats and Van Buren, who carries Illinois while losing out nationally.

Douglas’s political efforts are again rewarded when the Democratic controlled legislature appoints him as Illinois Secretary of State in November 1840 and then as Associate Justice of the state Supreme Court in 1841. Despite the fact that he is only twenty-eight years old, he has already argued fifteen cases before the high court, winning twelve and losing three. During his two year stint on the court he comes down hard against an abolitionist for harboring a run-away slave, while supporting Joseph Smith and the Mormons, earning their lasting praise.

In 1842 he loses his second political race, this time for a U.S. Senate seat, which goes to another, more senior Democrat, Sidney Breese. He is typically undaunted by the set-back and bounces back on August 7, 1843 by winning a race for the U.S. House. When the 28th Congress convenes on December 4, Douglas joins an impressive freshman class which includes the Georgia Whigs, Cobb and Stephens, anti-slavery men, Hale and Hamlin, states’ rights southerners, Slidell and Clingman.

But none will come to representing the diverse factions within the Democratic Party better than Stephen Douglas, over the next fifteen years. He is a northern man by birth; an expansionist westerner by choice; a full-fledged protégé of Andrew Jackson; a believer in the sacred Union, the Constitution, the will of the people; and, by 1848, an owner through marriage of a Mississippi plantation and over one hundred slaves.

He also brings an aggressive style to the floor of congress that justifies his nickname as “the Little Giant.” He is 5’4” tall, with a large head and a barrel chest mounted on short stubbly legs, and a stentorian voice firing short assertions seldom lacking in certainty.

With Jackson aging toward death in June 1845, and Van Buren on the ropes after his difficult term, Stephen Douglas at age thirty intends to revitalize the Democratic Party and ride it into a White House win for himself.

The Amazing Rise Of Stephen A. Douglas To National Prominence

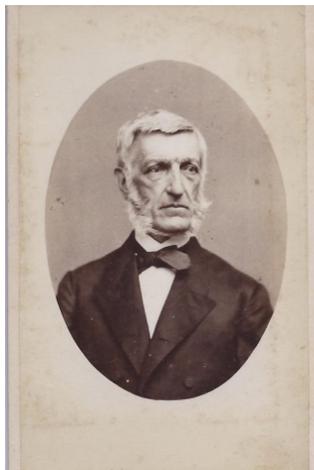
Date	Milestones
April 23, 1813	Douglas born in Brandon Vt to MD father and Sally Fisk
June 1813	Father dies and mother and her brother merge farms
1820-1827	Youth works on farm and attends 3-4 months of grade school per year
Spring 1828	Moves to Middlebury, apprentice carpenter, interest in politics
Winter 1828	Back in Brandon, rejects farming, carpentry, Andrew Jackson backer
December 1830	Mother remarries and he moves with her to Canandaigua, New York

1831-1833	Finishes grade school, begins to read law with well-known attorneys
June 24, 1833	Departs for west since NY bar standards requires 4 more years of study
Summer 1833	Stays briefly in Cleveland
Fall 1833	Another brief stop-over in St Louis before off to Jacksonville, Illinois
November 1833	Out of funds and walks to Winchester, IL to settle down
December 1833	Opens grade school for 40 children for support while studying law
March 1834	Closes school after 4 months and obtains a law certificate despite "gaps"
Spring 1834	Opens practice and decides to organize Democratic Party in his county
December 1834	Attends Illinois legislative session in capital of Vandalia to build Party
January 30, 1835	Bill he writes as lobbyist to have people choose states atty's passes
February 10, 1835	He is elected States Attorney for 1 st District riding circuit for 8 counties
1835	Law practice sputters and he settles on politics as his true calling
April 1835	Arranges first Democratic Party convention in Morgan County, IL
August 1836	Wins election to represent Morgan Cty in 10 th Illinois General Assembly
March 9, 1837	Resigns Leg seat & named by MVB Registrar of Springfield Land Office
November 1837	Nominated by Dems to run for US House vs. John Stuart, AL law partner
Fall 1838	Douglas loses to Whig Stuart by 36 votes out of 36,495 cast
March 2, 1839	Resigns Land Registrar job to focus on building Dem party and himself
November 1839	He and Lincoln begin series of debates over us bank, MVB admin, etc.
March 1840	Over 1,000 in Jacksonville hear a Douglas-Lincoln debate
Summer 1840	Douglas delivers 207 political speeches across Illinois
November 30, 1840	Dem controlled Illinois State Senate names him Secretary of State
By end 1840	Has argued 15 cases before Illinois Supreme Court with 12-3 record
1841	Resigns as Sec of State and named (at 28) to Illinois Supreme Court
June 1841	Judge Douglas orders Mormon leader Joseph Smith to be freed from jail
1842	MVB visits during election season and Dems win in August elections
December 16, 1842	Douglas loses US Senate nom to Sidney Breese on 19 th conv ballot by 56-51

April 1843	Decides against abolitionist Richard Eells for harboring run-aways
June 5, 1843	Douglas wins nomination for US House vs. Whig Orville Browning
June 28, 1843	He resigns from Supreme Court after 2 years
August 7, 1843	He is elected to House at age 30
December 4, 1843	Opening session of 28 th congress/news

Time: May 27, 1844

The Democrats Choose A “Dark Horse” In James Polk



George Bancroft (1800-1891)
Who Nominates Polk

Based on the collapse of the Whig agenda after Harrison’s death, and their strong showing in the 1842 off-year elections in the House, the Democrats are confident they can retake the presidency in 1844.

The only thing standing in their way is agreement on the right presidential candidate.

The party’s nominating convention convenes in Baltimore on May 27, four weeks after the Whigs have selected Clay. It plays out in the context of the fiery debate in the Senate over whether or not to annex Texas. So far, the opponents have been prevailing, led on the Democratic side by Thomas Benton of Missouri. In April, Martin Van Buren is drawn into the controversy and, like Clay, he publicly argues against a Texas deal, fearing war.

What he fails to realize at the time is that his mentor, Andrew Jackson, has switched positions, now favoring the annexation, and still wielding enough political power within the party to get his way.

Still, when the opening gavel sounds, Van Buren remains the clear cut favorite to win the nomination for a third straight time, despite his loss to Harrison in 1840. His main challenger is a sixty-one year old westerner, Lewis Cass, whose credentials are splendid -- Exeter Academy, freemason, general in the 1812 War, first Governor of the Michigan Territory, Jackson’s Secretary of War and Ambassador to France, supporter of adding Texas.

Alarm bells sound immediately in Van Buren’s camp when his opponents – who refer to him as “Van Ruin” --pass a rule requiring the nominee to win by a two-thirds majority, a near impossibility now for the ex-president.

Van Buren does lead after the first ballot, but then falls steadily until the fifth round when Cass overtakes him.

First Five Ballots In 1844 Race (174 To Win)

Candidate	1	2	3	4	5
Van Buren-NY	146	127	121	111	103
Lewis Cass-Mich	83	94	92	105	107
Rich Johnson-Ky	24	33	38	32	29
Calhoun-SC	6	1	2	0	0
Buchanan-Pa	4	9	11	17	26

The Michigan man adds a few more delegates in the next two ballots reaching the 123 level, still well short of the 174 votes needed to win. By the eighth ballot, it's clear that neither man can win, and the search is on for a "dark horse" or compromise candidate.

Andrew Jackson has had one in mind all along, his fellow Tennessean, James Knox Polk.

Polk arrives at the convention with almost no standing. He plans to support Van Buren and, if the New Yorker wins, hopes to be considered as Vice-President. But the odds are against him, until the convention is stalemated.

At that point, Polk's mentor Jackson seizes the initiative. Three supporters, Gideon Pillow, his ex-law partner, advisor Cave Johnson, and George Bancroft, of Massachusetts join forces and offer his name on the eighth ballot, before either James Buchanan or Richard Johnson can try to fill the void. A quickly convened ninth ballot becomes a stampede in favor of Polk. Governor George Dallas, from Pennsylvania, is chosen as Vice-President – and the Democrats have their ticket for 1844.

Full Voting Results At The 1844 Democratic Convention (174 To Win)

Candidate	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Van Buren-NY	146	127	121	111	103	101	99	104	0
Lewis Cass-Mich	83	94	92	105	107	116	123	114	29
Rich Johnson-Ky	24	33	38	32	29	23	21	0	0
Calhoun-SC	6	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
Buchanan-Pa	4	9	11	17	26	25	22	0	0
Polk-Tenn								44	231

So it will be "Little Hickory." A Southerner, successful lawyer, militia man, slave-holder, pro-states' rights and anti-US Bank, friend of Jackson and Sam Houston, and ardent supporter of "manifest destiny."

But Polk's surprising win will come at the expense of unity within the Democratic Party – especially among the powerful New York block who feel that Van Buren has been robbed by Southerners in Baltimore. In the years ahead they will seek revenge, earning the nickname as party "Barnburners."

Time: 1844

The Nativist American Party Make Its First Appearance

One other nascent political party also makes its first appearance during the 1844 election cycle. It is referred to early on as the American Republican Association, before morphing into the Native American Party and finally, the “Know Nothings.”

It originates with a South Carolinian named Lewis Charles Levin, son of Jewish parents, who graduates from his state university and tries his hand at the law and teaching before becoming a Methodist preacher. His temperament, however, is anything but pastoral, and he is known for engaging in fistfights and gun duels. After one such incident he is forced to leave Mississippi, and lands in Philadelphia.

Once there, he throws himself into a crusade against alcohol, carried out in his newspaper, the *Temperance Advocate*, and in elaborate public events dubbed “bonfires of booze,” aimed at shutting down taverns. This cause, however, soon gives way to another, his obsessive attacks against Catholic immigrants.

Since the early 1830’s, immigration to America is on the rise, with most of it coming from Roman Catholics fleeing Ireland and Germany.

Immigration Trends By Country

5 Years	Total	Irish	German	All Other
1820-4	74.8	11.7	1.9	25.1
1825-9	130.3	40.0	3.8	46.0
1830-4	326.5	54.1	39.3	137.1
1835-9	389.8	116.6	85.5	105.8
1840-4	481.2	181.7	100.5	117.8

Levin regards the Catholics as untrustworthy and dangerous for reasons mirroring the Anti-Masonic fervor in upstate New York in 1828. Theirs is a secret society, he says, whose allegiance is to the Pope in Rome, not to the government in Washington. Its corrupt religious practices and authoritarian rule are what drove settlers to America in the first place – so what sense does it make to open the nation’s borders to a proven enemy.

Having latched on to these themes, Levin organizes the American Republican Association in Philadelphia in 1844 and publishes another newspaper, *The Daily Sun*, devoted to attacking Catholic immigrants.

A flashpoint comes when Francis Kenrick, the Bishop of Philadelphia, asks the local School Controllors to excuse Catholic students from participating in the traditional practice of reading from the Protestant Bible at the start of each day. When the request is granted, Levin’s backers

claim that the real intent is to eliminate all traces of the Protestant religion from the school curriculum.

What follows in Philadelphia in the spring and early summer of 1844 is a recreation of European-style religious battles between Protestant and Catholic. The first outbreak takes place on May 3, 1844, after an attempt by Lewis Levin to speak in the Catholic neighborhood of Kensington is broken up by Irish protesters. Levin returns with 3,000 supporters and fighting continues through May 8, with local police outmanned and unable to quell the mobs. The toll includes some fourteen deaths, another fifty injured, and two hundred left homeless. The Sisters of Charity Seminary is attacked, along with the Hibernia fire station. Two Catholic churches – St. Michaels and St. Augustine’s -- are burned to the ground, and the rioting ends only after the state militia under General George Cadwallader is called into action.

A second outbreak occurs in July, centered on St. Philip Neri’s Catholic Church. Fearing a nativist attack during the July 4 celebrations, the church pastor asks Pennsylvania Governor David Porter for support from the militia. On the evening of July 6, a sizable defensive force, again under Cadwallader, confronts a rock-throwing mob of several thousand, the result being a momentary stand-off. This truce breaks down a day later and open warfare – including cannon fire from both sides in the streets – leaves another fifteen killed and many others wounded. This time a military force of some 5,000 troops is needed to end the carnage.

Newspapers across the country report on the alarming level of violence in Philadelphia, and the difficulty faced by officials in stopping it. The Catholic Church sues the city for failing to adequately protect its property, winning a \$45,000 payment, and begins opening its own schools to teach the faith. Meanwhile the city fathers pass bills requiring that one policeman be hired for every 150 residents, and designating a full infantry regiment, along with artillery and cavalry support, for call-up in case of any more disturbances.

While not yet sufficiently organized to impact national voting in 1844, it does elect six U.S. House members.

One of them is Levin himself, joined by one other Pennsylvania congressman and four from neighboring New York.

Together they begin the campaign to halt further immigration and secure America for “real Americans,” not foreigners.

Chapter 116 - James Knox Polk Term

Time: 1844

The 1844 Presidential Campaign Turns Nasty



Theodore Frelinghuysen (1787-1862)

The Democrats are energized by the thought of James Polk -- “another Jackson” -- leading the party back to its historical dominance in Washington.

To insure this outcome, they go on the offensive, first to discredit Henry Clay’s character, with attacks on his well-known reputation for drinking, gambling, blasphemy, womanizing and dueling.

They then turn to undermining him across the South, focusing on three issues.

They claim his “American System” prioritizes federal authority over states’ rights, and results in high tariffs on cotton goods and increases in the national debt. Next comes the assertion that he opposes slavery, has referred to it as a “moral stain,” and may even be in league with the abolitionists. Finally, they zero in on his public statements opposing the annexation of Texas.

Failure to expand into Texas would represent a critical blow to the Southern economy, which by 1844 depends on opening more cotton plantations and selling more bred slaves into the west. Clay’s stance also draws fire from his old nemesis, Andrew Jackson, who says that it demonstrates his military naiveté and threatens the national defense.

In an 1844 letter to John Mason, Secretary of the Navy, the old General raises the specter of an alliance between the Republic of Texas and Great Britain to conquer the entire western half of the continent.

Texas ought to have been & now must be (added), or the safety of the south & west is jeopardized, New Orleans insecure, and our revenue destroyed, by smuggling, & in a war with England, her & Texas united, a British force might in ten days from the Sabine make a lodgment on the Mississippi...possess herself of the command of the navigation of Red River, raise a servile war, capture New Orleans, excite our Indians placed on our western borders to hostilities against us - with these [ancillaries], and her armies from Canada uniting on our west, how much blood & treasure would it take to regain New Orleans, put down the servile & Indian War thus created and supported by Great Britain. There is not an American heart & eye, that should not now be opened to the great

security Texas will give to the United States & it ought to be seized with the greatest promptitude.

Discrediting Clay in the North is more challenging, but it too eventually succeeds.

The “Texas question” again plays the leading role in the strategy, with Clay being painted as “unpatriotic” for standing against America’s aspiration to control the entire continent. Those who oppose slavery or its spread to the west are also reminded that Clay, like Polk, is a slave owner. This fact cuts into his support among the “Conscience Whigs.”

For good measure, the Democrats decide to smear Clay’s running mate, Theodore Frelinghuysen. While in the Senate, he earns the nickname of “the Christian statesman,” based on his intense Bible study and support for various Dutch Reformed missions. But he earns Jackson’s wrath for a six-hour speech on the floor in 1830 in opposition to the Indian Removal Act. For this transgression, he is tarred during the campaign as an anti-Catholic bigot, and opponent of the separation of church and state.

The Whigs respond in kind.

They characterize Polk as a weak puppet of Jackson, and one who would involve America in an illegitimate and costly war to steal land from Mexico for the purpose of extending slavery into the west.

They also engage in character assassination through political pamphlets which accuse Polk of branding his initials onto the shoulders of forty of his slaves, a total fabrication, and resurrect a rumor that his grandfather, Ezekiel, was a British sympathizer during the Revolutionary War.

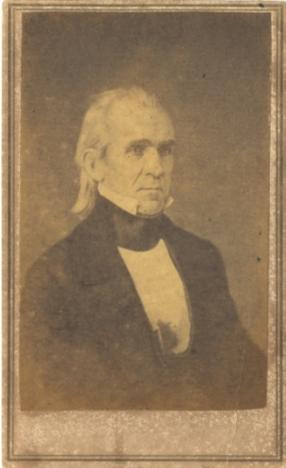
As the race plays out, both candidates are actively engaged.

To the surprise of many, Polk proves to be a crafty politician. He reassures Pennsylvania leaders that his tariff will protect their industries, while downplaying the duties in the South. He convinces Jackson to nudge Tyler out of running as an independent. He announces that he will serve only one term, encouraging future contenders like Cass, Buchanan and Calhoun to get out the Democratic vote.

Clay meanwhile senses the easy victory he anticipated slipping away. He finally realizes that his position on Texas is on the wrong side of emerging public sentiment, but several attempts to walk back his prior opposition fall flat. For many the “Great Compromiser” looks like he is abandoning his principles to win the White House.

Time: November-December 1844

James K. Polk And The Democrats Emerge Victorious



James Knox Polk (1795-1849)

Ballots are cast in the 15th quadrennial election for president between November 1 and December 4, 1844. The total popular vote count exceeds the hotly contested 1840 race and reaches 2.7 million, with just under 80% of all age-eligible citizens participating

Popular Votes Cast For President

Year	Number	% Vs Y-A
1832	1,286,700	+12.1%
1836	1,502,300	+16.8
1840	2,411,808	+60.5
1844	2,701,552	+12.0

When the results are in, the “dark horse” James Polk has won a razor thin victory, with 49.6% of the popular vote to 48.1% for Henry Clay.

1844 Presidential Election Results

1844	Party	Pop Vote	Elect Tot	South	Border	North	West
Polk	Democrat	1,339,494	170	60	7	77	26
Clay	Whig	1,300,004	105	24	23	35	33
Birney	Liberty	62,054	0				
		2,701,552	275	84	30	112	59

Polk loses in both his birth state of North Carolina and his home state of Tennessee, but carries most of the South, along with the Northern states of New York, Pennsylvania, New Hampshire and Maine.

Party Power By State

South	1840	1844	Pick-Up
Virginia	Democrat	Democrat	
North Carolina	Whig	Whig	
South Carolina	Democrat	Democrat	
Georgia	Whig	Democrat	Democrat
Alabama	Democrat	Democrat	
Mississippi	Whig	Democrat	Democrat
Louisiana	Whig	Democrat	Democrat
Tennessee	Whig	Whig	
Arkansas	Democrat	Democrat	
Border			
Delaware	Whig	Whig	
Maryland	Whig	Democrat	Democrat
Kentucky	Whig	Whig	
North			
New Hampshire	Democrat	Whig	Whig
Vermont	Whig	Whig	
Massachusetts	Whig	Whig	
Rhode Island	Whig	Whig	
Connecticut	Whig	Whig	
New York	Whig	Democrat	Democrat
New Jersey	Whig	Whig	
Pennsylvania	Whig	Democrat	Democrat
Ohio	Whig	Democrat	Democrat
Maine	Whig	Democrat	Democrat
Indiana	Whig	Whig	
Illinois	Democrat	Democrat	
Iowa	Democrat	Democrat	
Michigan	Whig	Democrat	Democrat

Clay's hopes are shattered when he loses New York State by only 5,106 votes. The difference here may have traced to the 15,812 ballots won by James Birney of the abolitionist Liberty Party, a former supporter of Clay. Had the state's 36 electoral votes shifted to Clay, he would have won the presidency in the Electoral College by a margin of 141-134, rather than losing 105-170.

1844 Results In New York State

1844	Party	Pop Vote	Elect Tot
Polk	Democrat	237,588	36
Clay	Whig	232,482	0
Birney	Liberty	15,812	0

The Democrats retain the firm control over the House they've held since the Whig collapse in 1842.

U.S. House Elections

Party	1840	1842	1844
Democrats	98	148	142
Whigs	144	73	79
Native American			6
Other		2	2

They also regain control in the Senate.

U.S. Senate Elections

Party	1840	1842	1844
Democrats	22	23	27
Whigs	29	29	24
Other			1

Time: 1795-1845

President James Knox Polk: Personal Profile

James Polk is born in 1795 in Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, named after Charlotte, wife of King George III, and famous for being first to publicly declare independence from Great Britain in 1775. His mother descends from the Scottish Presbyterian minister, John Knox, and his father is a lifelong Deist, who refuses to “affirm his faith” at a planned christening event, leaving James unbaptized until his deathbed 53 years later.

Both father and grandfather are outspoken Jefferson men who inculcate states’ rights and anti-Federalist principles early on. Sam Polk is also a savvy businessman, a successful farmer and slave owner, who decides in 1806 to move his family from the eastern piedmont range in NC across the Appalachians and into Tennessee.

Son James is a sickly youth, suffering from stomach ailments and, at age seventeen, a severe case of urinary stones, leading to life-threatening and primitive surgery and leaving him impotent for life. He is home schooled at first, until enrolling at the University of North Carolina in 1816, where he shines as a student and commencement speaker.

After graduation his future is shaped by studying law in Nashville with Felix Grundy, the top criminal lawyer in the state and future US Senator and Attorney General from 1838-40 in Van Buren’s cabinet. Grundy prepares him to pass the bar in 1820 and introduces him to the inner workings of the state legislature and the political arena that quickly captures his imagination.

His law practice flourishes and his income soars. He rounds out his credentials by joining the state militia and becoming a freemason. He wins a seat in the US House in 1825 as a strong supporter of Andrew Jackson, a friend of his father and grandfather alike, and his future political mentor.

Polk remains in the US House for seven consecutive terms, fighting for Jacksonian principles and for his legislative agenda as President, including his controversial war with the U.S. Bank. In his last four years he is elected Speaker of the House, and at age forty-three is widely regarded as a future presidential candidate.

In 1838 he decides to run for Governor of Tennessee against Newton Cannon, a Whig and fierce opponent of Jackson, seeking his third consecutive term in the office. Polk wins a very narrow 51-49% victory and is sitting in the Governor's chair when the fall-out from the Bank Panic of 1837 rocks the nation and his home state.

After a frustrating first term, Polk runs again in 1840, at the same time the electorate decides to oust his party leader, Martin Van Buren, in favor of the first Whig President, Harrison. Polk loses 53-47%. In 1842, he tries again, and loses again by the same margin.

What appeared to Polk in 1840 to have been a soaring political future has fallen flat in 1844 as he heads off to the Democratic Party nominating convention in Baltimore.

There, after eight stalemated ballots, lightning strikes him as “the dark-horse nominee.”

Time: March 5, 1845

Polk Supports The Texas Annexation In His Inaugural Speech

Polk is sworn in as President by Chief Justice Roger Taney on March 5, 1845, a rain-filled day in DC. At 49 years of age, he is the youngest man yet to hold the office. His inaugural address to a crowd gathered on the east side of the Capitol opens with obligatory appreciation for his election victory.

Fellow-Citizens: Without solicitation on my part, I have been chosen by the free and voluntary suffrages of my countrymen to the most honorable and most responsible office on earth...I am deeply impressed with gratitude for the confidence reposed in me. Honored with this distinguished consideration at an earlier period of life than any of my predecessors.

It segues to the principles Polk intends to follow in office, beginning with a classical restatement of Jefferson's Tenth Amendment call for limitations on the power of the Federal government over the States, to avoid “unfortunate collisions” which could threaten the Union.

It will be my first care to administer the Government in the true spirit of (the Constitution), and to assume no powers not expressly granted or clearly implied in its terms... (to avoid) those unfortunate collisions between the Federal and State authorities which have occasionally so much disturbed the harmony of our system and even threatened the perpetuity of our glorious Union... "To the States, respectively, or to the people" have been reserved "the powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution nor prohibited by it to the States." Each State is a complete sovereignty within the sphere of its reserved powers.

While the Constitution calls for “majority rules,” it also protects the rights of the minorities against acts of oppression.

By the theory of our Government majorities rule, but this right is not an arbitrary or unlimited one It is a right to be exercised in subordination to the Constitution and in conformity to it. One great object of the Constitution was to restrain majorities from oppressing minorities or encroaching upon their just rights. Minorities have a right to appeal to the Constitution as a shield against such oppression. The inestimable value of our Federal Union is felt and acknowledged by all.

An example he cites is the Tariff, where he will oppose high “protective” rates benefiting some businesses or regions at the expense of others.

One of the difficulties which we have had to encounter in the practical administration of the Government consists in the adjustment of our revenue laws and the levy of the taxes necessary for the support of Government. In the general proposition that no more money shall be collected than the necessities of an economical administration shall require all parties seem to acquiesce. Nor does there seem to be any material difference of opinion as to the absence of right in the Government to tax one section of country, or one class of citizens, or one occupation, for the mere profit of another.

I have also declared... that I was "opposed to a tariff for protection merely, and not for revenue." ... To reverse this principle and make protection the object and revenue the incident would be to inflict manifest injustice upon all other than the protected interests.

Polk promises to run a frugal administration and avoid federal debt.

A national debt has become almost an institution of European monarchies.... Such a system is incompatible with the ends for which our republican Government was instituted... Ours was intended to be a plain and frugal government, and I shall regard it to be my duty to recommend to Congress and, as far as the Executive is concerned, to enforce by all the means within my power the strictest economy in the expenditure of the public money which may be compatible with the public interests.

True to Democratic Party doctrine, he will oppose a private national bank.

We need no national banks or other extraneous institutions planted around the Government to control or strengthen it in opposition to the will of its authors. Experience has taught us how unnecessary they are as auxiliaries of the public authorities--how impotent for good and how powerful for mischief.

He addresses growing “agitation” over slavery, never overtly mentioning the word as had Van Buren in 1836, but instead citing calls by one section for “the destruction of domestic institutions existing in other sections...which were recognized and protected in the Constitution.”

It is a source of deep regret that in some sections of our country misguided persons have occasionally indulged in schemes and agitations whose object is the destruction of domestic institutions existing in other sections--institutions which existed at the adoption of the Constitution and were recognized and protected by it. All must see that if it were possible for them to be successful in attaining their object the dissolution of the Union and the consequent destruction of our happy form of government must speedily follow.

His policy will be to tamp down such “sectional jealousies and heartburnings” which could lead to disunion. The “patriotic sentiment” he quotes is from Andrew Jackson’s famous toast vs. John Calhoun in 1832.

...Sectional jealousies and heartburnings must be discountenanced, and all should remember that they are members of the same political family, having a common destiny... Every lover of his country must shudder at the thought of the possibility of its dissolution, and will be ready to adopt the patriotic sentiment, "Our Federal Union--it must be preserved."

When it comes to foreign affairs, they are the province of the national government.

To the Government of the United States has been intrusted the exclusive management of our foreign affairs...In the management of our foreign relations it will be my aim to observe a careful respect for the rights of other nations, while our own will be the subject of constant watchfulness

And here he focuses on the annexation of Texas, which will lead to the war with Mexico and become the overarching focus of his administration. He begins by asserting that Texas was a part of the Louisiana Purchase, then “unwisely ceded” in the 1819 Adams-Onis Treaty to Spain, and now is simply wishing to rejoin the United States.

The Republic of Texas has made known her desire to come into our Union, to form a part of our Confederacy and enjoy with us the blessings of liberty secured and guaranteed by our Constitution. Texas was once a part of our country--was unwisely ceded away to a foreign power--is now independent, and possesses an undoubted right to dispose of a part

or the whole of her territory and to merge her sovereignty as a separate and independent state in ours. I congratulate my country that by an act of the late Congress of the United States the assent of this Government has been given to the reunion, and it only remains for the two countries to agree upon the terms to consummate an object so important to both.

As an independent Republic, it also has the perfect right to take this action. The annexation is not a conquest, simply a matter of free choice by the residents.

I regard the question of annexation as belonging exclusively to the United States and Texas. They are independent powers competent to contract, and foreign nations have no right to interfere with them or to take exceptions to their reunion.... Foreign powers should therefore look on the annexation of Texas to the United States not as the conquest of a nation seeking to extend her dominions by arms and violence, but as the peaceful acquisition of a territory once her own, by adding another member to our confederation, with the consent of that member, thereby diminishing the chances of war and opening to them new and ever-increasing markets for their products.

To cement his argument, he raises Jackson's specter of a "foreign nation more powerful than Texas" taking control of the Republic and of the entire Southwest.

None can one fail to see the danger to our safety and future peace if Texas remains an independent state or becomes an ally or dependency of some foreign nation more powerful than herself. Is there one among our citizens who would not prefer perpetual peace with Texas to occasional wars, which so often occur between bordering independent nations?

Bringing Texas into the Union will be an immediate priority.

To Texas the reunion is important, because the strong protecting arm of our Government would be extended over her, and the vast resources of her fertile soil and genial climate would be speedily developed, while the safety of New Orleans and of our whole southwestern frontier against hostile aggression, as well as the interests of the whole Union, would be promoted by it....I shall on the broad principle which formed the basis and produced the adoption of our Constitution, and not in any narrow spirit of sectional policy, endeavor by all Constitutional, honorable, and appropriate means to consummate the expressed will of the people and Government of the United States by the re-annexation of Texas to our Union at the earliest practicable period.

With regard to contested territory further west, he asserts that America has "clear and unquestionable" rights to the entire Oregon country land, already occupied by our settlers.

Nor will it become in a less degree my duty to assert and maintain by all Constitutional means the right of the United States to that portion of our territory which lies beyond the Rocky Mountains. Our title to the country of the Oregon is "clear and unquestionable," and already are our people preparing to perfect that title by occupying it with their wives and children.

In neither the case of Texas nor of Oregon does he threaten warfare against Mexico or Britain – but both nations are implicitly put on notice by his contentions.

Polk ends his speech with the standard invocation of the Divine Being to watch over the United States.

Confidently relying upon the aid and assistance of the coordinate departments of the Government in conducting our public affairs, I enter upon the discharge of the high duties which have been assigned me by the people, again humbly supplicating that Divine Being who has watched over and protected our beloved country from its infancy to the present hour to continue His gracious benedictions upon us, that we may continue to be a prosperous and happy people.

What comes next is one of the most consequential presidential terms in American history.

Time: March 1845

Polk Names His Cabinet

Shortly after his election victory, Polk meets with Andrew Jackson. Among the topics discussed is the formation of his cabinet, where he hopes to avoid the many pitfalls the old General experienced with connivers like John C. Calhoun, the sitting Secretary of State under Tyler. Polk eventually offers Calhoun the job of Ambassador to Britain, but he turns it down to return to the Senate, as self-styled “defender of the South.”

In the end Polk names six men, all lawyers, save for Bancroft, his choice for the Navy post.

While he fully intends to oversee foreign affairs on his own, he chooses the Senator from Pennsylvania, James Buchanan, a twenty year veteran of Congress, as his Secretary of State. Buchanan soon proves troublesome, and Polk offers to appoint him to the Supreme Court when Justice Henry Baldwin dies, but Buchanan declines, wanting to stay put and try to succeed Polk after his promised single term is up.

For Treasury he picks Senator Robert J. Walker of Mississippi, whose early adulthood is in Pennsylvania, before moving South to build a successful business career speculating in land, cotton and slaves. Walker is a passionate defender of slavery and a straight Jacksonian, including aversion to any talk of dissolving the Union.

Secretary of War, William Marcy, at age fifty-eight, is the oldest member of the cabinet. His military credentials trace to combat experience in Canada as a militia captain early in the War of 1812. He then becomes the consummate New York politician, a member of the Albany Regency, Van Buren's patronage machine, and coiner of the phrase, "to the victors belong the spoils." He wins three elections at New York Governor before losing in 1838 to Henry Seward and falling out with Van Buren, who warns Polk not to name him, and is offended when his advice is ignored.

Tyler's Secretary of the Navy, John Mason of Virginia, is retained by Polk, but in the position of Attorney General. His legal training traces to the famed Tapping Reed School, and his public service includes three years as a district court judge. His political history includes three terms in the U.S House. He is a Southern planter and a life-long backer of Jackson and Van Buren.

The only non-lawyer in the cabinet is George Bancroft, a Massachusetts' man who earns a PhD in history from the University of Gottingen, and teaches Greek at Harvard College. He ventures into the political realm in 1837 when Van Buren appoints him Customs Collector for the port of Boston. He loses a run for Massachusetts' Governor in 1844, collecting only 41% of the vote, and is an opponent of slavery. But he favors the Texas Annexation and is a Northern Democrat who eventually comes out for Polk at the critical moment in the 1844 nominating convention.

Lastly Polk names his long-term Tennessee friend and advisor, Cave Johnson, as the new Postmaster General. He is a four-time member of the U.S House, Polk's campaign manager during his run for the White House, and the "fixer" of problems throughout the term.

James Knox Polk's Cabinet

Position	Name	Home State
Secretary of State	James Buchanan	Pennsylvania
Secretary of Treasury	Robert Walker	Mississippi
Secretary of War	William Marcy	New York
Attorney General	John Mason	Virginia
Secretary of Navy	George Bancroft	Massachusetts
Postmaster General	Cave Johnson	Tennessee

Four of his six appointees will serve all four years. Mason will switch back to his old position as Secretary of the Navy when Bancroft departs. His Attorney General post will go to Nathan Clifford and then Isaac Toucey.

Chapter 117 - The Republic Of Texas Is Annexed

Time: December 1844 – February 1845

The Lame Duck Congress Again Debates The Texas Question

Polk's aggressive stance on the annexation of Texas has much to do with his election victory – and he hopes that Congress will authorize its go-ahead by the time he is sworn in.

But complexities abound, not the least of which is to clarify the exact territorial boundaries being claimed by the Texans. At one extreme, “Imperial Texas” encompasses a huge swath of land from the Rio Grande River in the South to a northern tip in later day Wyoming, and extending west into later day New Mexico.

Meanwhile there is the much smaller land mass actually occupied by the Republic, sandwiched between two rivers, on the north and east, the Arkansas, on the south and west, the Rio Grande.

Both “claims” regarding the actual Texas boundaries are hotly disputed by the Government of Mexico.

The debate over annexation is taken up by the 28th Congress in its lame duck session, which opens in December 1844, with Tyler still in the White House and Calhoun as Secretary of State.



Map of Texas Proper vs. The Claimed Territory

While their Annexation Treaty was rejected six months earlier, both are convinced by the election results that public opinion now favors approval. To make passage easier this time, they abandon the prior attempt to approve a “treaty” with Mexico – needing a 2/3rd majority in the Senate – and instead go for a standard legislative bill, requiring only a simple majority.

In the House, however, efforts to shape a final bill are stalled over a host of issues, including: final “boundary definitions;” whether Texas will become a territory or a state; its “status” regarding slavery; and how its accumulated debts will be handled.

On January 13, 1845, a proposed solution is offered by Milton Brown, a Tennessee Whig, who studies law under Polk's mentor, Felix Grundy, before becoming a leader

among Southern Whigs, and a consistent thorn in the side of the Democrats. Brown argues in favor of immediately annexing

the generally accepted, “narrow borders” of the Texas Republic, and holding over the broader land claims until Polk is in office.

His proposal involves four points:

1. Act now to annex the existing Republic of Texas land, and immediately grant it status as a slave state.
2. Assign all acreage to the state along with responsibility for any outstanding debts.
3. Delay resolution over the “claimed land” until further U.S. treaty negotiations with Mexico can occur.
4. Divide up any additional land acquired in the treaty negotiations into four more new states.

Brown’s plan to create additional slave states around Texas draws immediate fire, especially from the two leading Whig abolitionists in the House, JQ Adams and Joshua Giddings. The Ohioan’s remarks are particularly scathing. He says the annexation is not about patriotism; rather opening new slave markets to increase Southern wealth.

Texas is engaged in a war with Mexico and wants us to fight her battles...and a portion of this House say, we will do it, if, by that means, we can keep up slavery in Texas and thereby furnish a market for our slave-breeding states to sell their surplus population.

After further debate, however, Brown’s bill carries the House on January 25, 1845 by a 120-98 margin, decided along party, not regional, lines – with the vast majority of Democrats in favor and Whigs opposed.

The bill now moves to the Senate where it faces an even greater challenge, for two reasons: first, the Whigs still hold a majority during the lame duck session; and second, only six months ago, the powerful Thomas Hart Benton of Missouri, opposed Tyler’s treaty and convinced seven other Democrats to also vote no.

Benton is sixty-two years old in 1845, a volatile figure that permanently shatters Andrew Jackson’s left arm in an 1813 duel, before reconciling with him. From then on, he becomes a leading force in Congress for passing the General’s legislation, especially around banking and hard money – where he earns the nickname, “Old Bullion.” Although a fierce “expansionist” – and father-in-law of the western explorer, John Fremont – his moral compass remains uncomfortable with any open-ended land grab from Mexico. Likewise his beliefs about slavery are evolving, especially around the wisdom of spreading it further into new states. This hesitancy will eventually cause Missouri voters to oust him in 1851.

But with Polk about to be in the White House, Benton changes his mind on Texas and decides to support the annexation. He calls for the existing Texas land (“narrow borders”) to be admitted immediately as a state, while any added land to become a territory, with “boundary and slavery issues” to be decided later by a five man commission set up by Polk. He feels that by delaying final calls on “slave vs. free” status for any other new states, more Northern Democrats will support the annexation.

Meanwhile Calhoun and his hard core faction in the Senate are lobbying for the broadest Texas borders, with all other land acquired being open to slavery right away.

Time: February 28, 1845

The Texas Annexation Bill Is Finally Approved



At this point, Polk is frustrated by the lack of decisive action in the Senate. A possible solution comes from his soon-to-be Treasury Secretary, Senator Robert Walker of Mississippi, who proposes a combination of Brown’s plan to immediately annex existing Texas (“narrow borders”) along with Benton’s plan to delay closure on the broader “claimed lands” until later.

Benton signs on for this idea, believing, incorrectly, that Polk will be cautious in dealing with Mexico over “claimed land”

Map Of The Eventual State Of Texas Bordered By The Rio Grande River conflicts, and on slavery-related issues. In turn, he whips all 25 Democrats into supporting the bill.

The Whigs, with 27 votes to cast, still threaten to defeat the annexation until two defectors from slave-holding states -- the Maryland Senator, William Merrick, and the Louisiana man, Henry Johnson – swing the balance in favor of passage – 27 aye vs. 25 nay.

Senate Vote On Texas Annexation Bill: February 28, 1845

Region	Dems-Yes	Dems-No	Whigs-Yes	Whigs-No
Northeast	8	0	0	10
Northwest	5	0	0	2
Border	3	0	1	5
Southeast	4	0	0	4
Southwest	5	0	1	4
Total	25	0	2	25

Note: Northwest = Ohio, Indiana, Mich, IL; Southwest = TN, Ala, Miss, La, Ark

Aside from giving Polk the go-ahead to secure Texas, the annexation votes also shows that, on some issues, the Congress remains split along party lines – Democrats vs. Whigs – rather than along sectional/slavery lines – South vs. North.

Analysis Of Texas Annexation Vote

Status	Yes	No
Democrats	25	0
Whigs	2	25
South States	14	13
North States	17	17

Surprisingly in supporting the annexation, the North also goes along with handing the South a momentary two state advantage in the balance of voting power in the Senate.

Post-Texas Admission

Status	Count
South/Slave States	17
North/Free States	15

On March 1, 1845, John Tyler signs the final Annexation bill into law.

The next step in the Texas scenario now belongs to a response from the Mexican government.

Date: March 1, 1845

Sidebar: Final Texas Annexation Bill Calling For Popular Sovereignty Over Slavery

28th Congress Second Session. Joint Resolution for annexing Texas to the United States. *Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That Congress doth consent that the territory properly included within, and rightfully belonging to the Republic of Texas, may be erected into a new state, to be called the state of Texas, with a republican form of government, to be adopted by the people of said republic, by deputies in Convention assembled, with the consent of the existing government, in order that the same may be admitted as one of the states of this Union. And be it further resolved, That the foregoing consent of Congress is given upon the following conditions, and with the following guarantees, to wit: First-said state to be formed, subject to the adjustment by this government of all questions of boundary that may arise with other governments; and the constitution thereof, with the proper evidence of its adoption by the people of said republic of Texas, shall be transmitted to the President of the United States, to be laid before Congress for its final action, on or before the first day of January, one thousand eight hundred and forty-six.*

Second-said state, when admitted into the Union, after ceding to the United States all public edifices, fortifications, barracks, ports and harbors, navy and navy-yards, docks, magazines, arms, armaments, and all other property and means pertaining to the public defence belonging to said republic of Texas, shall retain all the public funds, debts, taxes, and dues of every kind which may belong to or be due and owing said republic; and shall also retain all the vacant and unappropriated lands lying within its limits, to be applied to the payment of the debts and liabilities of said republic of Texas; and the residue of said lands, after discharging said debts and liabilities, to be disposed of as said state may direct; but in no event are said debts and liabilities to become a charge upon the government of the United States.

Third- New states, of convenient size, not exceeding four in number, in addition to said state of Texas, and having sufficient population, may hereafter, by the consent of said state, be formed out of the territory thereof, which shall be entitled to admission under the provisions of the federal constitution. And such states as may be formed out of that portion of said territory lying south of thirty-six degrees thirty minutes north latitude, commonly known as the Missouri compromise line, shall be admitted into the Union with or without slavery, as the people of each state asking admission may desire. And in such state or states as shall be formed out of said territory north of said Missouri compromise line, slavery, or involuntary servitude, (except for crime,) shall be prohibited.

And be it further resolved, That if the President of the United States shall in his judgment and discretion deem it most advisable, instead of proceeding to submit the foregoing resolution to the Republic of Texas, as an overture on the part of the United States for admission, to negotiate with that Republic; then, Be it resolved, that a state, to be formed out of the present Republic of Texas, with suitable extent and boundaries, and with two representatives in Congress, until the next apportionment of representation, shall be admitted into the Union, by virtue of this act, on an equal footing with the existing states, as soon as the terms and conditions of such admission, and the cession of the remaining Texan territory to the United States shall be agreed upon by the governments of Texas and the United States: And that the sum of one hundred thousand dollars be, and the same is hereby, appropriated to defray the expenses of missions and negotiations, to agree upon the terms of said admission and cession, either by treaty to be submitted to the Senate, or by articles to be submitted to the two Houses of Congress, as the President may direct.

J W JONES

Speaker of the House of Representatives.

WILLIE P. MANGUM

President, pro tempore, of the Senate.

Approv'd March 1. 1845

JOHN TYLER

Note: The Texas legislature previously approves the annexation and a constitution on Oct 13, 1845.

Time: May 1845

A Small Minority Resist The Annexation Exists As Imperialistic



Henry David Thoreau (1817-1862)

Despite the public popularity behind adding Texas, some Americans are troubled by what they see as Polk's imperialistic actions.

The abolitionist Lloyd Garrison calls the Texas annexation "the greatest crime of our age."

The New England transcendentalist, Henry David Thoreau, refuses to pay his \$1 Massachusetts's poll tax in protest, and spends a night in jail. While released the next day, this experience leads to his 1849 treatise on "Civil Disobedience," where he poses questions of conscience that resonate with time.

Can there not be a government in which majorities do not virtually decide right and wrong, but conscience? Must the citizen ever for a moment, or in the least degree, resign his conscience to the legislator?

How does it become a man to behave toward this American government to-day? I answer, that he cannot without disgrace be associated with it. I cannot for an instant recognize that political organization as my government which is the slave's government also.

It is not a man's duty, as a matter of course, to devote himself to the eradication of any, even the most enormous wrong?

Ohio congressman Joshua Giddings expresses his conscientious objections in no uncertain terms:

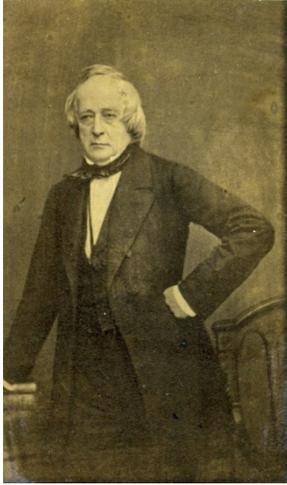
War, with all its horrors and its devastation of public morals, is infinitely preferable to a supine, inactive submission to the slaveholding power that is to control this nation if left in its present situation.

But these are the predictable abolitionist voices of protest – hardly enough to derail the momentum on Polk's side.

Chapter 118 – War Breaks Out With Mexico

Time: March 6, 1845 – November 10, 1845

An Angry Mexico Breaks Relations But Then Opens The Door To Negotiations



John Slidell (1793-1871)

The Mexican government is predictably outraged by U.S. passage of the March 1, 1845 Annexation bill, and doubly so because it involves not only Texas proper (north and west of the Nueces River), but also another huge area of “claimed land” south to the Rio Grande.

They signal their anger on March 6, 1845, two days after Polk’s inauguration, by recalling their minister and severing diplomatic relations with Washington.

Anticipating possible hostilities, the President in May 1845 sends General Zachary Taylor and 2,400 troops to the Nueces River border of Texas “for defensive purposes.”

When Polk’s long-time mentor, Andrew Jackson, dies on June 8, 1845 at age 78, in Nashville, “Young Hickory” is left to stand on his own amidst the controversies.

Animosity toward Mexico builds into the summer, with public sentiment in favor of expansion further spurred by the journalist John L. O’Sullivan whose *Democratic Review* continues to assert that America’s “manifest destiny (is) to overspread the continent:”

It is now time for the opposition to the Annexation of Texas to cease, (for) our manifest destiny (is) to overspread the continent for the free development of our yearly multiplying millions.

The strained relations continue until October, when Mexican President Jose Herrera, who hopes to avoid war, signals that he is willing to engage in talks about border issues, by which he means the original seizure of the Texas Republic. Polk seizes upon this apparent “opening” to not only resolve the “claimed land” borders to the Rio Grande, but also to explore Mexico’s willingness to part with additional territory west to California.

Louisiana Senator John Slidell is chosen by Polk as Minister to Mexico on November 10, and is sent on a mission to negotiate a trade of land for money – the Rio Grande border in exchange for forgiving a \$3.5 million Mexican debt owed the U.S., the New Mexico territory for \$5 million, and the ports of San Francisco and Monterrey for another \$20 million.

He is also directed to inform Herrera that the U.S. would intervene in any move by Mexico to sell this land to a foreign power, such as Britain or France.

Time: November 29, 1845 – April 24, 1846

Treaty Talks Stall And Shots Are Fired Along The Border



President of Mexico Mariano Paredes (1797-1849)

On November 29, 1845, Slidell arrives at the gulf port of Veracruz, ready to engage Herrera in Mexico City.

But Herrera's tenure in office is about to end, as the hawkish General Mariano Paredes, who had previously ousted Santa Anna, marches on the capitol and takes power on December 30.

Slidell is now left in a holding pattern, waiting to learn Paredes stance on the border issues.

Polk, however, is not in a waiting mood.

When news of Paredes stalling tactics reach him on January 12, 1846, he orders Taylor's forces to advance further southwest from the Nueces line, and across disputed land to the east bank of the Rio Grande.

Paredes fires back by refusing to accept Slidell's credentials as a diplomat. After standing idly by for over three months, the treaty mission officially ends in March 1846.



Map Showing Matamoros Just South Of The Rio Grande

Meanwhile Taylor's troops, now 3,500 men strong, are strung out along the north bank of the Rio Grande opposite the town of Matamoros, on the eastern side of the river.

On April 24, 1846, they are attacked by Mexican forces, with sixteen Americans killed in action.

Time: May 13, 1846

Congress Declares War On Mexico

On May 8, Slidell is back in Washington briefing Polk and his cabinet on his failed mission to Mexico City.

The President finds “ample cause for war” in Parades’ treatment of Slidell, and is in the process of drafting a message to congress, when word reaches him that fighting has already broken out. Polk responds by sending up a declaration of war to Congress on May 13, confident that any hold-outs will now be ready to act.

His assessment proves right, and his request quickly passes the Senate by 40-2 and the House by 174-14.

The only declared opponents at that moment are a small cluster of House Whigs led by JQ Adams, Hannibal Hamlin of Maine, and Jacob Brinkerhoff of Ohio who join the avowed abolitionist Joshua Giddings in labeling the conflict an “aggressive, unholy, unjust war.”

Time: May 1846

Polk Organizes His Forces As The Conflict Begins



U.S. Military Academy At West Point

On the day war with Mexico is declared, America’s military force is anemic.

Despite its actual and often anticipated conflicts with Britain, the notion of a large standing army is still seen by many as a potential threat to preserving the nation’s democracy. Should war break out, the fighting is to be done by a volunteer militia, led by a small Regular Army corps.

Officers for the army corps are trained since 1802 at the U.S. Military Academy in West Point, NY. But the academy is modestly funded, with a total of only 59 graduates in the entire renowned class of 1846.

Meanwhile the U.S. Naval Academy at Annapolis, Maryland, has just opened its doors on October 10, 1845, as the brainchild of George Bancroft, Polk's Secretary of the Navy.



U.S. Naval Academy

On May 13, 1846, muster for the Regular Army stands at a mere 6,562 men comprising 14 regiments, with eight infantry, four artillery and two dragoons (mounted troops). To bolster this count, Polk asks Congress to fund an additional 50,000 volunteers.

On top of the need for more volunteers, Polk faces another challenge in deciding who should command his expeditionary army.

The obvious choice as overall leader is Major General Winfield Scott, the ranking officer in the army since his June 1841 promotion. Scott is 59 years old when war is declared and has served his country since 1809. He becomes a Brigadier General at twenty-seven after being severely wounded at Lundy's Lane in the War of 1812. From there he is called upon by one president after another to oversee any and all military crises.

Polk's reservations about naming Scott to lead the troops in Mexico are political in nature.

While the imposing 6 foot 5 inch tall general grows up on a Virginia plantation, he is an outspoken critic of slavery and a Whig who has already been considered for the presidency in 1840, before the nomination goes to William Henry Harrison. As such Polk views him more as a political competitor than a military subordinate.

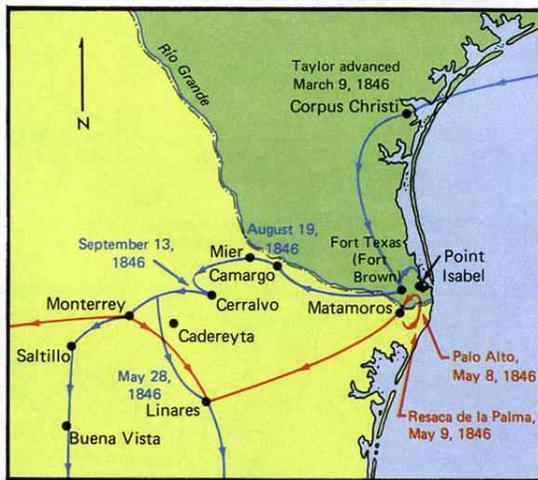
Given this, Polk decides to leave Brigadier General Zachary Taylor in command, since he is already in action on the Rio Grande and, unlike Scott, professes no interest in politics, at least so far.

Time: May 3-8, 1846

The Opening Battle For Fort Texas

As the war begins, Taylor's initial strategy is two-fold:

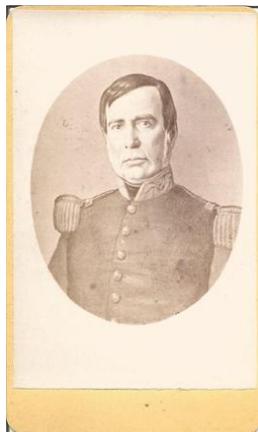
- Meet and defeat the Mexican forces at the southern tip of the Rio Grande, and then move inland to the immediate west; and
- Send troops to occupy the northern provinces of New Mexico and Alto California so these can become U.S. territory when the conflict is over.



Map Showing Point Isabel, Ft. Texas And Matamoros

The hard fighting is under way for ten days before the official May 13 declaration passes Congress.

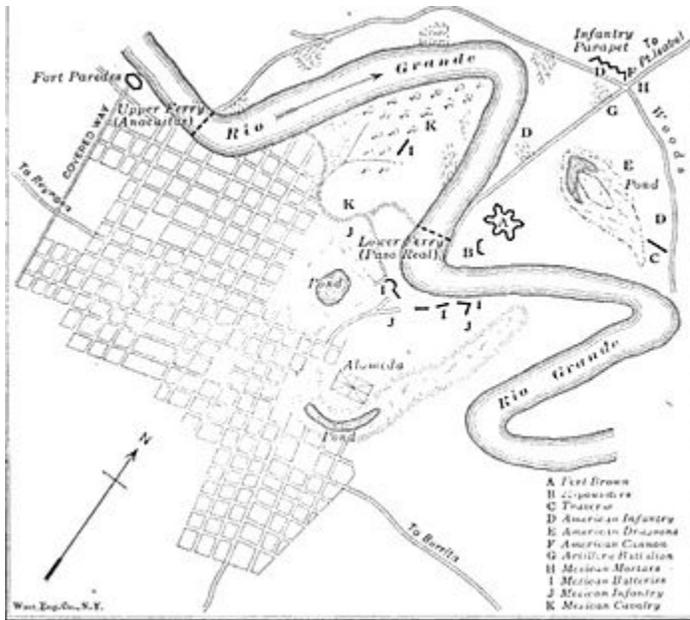
The first objective for the Mexicans is a star-shaped earthen defense outpost that Taylor's troops have built on the east side of the Rio Grande. It is christened Ft. Texas, and later re-named Ft. Brown, after the heroic major who falls there. It is occupied by only 500 U.S. troops, and General Mariano Avista begins to shell it on May 3 from his side of the river in Matamoros. He then advances across the river, surrounds the fort, and begins an all-out siege.



General Mariano Arista (1802-1855)

After five days of steady bombardment, the fort is still holding out, when Taylor, stationed 22 miles away to the east at Fort Isabel, sets out with 2200 men and 150 wagons to relieve the pressure.

General Avista hears of the movement and pivots the troops he has north of Ft. Texas, heading out along the Point Isabel Road to intercept Taylor.



Map Showing The Star-Shaped Ft. Texas North Of The Rio Grande

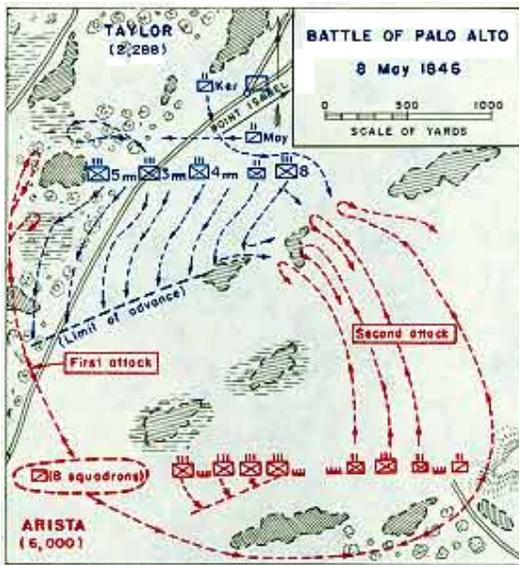
Time: May 8-9, 1846

Taylor Wins His First Victories At Palo Alto And Resaca De La Palma

Taylor is outnumbered by Avista – on the order of two to one -- when the armies meet on May 8 on an open plain bordering the high chaparral, or shrub land, known as Palo Alto.

The action is particularly bloody, since neither side entrenches and there are no natural walls or fences to provide protection from artillery fire.

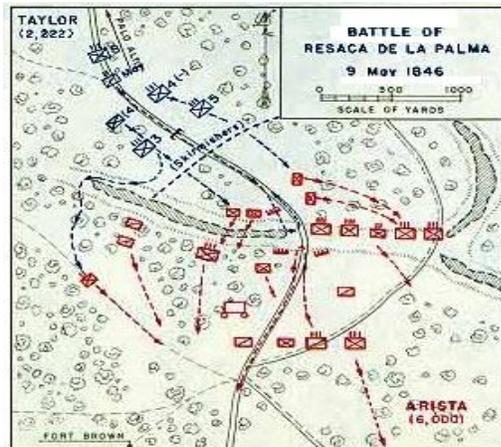
Over a five hour period, repeated changes by the Mexican infantry and dragoons are repulsed by the American's "flying artillery," lightweight cannon with exploding shells maneuvered by horses to critical areas of the field. Avista finally abandons his attack, with casualties upwards of 600 killed or wounded vs. Taylor's losses reported at 4 killed and 37 wounded.



Map Of Palo Alto Battlefield North Of Ft. Texas

On the morning of May 9, the Mexicans fall back in good order some five miles to defensive fortifications they had previously prepared along the Point Isabel road to Fort Texas. Taylor chases after him.

Fronting the Point Isabel road is an ancient run-off channel of the Rio Grande, known locally as Resaca de la Palma, a ravine with waist-deep water surrounded by palm trees and other shrubs. Arista locates his HQ to the south while arraying his troops (in red on the maps) along the arc of the ravine, both west and east of the road.



Map Of Resaca De La Palma Between Palo Alto And Ft. Texas

His position is a strong one, and Taylor attacks it head on from the northwest. One of his young lieutenants is Ulysses S. Grant, who describes his early assault as follows:

I was with the right wing and led my company through the thicket wherever a penetrable place could be found...that would carry me to the enemy. At last I got pretty close up without knowing it. The balls commenced to whistle very thick overhead cutting the limbs of the chaparral left and right.

Another later-to-be-famous warrior, Lt. James Longstreet, offers his memories of the fight:

After a considerable march the battalion came to the body of a young Mexican woman. This sad spectacle unnerved us a little, but the crush through the thorny bushes brought us back to thoughts of heavy work...All of the enemy's artillery opened, and soon his musketry. The lines closed in to short work, even to bayonet work at places....A pause was made to dip our cups for water, which gave a moment for other thoughts; mine went back to her whom I had left behind. I drew her daguerreotype from my breast pocket, had a glint of her charming smile, and with quickened spirit mounted the bank (ahead).

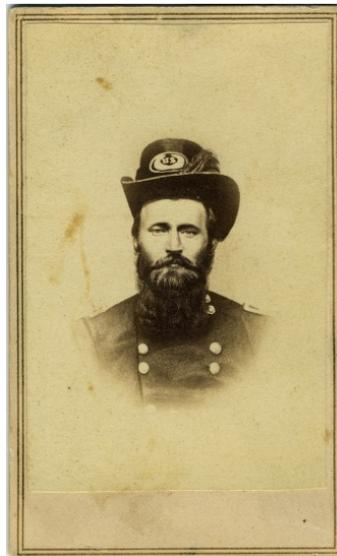
The Americans continue this “heavy work” against the Mexican lines throughout the afternoon. They finally break through after a small force under Captain Robert Buchanan flanks the defender’s left wing and comes up in the rear of Arista’s men. This surprise infiltration collapses the Mexican’s line, wins the battle, and initiates a panicked 200 mile retreat due west to their bastion at Monterrey.

During the two days of fighting, the Americans suffer 34 killed and 113 wounded, while the Mexicans lose over 1500 men, killed, wounded or drowned during flight, along with the capture of 7 major artillery pieces.

With these opening victories, the Americans secure the Rio Grande border, demonstrate their tactical superiority on the battlefield, and prepare to drive further west into the interior of Mexico.



Lt. Ulysses S. Grant (1822-1885)

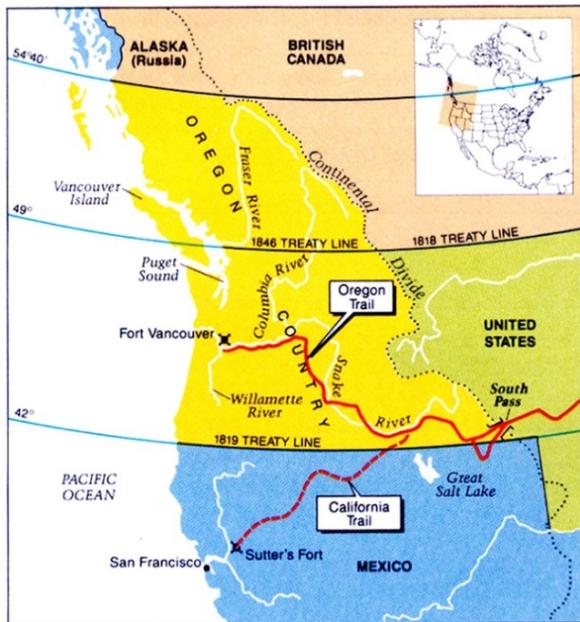


Lt. James Longstreet (1821-1904)

Chapter 119 - The Oregon Boundary Dispute With Britain Is Resolved

Time: 1800-1840

The Oregon Boundary Lines Remain In Dispute



The Disputed Oregon Territory

As the war with Mexico gets under way, Polk acts to resolve another long-standing territorial dispute, this time with Great Britain.

In question is a vast area in the Pacific Northwest, known to the Americans as the Oregon Country and to the British as the Columbia District of the Hudson Bay Trading Company.

Over time this land has played an important role in development of the fur trading industry.

America first enters the region in 1805, when Jefferson's Lewis & Clark expedition reaches the headwater of the Columbia River, where it empties into the Pacific. In 1811 a subsequent

mission, funded by the tycoon, John Jacob Astor, arrives there and builds Ft. Astoria, a fur trading station servicing both Astor's Pacific Fur Company and another British competitor known as The North West Company.

The British seize Ft. Astoria during the War of 1812 and rename it Ft. George, until the 1814 Treaty of Ghent returns conditions to the status quo ante.

President James Monroe attempts to settle the Oregon borders with Britain during his first term.

In 1818 he tries to gain acceptance of the 49th parallel as the northern demarcation between Canada and the U.S., but Britain demands a line further south, for direct access to the Columbia River port. These talks end with a ten year "joint occupation" agreement allowing settlers from both countries to live side by side.

Monroe's negotiations with Spain over the southern border are more successful and the 1819 Adams-Onis Treaty sets the 42nd parallel as the boundary between the Oregon and Spanish California. (This is also the same treaty that sets the Texas line along the Nueces River, which Polk bemoans in his inaugural address.)



The 1819 Adams-Onís Treaty Borders With Spain

Over the next two decades, Oregon develops gradually, with Ft. Vancouver, 90 miles inland from Ft. Astoria, becoming the hub of the fur trade, and the Hudson Bay Company reasserting its dominance. The 1818 “joint occupation” bargain with Britain is extended in 1827.

But things begin to change in the early 1830’s, as the Oregon Trail becomes passable for pioneer families, not just for independent mountain men. American settlers flock into the region, build homesteads, and vastly outnumber the British. As with the Texans, the Oregon population now looks to Washington to validate their land claims.

Time: June 18, 1846

Polk Secures A Final Treaty On Oregon With Whig Support

The demands of the Oregon settlers are reflected in the Democratic Convention platform of 1844, and Polk himself reinforces them in his March 4, 1845 inaugural address:

Our title to the country of Oregon is ‘clear and unquestionable’ and already are our people preparing to perfect that title by occupying it with their wives and children.

Once that assertion is made public, final resolution with Britain on the exact northern boundary becomes a necessity.

Some Western hawks in Congress rally behind the slogan “fifty-four forty or fight,” a line that would gouge 300 miles north into British Canada. But Polk and his Southerners hope to solve the issue without the war that would likely follow.

Early discussions with England go badly. Polk’s “blustering announcement” in his inaugural being booed roundly in the British parliament.

Things worsen with a clumsy July 16 letter from Secretary of State James Buchanan to Sir Richard Packenham, which first reiterates America’s right to the entirety of Oregon, then backs off to a 49th parallel compromise in the “spirit of moderation.” Packenham rejects the terms outright, refuses even to forward the letter to Prime Minister Peel, and declines to offer a counter-proposal. In turn, Polk takes his initial proposal off the table.

Within the cabinet, Polk and Buchanan go head to head, with the Secretary calling for accommodation and the President intent on staying silent and forcing Britain’s hand. As Young Hickory says, “the only way to treat John Bull is to look him straight in the eye.”

In December 1845 the Oregon border issue heats up in Congress, as westerners again demand the fifty-four forty solution, southerners support the 49th parallel, and northerners simply wishing to avoid war with Britain. The debate in the House carries over to the New Year, where a first term congressman from Ohio named John Cummins articulates a vision for an America in possession of the Oregon country:

(Oregon) is the master key of the economic universe, with flourishing towns and embryo cities (facing toward the Asian markets.) The commerce of the world would thus be revolutionized...Britain must lose her commercial supremacy in the Pacific...and (trading partners) must pay tribute to us.

On February 9, 1846, the House passes a bill calling on Polk to terminate the “joint occupancy” agreement with Britain inside of one year – while also encouraging a new border settlement that is amicable. When the bill goes to the Senate, the western wing of the Democratic Party led by Lewis Cass and the southern wing led by Calhoun clash, to Polk’s dismay. This persists until April 23, when a re-written joint “termination” directive passes the House 142-46 and the Senate 42-10.

Now the ball is back with the British, and a revised Parliament looking for resolution. On June 3, a letter from Packenham proposes a 49th parallel solution, as long as British settlers south of the line retain their lands, and access to the Columbia River is granted British ships. This breaks the stalemate, and on June 18, Polk sends a final treaty proposal to the Senate, which ratifies it by a 41-14 vote.

Remarkably, all 23 Whig senators support Polk’s measure – unlike his own Democrats who remain split.

Cass of Michigan is opposed to the compromise border. He is joined by other westerners including Atchison of Missouri, both senators from Illinois (Breese and Semple) and from Indiana (Hannegan and Bright), along with William Allen of Ohio, chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, who resigns this post in protest.

Composition Of Senate Votes On The Oregon Bill

	Support	Oppose
Democrats	18	14
Whigs	23	0

But by early June 1846, the crafty Polk can declare victory on his promise to resolve Oregon, a move that adds a full 10% to America's total land mass.

He now turns his attention back to progress on the tariff.

Chapter 120 - Polk Gets His Tariff Bill Approved

Time: 1828-1845

Tariff Rates Continue To Cause North-South Friction



U.S. Treasury Department

For the hard-charging President Polk, the first three months in office have been a whirlwind, although he remains determined to complete all his identified objectives in one term.

He has settled the border dispute over Oregon on June 18, 1846, and his forays into Texas and Alta California are progressing well. He decides now to tackle nagging issues related to tariffs.

Polk was a second term member of the U.S. House in 1828 when the “Tariff of Abominations” bill – cynically designed to undermine the South’s political opponents – backfired on John C. Calhoun, and was signed into law. It doubled the tax on imported goods to an average of 45%.

For the nascent New England manufacturers, this high tariff on imported goods such as cotton, wool and pig iron provides marketplace “protection” by keeping their retail prices in line with what is offered by their competition – the larger and hence more efficiently run factories in Europe.

The West also favors the higher rates, since they stand to benefit disproportionately from increases in the government’s infrastructure spending that will follow.

Federal Spending On Internal Improvements (1820-29)

Region	% Spending	% Population
North	49%	47%
South	19	40
West	32	13

Malone (1998)/Douglas Irwin

Meanwhile the Southern planters are outraged by the negative effects on the tariff on their cotton industry. This leads to the attempt by South Carolina to “nullify” the law and Jackson’s “Force Bill” threatening to send in troops to insure compliance.

Jackson lowers the rates in 1830, only to have the “protectionists” drive them back up in 1832.

The Compromise of 1833 delivers a framework that holds up well until 1842. It focuses on all imported goods currently being taxed at high rates in 1833 and imposes a formula for gradual yearly reductions to adjust them down to a 20% target by 1842.

But when 1842 arrives, the Whigs have taken control in Congress, and, despite two vetoes by Tyler, Henry Clay’s so-called “Black Tariff” drives the levies back up to roughly 40%.

Time: July 28, 1846

Congress Passes The “Walker Tariff Of 1846”

As a congressman, Polk experiences all of this regional turmoil, and hopes to never see it repeated.

He believes – with good cause – that America’s manufacturing sector is now well established, and no longer in need of “protection” from the federal government. At the same time, however, he recognizes that tariff revenues continue to supply upwards of two-thirds of all money coming into DC. These funds will now be needed to carry on the Mexican War, in addition to further infrastructure projects.

Polk charges his Treasury Secretary, Robert Walker, with arriving at a new tariff bill that lowers the tariff while striking a proper balance between the financial needs of the nation and the political needs of his Democrat party.

The “Walker Tariff of 1846” breaks imported goods into five classes, assigning staggered rate to each, from a high of 100% to a low on 0%, reserved for coffee and tea. The historically most fought-over items fall into the “C-Class” (iron, other metals, wood, glass, paper, wool, woolens, leather) taxed at 30%, and the “D-Class” (including cotton) at 25%.

The Bill breezes through the House but ends in a tie 27-yea vs. 27-nay vote in the Senate – and only due to a last ditch effort by the Governor of Tennessee to convince Whig Senator Spencer Jarnigan to vote “yes.”

Responsibility for breaking the tie falls on the shoulders of Polk’s Vice-President, George Dallas, of Pennsylvania. Dallas plans to run for President in 1850 and knows that his backing in New England will erode if he supports the lower tariff. Still, as a Democrat, he has no real choice

in the matter. He votes “aye” on July 28, 1846, and the Walker Tariff becomes the law of the land. It will survive intact until 1857 when rates are further reduced to 17% on average.

Chapter 121 – Americans Occupy California And New Mexico

Time: Summer 1846

Tensions Rise For American Settlers Living In Alta California

While Polk is pleased by General Taylor's victories south of the Rio Grande in the Spring of 1846, his sights remain set on acquiring all of the land identified in November 1845 when he sent Congressman John Slidell to negotiate with the Mexicans.



John C. Fremont (1813-1890)

He is particularly focused on Alta California, the upper part of the province, sparsely populated by Mexicans and largely ignored by their civil government. Included here are the ports of San Francisco and Los Angeles and the surrounding valleys, where clusters of American settlers have already put down roots:

“Mountain men” like Joseph Walker, who explores the region in 1832 along with the Paris-born, West Point grad, Benjamin Bonneville; Isaac Graham, who opens a distillery in 1836 and tries to form up a Texas-style Republic; and one Johan Suter (later John Sutter), a German immigrant, who travels the Oregon Trail to the west coast, takes on Mexican citizenship, and opens a fort bearing his name some 90 miles northeast of San Francisco. By 1845, Ft. Sutter is well-known locally as a resting place for weary pioneers; two years later it is world famous when gold is discovered on the land.

As customary, Polk acts aggressively on his goals – expanding the scope of the war beyond the border of Texas and over to Mexican territory on the west coast.

He sends American warships to blockade the Pacific coast ports and orders Colonel Stephen B. Kearney to march from Kansas toward Alta California. Kearney is a battle tested fifty year old who begins his military career in the War of 1812, helps explore the West, and then earns fame as the “father of the U.S. Cavalry” for decades of service protecting settlers across the Great Plains. Kearny rides out of Leavenworth on June 3, with 1700 men and his immediate sights set on reaching Santa Fe, some 750 miles to the west.

Before he gets even that far, Polk's quest for control of California is almost resolved through the actions of a band of local settlers around Sacramento, aided by the western adventurer, Captain John C. Fremont.

Together they engineer a military filibuster known thereafter as the Bear Flag Revolt.

Time: June - July 1846

America Seizes Alta California In The “Bear Flag Revolt”



Map Showing The Sacramento Valley, Yuba City And San Francisco

On June 8, 1846, Fremont, Kit Carson and a band of 55 armed troopers are encamped at Sutter Butte, in the Sacramento Valley, near Yuba City.

They have arrived there after Fremont’s third expedition – mapping the route of the Arkansas River – has morphed into a year-long journey into the Oregon Country and then down into Alta California, where he makes contact with American settlers in the region.

The Mexicans regard Fremont as a nuisance and chase him back into Oregon for a period of time. But as word reaches him of possible hostilities, he re-positions his troops back in the valley.

I saw the way opening clear before me. War with Mexico was inevitable; and a grand opportunity presented itself to realize in their fullest extent the far-sighted views of Senator Benton. I resolved to move forward on the opportunity and return forthwith to the Sacramento valley in order to bring to bear all the influence I could command.

Once there, he is approached by a band of local Americans led by William Ide and Ezekiel Merritt, who claim that Mexican troops are about to drive all foreign settlers out of Sacramento. They ask Fremont if he would be willing to support them in establishing a Texas-like republic.

Evidently Fremont encourages them to proceed, but without committing his own troopers to any action.

Ide and Merritt plunge forward, assembling and equipping their own thirty man posse and heading back toward San Francisco to launch a military-style filibuster.

On June 14, 1846, they arrive at the sleepy Mexican outpost in Sonoma, some 45 miles north of the port city, and surround the home of General Mariano Vallejo, “Commandante of Northern

California.” They proceed to arrest both Vallejo and his brother, and declare their new status as an independent nation.

The Commander in Chief of the Troops assembled at the Fortress of Sonoma... declares his object to...defend himself and companions in arms who were invited to this country by a promise of Lands on which to settle themselves and families, and who were also promised a "republican government," (but) when arriving in California were denied even the privilege of buying or renting Lands of their friends... and instead of being allowed to participate in or being protected by a "Republican Government" were oppressed by a "Military Despotism."

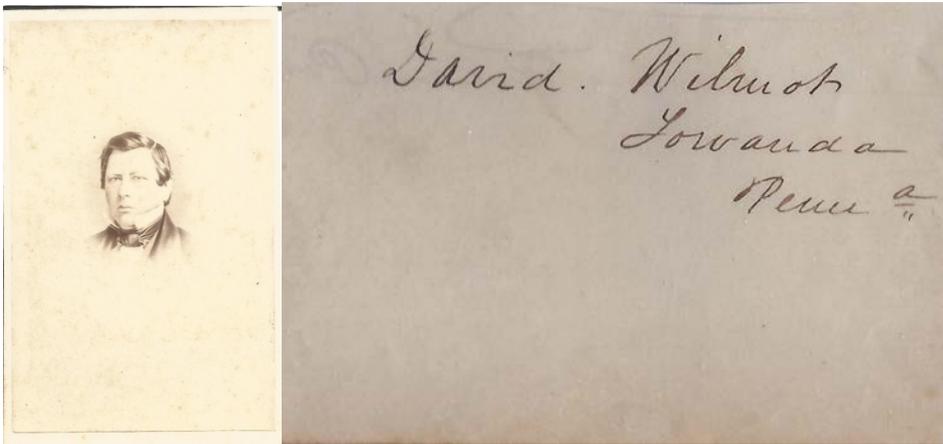
A white bedsheet serves as their makeshift flag, painted across the top with the outline of a California grizzly bear and a single red star, mimicking Texas.

On July 1, the “Bear Flag” rebels, now under Fremont’s direct leadership, reach San Francisco and occupy the Presidio compound, which is undefended. At first they raise their banner over the works, but within days it is replaced by the stars and stripes. This ends the brief history of the “Bear Flag Revolt” and begins the de facto seizure of Alta California from the Mexicans.

Chapter 122 - The Wilmot Proviso Is An Existential Threat To The South

Time: August 8, 1846

Wilmot's Proviso Signals A New Crisis



Congressman David Wilmot (1814-1868) and Signature – Whose 1846 “Proviso” Helped Spark The Civil War

Polk is enjoying a remarkable string of victories when everything he has accomplished is suddenly threatened by a crisis in the U.S House.

The impetus here is a straight forward appropriations bill to set aside \$2 million to fund the Mexican War, which the President hopes to pass in the final two days before the 29th Congress adjourns for recess.

Polk fully expects the bill to prompt the usual criticism of the war from his Whig opponents, and this occurs when the New Yorker, Hugh White, says the conflict is a Southern plot to “extend the limits of slavery” into the west. He promises to vote against funding the war unless the language in the bill...

Forever precludes the possibility of extending the limits of slavery...and I call upon the other side to propose such an amendment...as evidence of their desire to restrain that institution within its constitutional limits.

The next member to speak is first term Democrat congressman David Wilmot, representing the 12th district of Pennsylvania.

Wilmot is only 32 years old, but imposing in stature, sporting a chaw of tobacco, and ever ready to buck the system on behalf of speaking his mind. After being recognized by the Speaker as a likely-to-be friendly voice in the storm, Wilmot announces that he will support Polk's bill, but only if a “proviso” is added.

Provided, That, as an express and fundamental condition to the acquisition of any territory from the Republic of Mexico by the United States, by virtue of any treaty which may be negotiated

between them, and to the use by the Executive of the moneys herein appropriated, neither slavery nor involuntary servitude shall ever exist in any part of said territory, except for crime, whereof the party shall first be duly convicted.

His fellow Democrats are stunned by his declaration!

When asked to explain his amendment, he says that he voted for the Texas annexation, and has no moral qualms over slavery, nor any wish to abolish it. Rather his intent is simply to preserve “free soil” out west in order to “uphold the dignity of white men’s labor.”

I would preserve for free white labor a fair country, a rich inheritance where the sons of toil of my own race and color, can live without the disgrace which association with negro slavery brings upon free labor....If free territory comes in, God forbid that I should be the means of planting this institution upon it.

In this moment Wilmot offers up a new rationale for opposing slavery.

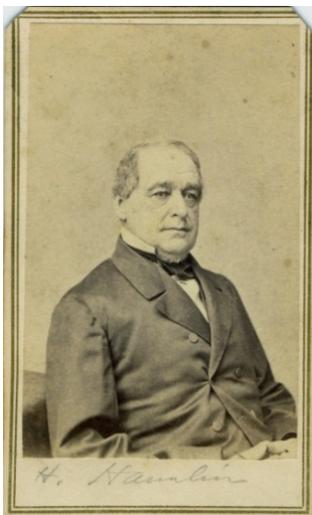
It is directed at upholding the value of white men’s labor, not ending the black man’s suffering.

To achieve this end, it flat out prohibits any further spread of slavery.

As such it is the worst nightmare for Polk and the men of the South – and it originates with a Democrat!

Time: 1844-1846

The Complex Roots Of Rebellion Among Northern Democrats



Hannibal Hamlin (1809-1891)



Preston King (1806-1865)

Once Wilmot's shocking Proviso is out in the open, Polk's supporters scurry to identify its origin and to determine just how much support it has, especially within the Democrat Party.

What they learn is deeply distressing.

Wilmot's dissent is widely shared among Northern Democrats, and aimed at Polk and the Southern wing of the party. Its origins trace all the way back to the 1844 Nominating Convention, where many feel that Van Buren was robbed of his chance for a second term.

Much of it is concentrated in New York, especially among men "Van Buren men" like Senator John Dix and Governor Silas Wright.

They are joined by others, including Preston King of New York, Hannibal Hamlin of Maine and Jacob Brinkerhoff of Ohio, who go beyond sheer political animosity and see a Southern cabal at work, one determined to take over the party and put a pro-slavery man in the White House who will back their regional agenda.

This opposition group becomes known as the "Barnburner Democrats," accused by other members of being more willing to destroy the party than to back the President. Indeed many will assert that it is actually Brinkerhoff or Preston, rather than Wilmot, who pens the August 8 Proviso in the first place.

Other factors also play into this notion that the "Slave Power" has co-opted the Democrat Party, to the detriment of Northern interests.

Two powerful Democratic senators, Lewis Cass of Michigan and William Allen of Ohio, have led the "Fifty-four forty or fight" cry to occupy all of the Oregon Country. When Polk compromises with Britain on the 49th parallel boundary, the suggestion is that he will fight for slave territory in Texas, but not for free land in Oregon.

Then there is the Walker Tariff, perceived by many Northerners as a reduction in rates to satisfy the planters of the South at the expense of manufacturing in the east and added infrastructure in the west.

Finally comes the widening of the war against Mexico, no longer confined to disputed land within Texas, but now extending across the Southwest and opening the way to a host of new slave states.

Out of these combined grievances a sizable group of Northern Democrats in the House decide that it is time to send a signal to their Southern colleagues that their interests will not be ignored.

And what better way than to threaten the one thing the Southerners want most – the extension of slave plantations west of the Mississippi.

Time: August 8, 1846

The Wilmot Proviso Passes In The House

With time nearing on a final vote, House Democrats scramble to find an option to the Wilmot Proviso.

The main attempt comes from the Indiana Democrat William Wick, who offers up an alternative solution for all new land west of the Mississippi.

Wick’s proposal is one that will be heard over and over in Congress between 1846 and the collapse of the Union in 1861.

Instead of a universal ban on slavery in the new Territories, why not simply extend the old 36°30” Missouri Compromise line to the Pacific, with states falling south of the line allowing slavery and north of the line prohibiting it. That solved the conflict in 1820 and why shouldn’t it work again in 1846.

The answer in the House is a resounding “no.” Wick’s proposal goes down by an 89-54 margin.

At this point it becomes clear that the usual political calculus has broken down.

The rejection is not a matter of a split along traditional party lines, as in unified Democrats against unified Whigs.

Instead *both parties are split along regional lines* – with Northern members favoring Wilmot’s ban on extending slavery and Southerners in opposition.

Once this division is clear, Southern forces in the House try to stall. The floor debate continues into the evening, with procedural votes taken on the wording of the Proviso and then on whether to table consideration of the bill until the House reconvenes in December. Both attempts fail.

At last, Polk’s Appropriation Bill with the Wilmot Proviso added comes to a vote. It passes by a narrow margin of 85-80, with only small differences showing up in total between Democrats and Whigs.

House Vote On Appropriation Bill With The Wilmot Proviso Added

Region	Democrats Yes - No	Whigs Yes - No	American Yes - No	Total Yes - No
Northeast	37 - 0	24 - 6	5 - 0	66 - 6
Northwest	15 - 4	2 - 2		17 - 6
Border	0 - 9	2 - 9		2 - 18
Southeast	0 - 27	0 - 7		0 - 34
Southwest	0 - 15	0 - 1		0 - 16
Total	52 - 55	28 - 25	5 - 0	85 - 80
Not Voting	(32)	(23)	(1)	(56)

VoteView/Library of Congress Records

But looked at along regional lines, the final vote shows that Northern members support Wilmot by 83-12 while Southerners oppose it 68-2.

North Vs. South Split Over The Wilmot Proviso: August 8, 1846

Region	Democrats Yes - No	Whigs Yes - No	American Yes - No	Total Yes - No
North	52 - 4	26 - 8	5 - 0	83 - 12
South	0 - 51	2 - 17	-- - --	2 - 68
Total	52 - 55	28 - 25	5 - 0	85 - 80

This outcome is NOT about a moral judgment on slavery, NOT about conscience-stricken Northern whites wishing to end the suffering of Southern slaves.

Rather it is a direct shot by Northerners in both parties across the bow of Polk and the South. It expresses their wish to reserve any new territory in the west for the exclusive benefit of white settlers -- unencumbered by the prospect of rich planters trying to buy the best acreage, and black slaves who would erode the “dignity” of their labor, threaten the safety of their families, and diminish the social fabric.

As such, the Wilmot Proviso represents an irreversible line in the sand between Southerners and those in the North and West.

Time: August 10, 1846

Southerners Finally Stall The Wilmot Proviso In The Senate

After the House passes the Wilmot Proviso, all that’s left for the Southern coalition to try to delay a vote in the Senate, until the clock runs out toward recess of the 29th congress on August 10.

This strategy works, despite a filibustering effort by the Massachusetts Senator “Honest John” Davis to force a vote.

On August 10 both chambers adjourn, leaving Polk without approval of his \$2million appropriation request to fund the war, and the Northerners without approval of their Wilmot Proviso.

Still, a clear-cut message from the North to the South has been delivered.

The astute Southern leader, John Calhoun, sums it up as follows:

- The North now enjoys a commanding majority of the votes in the House;
- The Wilmot measure shows that the North intends to stop the spread of slavery to the west;
- The South can no longer count on unwavering support for their cause from Northern Democrats;
- Nor does it have a ready-made solution in extending the old 36’20” compromise line.

Unless some new accommodation between the two sections can be found, disunion will be inevitable.

As usual, the South Carolina man accurately foretells the future.

From August 10, 1846 onward, the leaders of congress will begin a 15 year search for a new accommodation capable of holding the nation together.

In the end, they will fail.

Time: August 1846 Forward

The Profound Implications Of The Passage Of The Wilmot Proviso

This vote on the Wilmot Proviso will become a watershed moment in the eventual dissolution of the Union.

It expresses a flat “no” to Southern plans to extend slavery west of the Mississippi, even under the 34’30” line set in the 1820 Missouri Compromise.

It also initiates a dramatic shift in the number of whites willing to stand against the further spread of slavery.

Before Wilmot, this is largely confined to a small eastern band of so-called “radical abolitionists.”

After Wilmot, one need not be a “radical” to want to pen slavery up in the South.

That’s because of a new battle cry – “free soil for free men” – that will soon catch fire in the North and West.

It adds two pragmatic reasons against expanding slavery that go beyond mere anti-black racism and fear.

The first is that land prices for western settlers will go way up if average white farmers have to compete with rich plantation owners in the bidding.

The second is more subtle, but every bit as powerful.

It taps into America’s long-standing embrace of the “Protestant work ethic” – the belief that with hard labor comes both dignity and monetary rewards. But, as Wilmot argues, both suffer when blacks are doing the same work as white men, but for free. He calls this a “disgrace” – with white labor diminished to the level of slave labor.

If the value of white labor in America is to be preserved, it must not exist side by side with slave labor.

From this notion new political movements will soon take hold, the Free Soilers, the Know-Nothing Nativists, and eventually the Republican Party. All dedicated to preserving the new western land for white men.

When the South balks at this outcome, it will be branded by more and more Northerners as “the Slavocracy” -- forever prioritizing the self-interest of its rich plantation elites over the good of the white settlers.

The savvy abolitionist Lloyd Garrison quickly recognizes the power of this new theme and the Wilmot Proviso votes to serve his own ends, characterizing it as “the beginning of the end of our fight.”

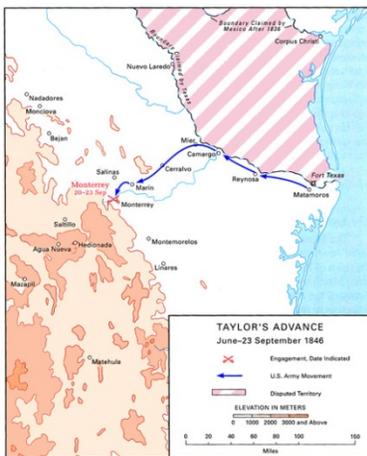
Chapter 123 - The War With Mexico Picks Up Momentum

Time: August 15 - September 21, 1846

Santa Fe Is Captured And The Battle For Monterrey Begins

While the “Bear Flag” land grab is playing out in California during June-July 1846, further U.S. incursions into Mexico are under way.

On August 15, 1846, General Stephen Kearny captures Santa Fe, the capital of the province of New Mexico, without firing a shot.



At the same time, General Taylor is heading west at a leisurely pace in pursuit of the Mexican army, which he defeated at Resaca de la Palma back in April.

He will find it in September, holed up at Monterrey, an enclave of 10,000 inhabitants, and the capital of Nuevo Leone province.

Map Of Taylor's Route From Matamoros To Monterrey

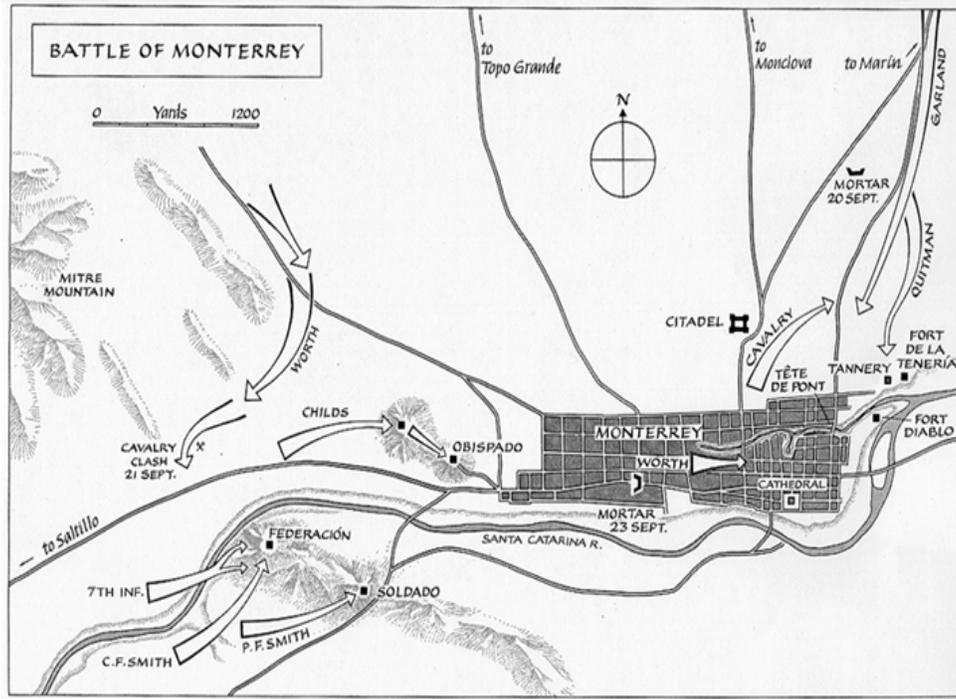
The city sits in a valley surrounded on two sides by the 4,000 foot peaks of the Mitre mountains, with the Santa Catarina River running along its eastern and southern flanks. Its location along the main road through the mountains toward Saltillo makes it strategically important to the westward advance of Zachary Taylor's army -- and knowing this, General Pedro Ampudia, who has now replaced Avista, decides to defend Monterrey.

In addition to its natural advantages in terrain, Monterrey is also well protected by a series of redoubts and stone buildings that dot the roads in from the northeast. General Ampudia concentrates his 9,000 troops across these fortifications, and confidently awaits the Americans.

Taylor, however, pauses for several weeks after his opening victories, and it is not until June 12 that he sends Ben McCulloch and his Texas Rangers out to scout the whereabouts of the Mexican army. When Taylor learns they are dug in at Monterrey, he sets three divisions and some 6600 troops in motion under Generals William Worth, David Twiggs and John Quitman. They arrive in early September and begin to plan their strategy.

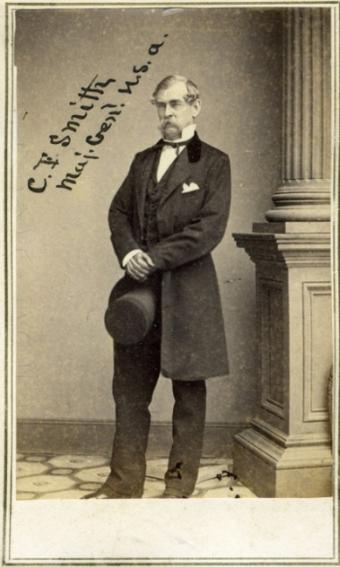
Lacking heavy artillery, Taylor knows that he must assault rather than siege Monterrey. After studying the ground, he settles on a daring two-prong attack. Quitman and Twiggs will send the bulk of the army headlong at the heavily defended fortresses north and east of the city. Worth

and 1700 men will swing west 7 miles under cover and arrive in the enemy's rear on the Saltillo road, cutting off the Mexican's supply and escape routes. If practicable, Worth will then launch a surprise attack against the more lightly defended western edge of the city. On September 20, Worth's flanking movement secures the Saltillo road, after a brief cavalry battle. Mexico's northern army is now effectively trapped in Monterrey as Taylor's assault begins on September 21.



Zachary Taylor's Attack On Monterrey

Colonel John Garland, leading Twigg's division, opens the battle against the eastern fortifications, with support from Mississippi and Tennessee units under Quitman and Colonel Jefferson Davis. They capture Fort de al Teneria and the bridge leading over the river to Ft. Diablo. Ohio troops under General Butler join the attack on Diablo, but it is successfully defended throughout the day by General Ampudia's forces. After ferocious street to street combat the Americans have gained a solid toehold on the eastern side of the city by nightfall.



Brvt Colonel Charles F. Smith (1807-1862)

Time: September 22-24, 1846

Monterrey Falls To Taylor



General John Quitman (1798-1858)

Overnight, General Ampudia decides to consolidate his two wings in the center of the city. He abandons Ft. Diablo, and draws back all his forces to the Cathedral and Central Plaza area, for a last stand.

At daybreak on September 23, General Quitman and a force of Texas Rangers resume their advance on Ft. Diablo and, finding it empty, race past it into the city, with shouts of “Alamo and Goliad” ringing through the streets. Taylor, however, is unaware of their breakthrough, and orders them to hold for the moment.

Meanwhile, General Worth hears the early sounds of battle and sends his troops forward to capture the western end of the city and envelop the remaining Mexicans. They quickly take the Bishop’s Palace outpost and begin house to house fighting.

By nightfall Worth has reached to within one block of the Plaza, and is in contact with Quitman and his troops, now nearby. The fates of the Mexican army and of the city of Monterrey are sealed – and General Ampudia knows it. On the night of September 23, he approaches General Worth for “terms of surrender.”

The agreement he finally works out with General Taylor is so stunning in its generosity that when word filters back to Washington, Polk wants to relieve Taylor of his command, despite the victory.

In return for ceding all public property in Monterrey to the Americans, Ampudia is allowed to evacuate his army, along with its small arms, within seven days, and any further conflict is suspended for the next six weeks.

While Taylor has lost 500 soldiers in the battle, to over 1,000 for the enemy, he is evidently so convinced that the Mexican army is defeated once and for all that he allows it to walk off the field in another retreat west.

Five months later he will realize that this calculation was not quite right.

Sidebar: Milestones In Taylor's Invasion Through Texas	
Taylor's 190 Mile Drive From Matamoros To Monterrey	
Date	Events
April 24, 1846	Taylor attacked along the Rio Grande
May 9	Taylor victory at Resaca de la Palma
May 13	Official declaration of war
May 18	Taylor occupies Matamoros
June - July	California taken in Bear Flag Revolt
August 15	Kearney secures New Mexico
September 24	Taylor victory at Monterrey

Time: Winter 1846

Polk's Cabinet Debates War Strategy And Commanders

Ever since General Zachary Taylor's troops are first attacked along the Rio Grande on April 25, 1846, the conflict with Mexico has all gone the American's way. His northern army, under Kearney, has planted the American flag from Santa Fe through California, and Taylor's central force has driven inland to capture Monterrey.

The only thing lacking so far is a formal capitulation by the Mexican government and a treaty resolving final ownership of the conquered lands. Various emissaries from Mexico hint at this resolution, but so far it remains simply a wish.

So the question becomes one of what it will take to bring the war to closure. This topic is hotly debated within Polk's cabinet. As usual, the President is clear about his preference – to expand the invasion until the enemy gives in.

His cabinet, led by the ever bothersome Secretary of State, James Buchanan, and the War minister, William Marcy, object to his proposal for three reasons:

- A broader invasion will extend the fighting and produce more agitation in Congress;
- They do not believe that General Winfield Scott is up to the task of leading the troops; and
- Both Scott and Taylor are Whigs who might run for president in 1848.

Polk floats out the possibility of promoting Senator Benton of Missouri to Lieutenant General, ranking Scott and taking overall command in the field, but he backs off when others resist. It's now clear that whatever future course the war takes, Scott will remain the lead general.

As the cabinet ponders options to end the war, critics begin to assert that Polk's hidden intent is to conquer all of Mexico, absorb it into the United States, and reinstitute slavery, banned there in 1829.

Polk flatly rejects these charges and insists that all future decisions about slavery in new territory acquired from the war will be left to the will of the settlers, as they write their state constitutions.

But this assurance isn't enough for the skeptics in congress – who again wave the Wilmot proviso in the face of the President and the Southerners.

Time: Winter 1846

General Scott Announces His Plan



General Winfield Scott
(1786-1866)

As political controversies over the war swirl about Washington, all eyes look toward the 61 year old General Winfield Scott for his plan to resolve the conflict.

Scott is a Southerner by birth and grows up on a Petersburg, Virginia plantation. He briefly attends the College of William & Mary, studies and practices law, then enlists in the Virginia militia. He comes to fame in the War of 1812, in the back and forth battles around Lake Ontario. He is wounded twice in the fighting, first as a Colonel, while capturing Ft. George, and later as a Brigadier General, near Niagara Falls at the Battle of Lundy's Lane. For his heroism, he is made a Brevet Major General at age 27. But the bullet wound to his left shoulder leaves him with a partially paralyzed arm, and he is unable to resume field duty.

After the 1812 War, Scott studies military strategy in France, writes various military manuals on drilling and tactics, and continues to advance his career. President Jackson calls on him to help put down the Nullification threat in 1832, to fight the Seminoles in 1836, to relocate the Cherokees in 1838. He becomes the ranking officer in the army in 1845, as a full Major General.

Scott is an enormous man, standing 6'5" and weighing over 250 lbs. His manner is imperious; he is a stickler for discipline; and he constantly decks himself out in elaborate uniforms. Hence the nickname, "Old Fuss and Feathers." Polk regards him in 1847 as a man filled with 'arrogance and inordinate vanity."

Nevertheless, the General finally steps forward with a plan to win the war. He will assemble and personally lead an invasion force of some 14,000 troops, capture the port city of Veracruz, then march overland to overwhelm and occupy the capital of Mexico City.

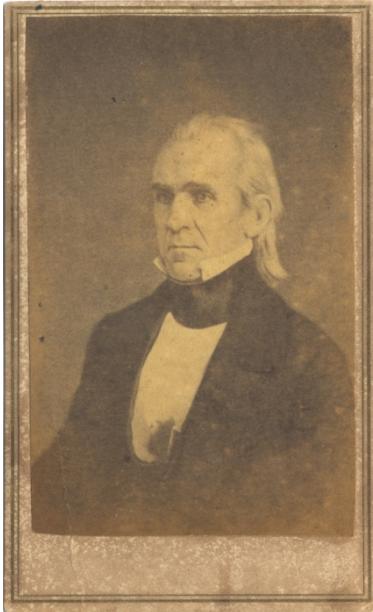
Polk reluctantly adopts the plan, and orders go out for Taylor to hold his position at Monterrey, while detaching the bulk of his army to join up with Scott's invasion force.

The fate of the President's war now rest in the hands of two Whig Generals, both of whom he distrusts as military commanders and as potential political opponents of his Democratic Party.

Chapter 124 - Congress Debates The Morality And Implications Of The Mexican War

Time: December 7, 1846

Polk Tries To Stem Divisiveness In His Annual Address To Congress



James K. Polk (1795-1849)

Polk's words show that he is clearly alarmed by the House vote on the Wilmot Proviso, which leaves him without funding for the war and with disunity in his own party over the future expansion of slavery.

The slavery question is assuming a fearful and most important aspect.

When the second and final session of the 29th Congress reconvenes on December 7, 1846, his Annual Message first attempts to align all sides behind his war efforts. His address begins with reassurances that the intent of the war is not to annihilate Mexico, and that the wish is end it as soon as the enemy will accept peace terms.

In my (last) annual message...I declared that-- The war has not been waged with a view to conquest, but, having been commenced by Mexico, it has been carried into the enemy's country and will be vigorously prosecuted there with a view to obtain an honorable peace....It has never been contemplated by me, as an object of the war, to make a permanent conquest of the Republic of Mexico or to annihilate her separate existence as an independent nation....Whilst our armies have advanced from victory to victory from the commencement of the war, it has always been with the olive branch of peace in their hands, and it has been in the power of Mexico at every step to arrest hostilities by accepting it.

He then turns to the delicate topic of slavery, not mentioning it explicitly, rather choosing to invoke the memory of George Washington and his warnings about geographical divisiveness as a threat to the Union.

(Washington) that greatest and best of men foresaw.. the danger to our Union of "characterizing parties by geographical discriminations--Northern and Southern, Atlantic and Western--whence designing men may endeavor to excite a belief that there is a real difference of local interests and views," and warned his countrymen against it.

So deep and solemn was his conviction of the importance of the Union and of preserving harmony between its different parts, that he declared to his countrymen in that address: It is of infinite moment that you should properly estimate the immense value of your national union to your collective and individual happiness; that you indignantly frown upon the first dawning of every attempt to alienate any portion of our country from the rest or to enfeeble the sacred ties which now link together the various parts. After the lapse of half a century these admonitions of Washington fall upon us with all the force of truth.

From there he boldly attempts to dismiss the battle over the Wilmot Proviso as nothing more than “differences of opinion upon minor questions of public policy.”

It is difficult to estimate the "immense value" of our glorious Union... How unimportant are all our differences of opinion upon minor questions of public policy compared with its preservation, and how scrupulously should we avoid all agitating topics which may tend to distract and divide us into contending parties, separated by geographical lines, whereby it may be weakened or endangered.

Polk’s message on December 7, 1846 is one that both he and his immediate successors will wish to believe – that sectional resistance to the presence of Africans, either slave or free, west of the Mississippi is a nothing more than a minor diversion.

Going forward, Congress should simply “avoid (these) agitating topics which may tend to distract and divide” the country.

Time: January 16, 1847

The House Debates Legal Precedents For Declaring Oregon A “Free State”



Hannibal Hamlin (1809-1891)

Despite Polk’s plea, the political jockeying over extending slavery into new western territory resumes early in the new session.

The initial focus is not the Southwest, but rather the Oregon Territory.

While all sides agree that Oregon should be declared a “Free State,” they argue over the legal basis for the call.

The rationale cannot be the Wilmot Proviso, since Oregon is acquired in the June 1846 treaty with Britain, and does not involve territory associated with the Mexican War.

But why then should Oregon have Free State status?

Southern members, led by Calhoun's man, Armistead Burt of South Carolina assert that the precedent should be the 1820 Missouri Compromise, simply extending the 34°30' line to the west coast. This is the same proposal offered six months earlier by Indiana's William Wick and supported by Stephen Douglas.

Again it meets resistance. Congressman Hannibal Hamlin of Maine, an outspoken abolitionist, says that the Missouri line "has no more application to the territory of Oregon than it has with the East Indies."

A contrived rationale finally emerges around the 1797 Northwest Ordinance ban on slavery, and it musters enough votes to ram the bill through a still rebellious House, on January 16, 1847.

The bill declaring Oregon a Free State goes on to the Senate, where it is immediately tabled.

Time: February 11, 1847

Tom Corwin Warns Of The Damage To Follow From The Mexican War



Senator Thomas Corwin (1794-1865)

The next volley over slavery comes when the Senate turns to a modified request from Polk for funds to prosecute the war with Mexico.

The ante has now risen from \$2 million to \$3 million, as it becomes clear that a more substantial invasion will be required to force an end to the fighting.

The leading spokesman for the Whigs is the ex-Governor now Senator from Ohio, Tom Corwin.

Corwin addresses his colleagues on February 11, 1847 in an eloquent and balanced speech, intended to challenge Polk's justification of the Mexican War and to warn members that geographical divisions over slavery is destined to lead on to "civil conflict."

Corwin begins by recalling Mexico's recent struggle for freedom from Spain, from Father Hidalgo's "cry" ("El Grito de la Independencia") at the town of Dolores in 1810 to the final Treaty of Cordova in 1821. And now, says Corwin, America comes as a new invader, seeking land the Mexicans bled over.

What is the territory, Mr. President, which you propose to wrest from Mexico? It is consecrated to the heart of the Mexican by many a well-fought battle with his old Castilian master. His Bunker Hills, and Saratogas, and Yorktowns are there! The Mexican can say, "There I bled for liberty! and shall I surrender that consecrated home of my affections to the Anglo-Saxon invaders? What do they want with it? They have Texas already.

The Senator then looks directly at the topic that Polk has treated in elliptical fashion – the potential for a war of acquisition to divide the Union over the issue of expanding slavery.

There is one topic connected with this subject which I tremble when I approach, and yet I cannot forbear to notice it. I allude to the question of slavery.

Opposition to its further extension, it must be obvious to everyone, is a deeply rooted determination With men of all parties in what we call the nonslaveholding states. New York, Pennsylvania, and Ohio, three of the most powerful, have already sent their legislative instructions here. So it will be, I doubt not, in all the rest.

How is it in the South? Can it be expected that they should expend in common their blood and their treasure in the acquisition of immense territory, and then willingly forgo the right to carry thither their slaves, and inhabit the conquered country if they please to do so? Nay, I believe they would even contend to any extremity for the mere right, had they no wish to exert it.

Once divided, Corwin argues, the result will be a civil conflict at home – which means, in turn, that bills calling to continue and fund the war are nothing less than “treason to the Union.”

I believe (and I confess I tremble when the conviction presses upon me) that there is equal obstinacy on both sides of this fearful question

This bill would seem to be nothing less than a bill to produce internal commotion. Should we prosecute this war another moment, or expend one dollar in the purchase or conquest of a single acre of Mexican land, the North and the South are brought into collision on a point where neither will yield.

Why should we precipitate this fearful struggle, by continuing a war the result of which must be to force us at once upon a civil conflict? Sir, rightly considered, this is treason, treason to the Union, treason to the dearest interests, the loftiest aspirations, the most cherished hopes of our constituents. It is a crime to risk the possibility of such a contest. It is a crime of such infernal hue that every other in the catalogue of iniquity, when compared with it, whitens into virtue.

The only way out is to abandon the war with Mexico, along with its demands for land beyond Texas. Mexico already knows that it cannot prevail on the battlefield, so peace terms will be readily accepted.

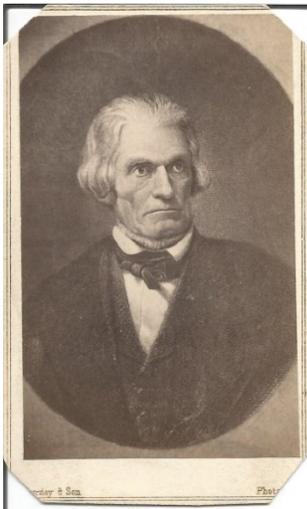
Let us abandon all idea of acquiring further territory and by consequence cease at once to prosecute this war. Let us call home our armies, and bring them at once within our own acknowledged limits. Show Mexico that you are sincere when you say you desire nothing by conquest. She has learned that she cannot encounter you in war, and if she had not, she is too weak to disturb you here. Tender her peace, and, my life on it, she will then accept it.

Once cleansed of Mexican blood, Corwin says, America can escape the prospect of its own civil war and restore “ancient accord and eternal brotherhood” at home.

Let us then close forever the approaches of internal feud, and so return to the ancient concord and the old ways of national prosperity and permanent glory. Let us here, in this temple consecrated to the Union, perform a solemn lustration; let us wash Mexican blood from our hands, and on these altars, and in the presence of that image of the Father of his Country that looks down upon us, swear to preserve honorable peace with all the world and eternal brotherhood with each other.

Time: February 15, 1847

Senator John Calhoun Issues A Southern Warning Over Wilmot



John Calhoun (1772-1850)

Like Corwin, John Calhoun of South Carolina is another prescient commentator on the consequences of the war and of the Wilmot bill. He sums up his thoughts in a senate speech delivered four days later.

The ever dour Calhoun begins by summing up the situation in congress as he sees it – with non-slaveholding states in both chambers apparently determined to prohibit slavery in the new “public domain” lands to the west.

Mr. President, I rise to offer a set of resolutions in reference to the various resolutions from the State legislatures upon the subject of what they call the extension of slavery, and the proviso attached to the House bill...

It was solemnly asserted on this floor...that all parties in the non-slaveholding States had come to a fixed and solemn determination...that there should be no further admission of any States into this Union which permitted, by their constitutions, the existence of slavery; and...that slavery shall not hereafter exist in any of the territories of the United States; the effect of which would be to give to the non-slaveholding States the monopoly of the public domain... At the same time, two resolutions which have been moved to extend the compromise line from the Rocky

Mountains to the Pacific, during the present session, have been rejected by a decided majority... It is a scheme, Mr. President, which aims to monopolize the powers of this Government and to obtain sole possession of its territories.

The slaveholding states, he says, are already in the minority in the House (138-90) and in the Electoral College (168-118).

Sir, already we—I use the word “we” for brevity’s sake—are already we are in a minority in the other House, in the electoral college, and I may say, in every department of this Government, except at present in the Senate of the United States—there for the present we have an equality.

There are two hundred and twenty-eight representatives, including Iowa, which is already represented there. Of these, one hundred and thirty-eight are from non-slaveholding States, and ninety are from what are called the slave States—giving a majority, in the aggregate, to the former of forty-eight. In the electoral college there are one hundred and sixty-eight votes belonging to the non-slaveholding States, and one hundred and eighteen to the slaveholding, giving a majority of fifty to the non-slaveholding.

Only in the Senate do the slaveholding states retain enough voting power to block the will of the majority, and this is transitory. The admission of Iowa and Wisconsin will give the Free States a 32-28 edge in Senate seats, and if 12-15 more Free States are added, the South will be further overwhelmed.

We, Mr. President, have at present only one position in the Government, by which we may make any resistance to this aggressive policy which has been declared against the South...And this equality in this body is one of the most transient character. Already Iowa is a State...Already Wisconsin has passed the initiatory stage, and will be here the next session. This will add...four in this body on the side of the non-slaveholding States, who will thus be enabled to sway every branch of this Government at their will and pleasure.

Sir, there is ample space for twelve or fifteen of the largest description of States in the territories belonging to the United States.... How will we then stand? There will be but fourteen on the part of the South—we are to be fixed, limited, and forever—and twenty-

eight on the part of the non-slaveholding States! Twenty-eight! Double our number! And with the same disproportion in the House and in the electoral college! The Government, Sir, will be entirely in the hands of the non-slaveholding States—overwhelmingly. ...If this scheme should be carried out...wo! wo! I say, to this Union!

This brings Calhoun to a favorite theme of his, echoed over decades: the need for the majority to avoid trampling on the wishes of the minority. So, he says, if the North denies the rights and the needs of the South on slavery, there will follow revolution, civil war and disaster.

Sir, the day that the balance between the two sections of the country ...is destroyed, is a day that will not be far removed from political revolution, anarchy, civil war, and widespread disaster.

His solution is forever grounded in the literal words and promises of the U.S. Constitution, guaranteeing “perfect equality” for all. It says that each man has the right to transport their “property” (in the form of slaves) into any state or territory they choose. The majority simply cannot deny that guarantee without violating the law.

Now, Sir, I put again the solemn question—Does the constitution afford any remedy? The whole system is based on justice and equality—perfect equality between the members of this republic. Now, can that be consistent with equality which will make this public domain a monopoly on one side—which, in its consequences, would place the whole power in one section of the Union, to be wielded against the other sections? Is that equality?

And is it consistent with justice—is it consistent with equality, that any portion of the partners, outnumbering another portion, shall oust them of this common property of theirs—shall pass any law which shall proscribe the citizens of other portions of the Union from emigrating with their property to the territories of the United States?

Furthermore, the essence of American democracy lies with the right of the people “to establish what government they may think proper for themselves.” It is simply an “outrage against the constitution” to demand that the people in all new territories must ban slavery before being admitted to the Union.

Mr. President... that proposition...which undertakes to say that no State shall be admitted into this Union which shall not prohibit by its constitution the existence of slaves, is equally a great outrage against the constitution of the United States.

Sir, I hold it to be a fundamental principle of our political system that the people have a right to establish what government they may think proper for themselves; that every State about to become a member of this Union has a right to form its government as it pleases;

and that, in order to be admitted there is but one qualification, and that is, that the Government shall be republican.

And yet, Sir, there are men of such delicate feeling on the subject of liberty—men who cannot possibly bear what they call slavery in one section of the country—although not so much slavery, as an institution indispensable for the good of both races—men so squeamish on this point, that they are ready to strike down the higher right of a community to govern themselves.

Calhoun turns to extending the 34°30' Missouri line as a possible compromise. Ever the purist, he argues that the line has always been unconstitutional – before saying that he would “acquiesce to it to preserve the peace of the Union.”

Mr. President, the resolutions that I intend to offer present, in general terms, these great truths... Overrule these principles, and we are nothing! Preserve them, and we will ever be a respectable portion of the Union.

Sir, here let me say a word as to the compromise line. I have always considered it as a great error—highly injurious to the South, because it surrendered, for mere temporary purposes, those high principles of the constitution upon which I think we ought to stand. I am against any compromise line. Yet I would have been willing to acquiesce in a continuation of the Missouri compromise, in order to preserve, under the present trying circumstances, the peace of the Union.... But it was voted down by a decided majority. It was renewed by a gentleman from a non-slaveholding State, and again voted down by a like majority.

I see my way in the constitution. I cannot in a compromise. A compromise is but an act of Congress. It may be overruled at any time. It gives us no security. But the constitution is stable. It is a rock. On it we can stand.... Let us be done with compromises. Let us go back and stand upon the constitution!

Nearing the end of his speech, the sixty-four year old South Carolina planter reflects on his personal history and his commitment to not surrendering his sense of honor, to “not sinking down into acknowledged inferiority.”

But I may speak as an individual member of that section of the Union. Here I drew my first breath; there are all my hopes. There is my family and connections. I am a planter—a cotton-planter. I am a Southern man and a slaveholder—a kind and a merciful one, I trust—and none the worse for being a slaveholder. I say, for one, I would rather meet any extremity upon earth than give up one inch of our equality—one inch of what belongs to us as members of this great republic! What acknowledged inferiority! The surrender of life is nothing to sinking down into acknowledged inferiority!

He closes with his four proposed “resolutions” to protect the rights of the slaveholding states under the constitution.

Resolved, That the territories of the United States belong to the several States composing this Union, and are held by them as their joint and common property.

Resolved, That Congress, as the joint agent and representative of the States of this Union, has no right to make any law, or do any act whatever, that shall directly, or by its effects, make any discrimination between the States of this Union, by which any of them shall be deprived of its full and equal right in any territory of the United States, acquired or to be acquired.

Resolved, That the enactment of any law, which should directly, or by its effects, deprive the citizens of any of the States of this Union from emigrating, with their property, into any of the territories of the United States, will make such discrimination, and would, therefore, be a violation of the constitution and the rights of the States from which such citizens emigrated, and in derogation of that perfect equality which belongs to them as members of this Union—and would tend directly to subvert the Union itself.

Resolved, That it is a fundamental principle in our political creed, that a people, in forming a constitution, have the unconditional right to form and adopt the government which they may think best calculated to secure their liberty, prosperity, and happiness; and that, in conformity thereto, no other condition is imposed by the Federal Constitution on a State, in order to be admitted into this Union, except that its constitution shall be republican; and that the imposition of any other by Congress would not only be in violation of the constitution, but in direct conflict with the principle on which our political system rests.”

In February 1847, Calhoun’s speech is regarded as radical, just one more attempt on his part to run for the presidency. A decade later, after his death, it will reflect the sentiments of most men across the South.

Time: February 15, 1847

The House Passes A New And Harsher Proviso On Expanding Slavery

While the debate continues in the Senate, the House takes up the Three Million Dollar Bill to fund the war.

Once again, the New York “Barnburner,” Preston King, proposes an amendment in the form of a revised version of the Wilmot Proviso.

King's version is even more onerous to the South than Wilmot's. It declares that slavery be banned in "any territory on the continent of America which shall hereafter be acquired." This being a direct shot at expansionists who wish to annex all of Mexico and Cuba and perhaps even parts of central America.

Polk calls this a "mischievous and foolish amendment...with (no) connection to making peace with Mexico."

Regardless, the House passes the bill on February 15 by a margin of 115-106 and sends it to the Senate.

Chapter 125 - General Zachary Taylor Wins Lasting Fame At Buena Vista

Time: September – December 1846

General Taylor Drifts Southwest From His Victory At Monterrey



Zachary Taylor (1784-1850)

After scoring his decisive victory at Monterrey on September 23, 1846, General Zachary Taylor allows the Mexican army to leave the field, much to the chagrin of Polk and his cabinet.

His orders from Washington are to consolidate his hold on Monterrey, but instead he continues westward, taking the town of Saltillo on November 16, and ordering General John Wool to move south to Aqua Nuevo, where he arrives on December 21.

As Taylor drifts further into the interior, Mexican General Ampudia is sacked in favor of the familiar figure of Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna.

His is a chequered past, starting with early support of Spanish rule, then flipping sides after independence is won in 1821 and finally defeating Spain's attempt to reconquer Mexico at the 1829 Battle of Tampico. This victory makes him a national hero and leads to a political career, whereby he is in and out of the presidency on seven occasions, his last term ending in exile to Cuba after a coup.



Map Showing Route From Monterrey To Saltillo And Buena Vista

But in late 1846 he again “offers his services to the country” to put down the American invaders – just as he did in March 1836 defeating the Texans at The Alamo and then in the Goliad Massacre.

With his return comes a guarantee to the government to stay out of politics, and a secret hint to the U.S. that he is ready to sign a peace treaty. He quickly abandons both promises, re-taking political control in 1847 and fighting tooth and nail against the U.S. invaders.

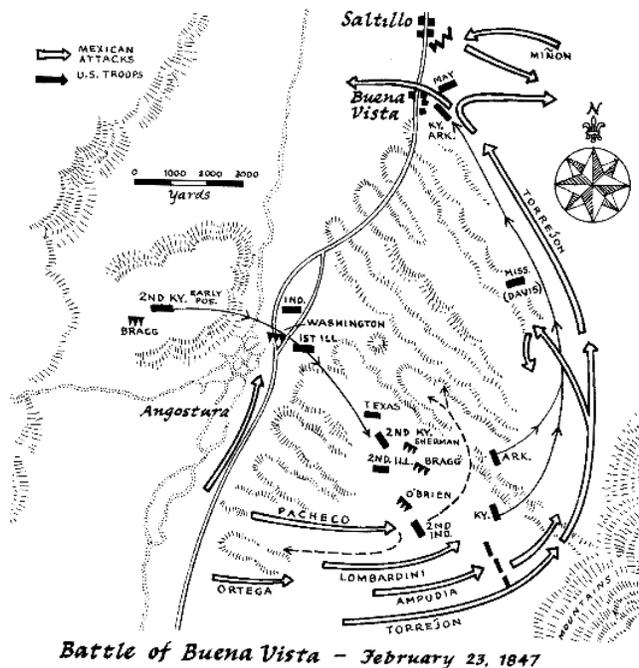
Santa Anna remains a courageous warrior, despite the loss of his left leg to a cannon ball in 1838.

He is a sound military planner, and also confident of victory – believing that he can first destroy Taylor’s depleted forces up north and then sweep down south on any invaders aiming at Mexico City.

His first move will play out just below the town of Saltillo, at Buena Vista.

Date: February 22-23, 1847

The Battle of Buena Vista Ends The Campaign In Northern Mexico



General Taylor appears to play right into Santa Anna’s hand on February 22, 1847 when his 5,000 man force, heading toward Aqua Nuevo, suddenly finds Santa Anna’s 20,000 man army directly in his front.

Taylor responds quickly by establishing a strong defensive position along the road leading back north to Buena Vista. On the west side of the road are impassable plateaus, while on the east side, where Taylor deploys, are a series of arroyos, or deep gullies, which inhibit massed infantry attacks. Still Santa Anna remains so confident of victory that he sends an emissary to seek immediate surrender – which Taylor promptly declines.

Map Showing Santa Anna Flanking Movement Against Taylor’s Left

At 8AM on February 23, the Mexicans launch a ferocious two-pronged attack. The main body of their infantry crashes into Taylor’s left center which wavers until pivotal artillery support from Lt. George Thomas and Captain Braxton Bragg stiffens the defense. Meanwhile another contingent of roughly 1500 lancers head far east and north to encircle the American’s left flank. These lancers break through and pose a serious threat to Taylor’s rear – until a courageous rush by Colonel Jefferson Davis and his 7th Mississippi Rifles hurls them back.

Santa Anna still believes by mid-afternoon that the U.S. forces will break under one more concentrated assault. At 5PM he throws everything he has left against the American center and again forces it backwards until Bragg’s flying artillery and Davis’s infantry are once again able to save the day.

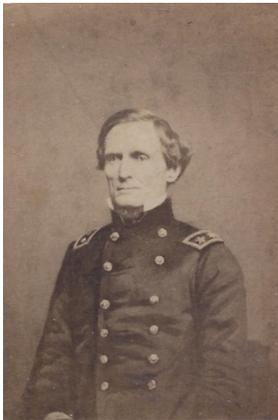
When Santa Anna retreats from Buena Vista the next day, his Mexicans will have come as close to securing a battlefield victory as they will at any time during the entire war.

The butcher's bill for the day of fighting on February 23 is high – with 3700 men killed/wounded/missing on the Mexican side and 750 on the American side.

Braxton Bragg (1817-1876)

Two U.S. heroes emerge from the battle.

The first is Zachary Taylor, who, despite disobeying orders and marching into a 4:1 manpower trap, has escaped with another victory to close out his campaign to secure the Rio Grande border for Texas.



The second, ironically, is Taylor's son-in-law, Jefferson Davis, who suffers a severe wound to his foot at Buena Vista, ending his military duty and leaving him on crutches for two years. He returns as a hero, and is chosen by Governor Brown to serve in the U.S. Senate, which is vacant by a death in office.

Davis joins the Senate on August 10, 1847 and immediately becomes a leader in the Democratic Party.

Jefferson Davis (1808-1889)

Sidebar: Death of Henry Clay, Jr.

Among those lying dead on the field at Buena Vista is Henry Clay, Jr., age 36, son of a famous father whose presidential ambitions have been derailed by his opposition to the Mexican War.

The younger Clay is the seventh of eleven children in the family, and the one chosen not only to bear his father's given name, but also to follow in his public footsteps.

Unlike his two older brothers, Henry Clay, Jr. exhibits his father's energy and ambition early in life. After graduating from Transylvania College, he goes on to finish second in his class at West Point in 1831. He resigns his commission, studies the law, and marries the 18 year old beauty, Julia Prather, in 1832. A single term in the Kentucky House in 1835-36, is followed by overseeing the Ashland Plantation and caring for two of the four children who have survived infancy.

Then, in 1840, his world changes when Julia dies after delivering another son, who survives. But the younger Clay never fully recovers from this loss. He remains dutiful to his family, but loses some of the "purpose" that marked his youth.

The War with Mexico lends him a new cause, a chance to serve his country, in the tradition set by his father. He helps to form the Second Kentucky Volunteer Infantry unit, assuming the rank of Lt. Colonel. He arrives in Mexico, but doesn't reach Taylor's command until after the victory at Monterrey. At that point, it looks like he will miss all of the fighting.

On February 23, 1847, however, Taylor, and Clay, are confronted by a Mexican army with a 4-1 manpower advantage, at Buena Vista. The 2nd Kentucky is caught in the front ranks as the battle begins, and is soon overrun by Santa Anna's forces.



HENRY CLAY and WIFE.

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1861, in the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the United States for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania, by Jas. Cremer, No. 18 South Eighth St. Philadelphia.

Henry Clay (1777-1852) and Lucretia
Hart Clay (1781-1864)

Lt. Colonel Henry Clay, Jr. falls with a severe wound in the left thigh. His men attempt to move him to the rear, but they fail, and he hands them his pistols and orders them to flee and save their own lives. When the Mexican lancers arrive on the field, they spear the remaining wounded, including Clay, to death.

After Taylor's remarkable victory at Buena Vista, Clay's body is temporarily buried in Saltillo. It rests there until the summer, when the remains of many Kentucky soldiers are re-interred in a cemetery in Frankfort. On July 20, 1847, the Clay family, along with some 20,000 other local citizens attend the final service. It becomes immortalized in a long poem – *The Bivouac of the Dead* – written by a Kentucky trooper named Theodore O'Hara. The opening stanza:

*The muffled drum's sad roll has beat
The soldier's last tattoo;
No more on life's parade shall meet
The brave and daring few.
On Fame's eternal camping-ground
Their silent tents are spread,
And Glory guards with solemn round
The bivouac of the dead.*

For the seventy year old Henry Clay, and his aging wife, Lucretia, the day is marked by deep sadness, rather than glory. They have just lost the seventh of their eleven children, and here in a war that Clay has already called “calamitous, as well as unjust and unnecessary.”

Chapter 126 - Congress Finally Approves A Funding Bill Without A Ban On Slavery

Time: March 1, 1847

The Senate Opposes The House Bill Again And Passes Its Own Option

With the final session of the 29th Congress set to adjourn on March 3, 1847, both chambers feel a sense of urgency about funding the Mexican War.

The House has already passed a bill, but with the amendment from Preston King prohibiting any future expansion of slavery, in the west or in other lands acquired by the United States. This prohibition, even more drastic than that from Wilmot, is considered too divisive in the Senate, and it goes down to defeat on March 1 with 21 ayes and 32 nays.

Senator Thomas Hart Benton then proposes a \$3 Million Appropriations Bill, without the King amendment. It passes 29-23 on March 1, 1847, with the only Democrat voting “no” being Simon Cameron of Pennsylvania, a strong opponent of slavery. The only Whig “yes” belongs to Henry Johnson of Louisiana, who cast the decisive vote earlier to annex Texas.

Senate Vote On Appropriation Bill -- Without Wilmot (March 1, 1847)

Region	Democrats Yes - No	Whigs Yes - No	Other Yes - No	Total Yes - No
Northeast	6 - 1	0 - 8	0 - 3	6 - 11
Northwest	5 - 0	0 - 2		5 - 2
Border	2 - 0	0 - 5		2 - 5
Southeast	3 - 0	0 - 4	1 - 0	4 - 4
Southwest	10 - 0	1 - 1	1 - 0	12 - 1
Total	26 - 0	1 - 20	2 - 3	29 - 23
Not Voting	(2)	(1)		(3)

Vote View/Library of Congress Record

Time: March 3, 1847

The House Passes The Appropriation Bill Without The Wilmot Proviso



Stephen Douglas (1813-1861)

With time running out, the Senate bill is back in the House for reconciliation, where those opposing the spread of slavery make one final attempt to add back the King Amendment. But this time it goes down to defeat by a narrow spread of 97 ayes to 102 nays.

This funding battle has lasted since August 8, 1846, a full nine months, and many House members now seem to conclude they have been operating in a dark and dangerous place far too long.

American soldiers are in the field in Mexico; they deserve to be properly funded and supported; the time has come to push on and win the war. Also one war seems enough for the moment -- without adding the visible threats of disunion that have surfaced over the Wilmot and King injunctions. Better to step back from this cliff for now, and possibly return to it later.

This is the theme promoted by the indefatigable Illinois congressman, Stephen Douglas, who lobbies hard to convince Northern Democrats to delay the battle over the spread of slavery until the various territories have been established, settlers have arrived and debated their state constitutions, and requests for admission are filed with congress.

This line of reasoning mirrors the plea from Calhoun that the people in each new state should determine their own form of government. As a principle it will soon become known as “popular sovereignty,” a new option to Wilmot/King and the 34’30” compromise line and one that postpones North-South violence until Kansas applies for statehood in 1856.

The efforts by Douglas and other party leaders pay off when the final bill passes by a comfortable 115-82 margin in the House on March 3, 1847.

House Vote On Appropriation Bill -- Without A Slavery Ban

Region	Democrats Yes - No	Whigs Yes - No	American Yes - No	Total Yes - No
Northeast	31 - 7	0 - 40	1 - 3	32 - 50
Northwest	22 - 3	0 - 10		22 - 13
Border	10 - 0	0 - 8		10 - 8
Southeast	28 - 0	0 - 5		28 - 5
Southwest	22 - 0	1 - 6		23 - 6
Total	113 - 10	1 - 69	1 - 3	115 - 82
Not Voting	(20)	(9)	(1)	(30)

Vote View/Library of Congress Records

Analysis of the final outcome on the \$3 Million Bill shows a remarkable shift among the Democrats in the seven months since the Wilmot Proviso passed the House on August 8, 1846. At that time, 52 Democrats voted in favor of the bill limiting the spread of slavery; by March 1847, only 10 of them are left! This is an early testament to Stephen Douglas' powers of persuasion

Shift In Democrat Votes For The War Appropriations Bill

Bill Limiting Spread Of Slavery	Aug 8, 1846	Mar 3, 1847	Change
# Democrats Voting Aye	52	10	(42)
# Democrats Voting Nay	55	113	+58

The ten hold-outs are all Northern Democrats, led by David Wilmot, and joined by others including Preston King, Jacob Brinkerhoff and Hannibal Hamlin.

The Ten Hold-Out Northern Democrats

Name	State
Jacob Brinkerhoff	Ohio
John Campbell	Pa
Martin Grover	New York
Hannibal Hamlin	Maine
Joseph Hoge	Illinois
Preston King	New York
Mace Moulton	New Hampshire
John Wentworth	Illinois
Horace Wheaton	New York
David Wilmot	Pennsylvania
Bradford Wood	New York

Meanwhile, the House Whigs remain solidly against the appropriation bill and the war itself.

Sidebar: Recap Of The Key Votes On The Wilmot Proviso						
Chamber	Date	Form Of Bill	Yes	No	(NV)	Resolution
House	August 8, 1846	\$2MM + Wilmot	85	80	(56)	Senate Tables
House	February 15, 1847	\$3MM + King	115	106	(6)	House Passes
Senate	March 1, 1847	\$3MM + King	21	32	(3)	Senate Opposes
Senate	March 1, 1847	\$3MM w/o Proviso	29	23	(3)	Senate Passes
House	March 3, 1847	\$3MM + Wilmot	97	102	(28)	House Opposes
House	March 3, 1847	\$3MM w/o Proviso	115	82	(30)	House Passes

Chapter 127 - Whigs Make Large Gains In The Off-Year Election Of 1846

Time: August 1846 – November 1847

Whigs Take Back The House While Democrats Hold The Senate

With the war and the Wilmot controversy swirling in the background, the off-year congressional elections drag on for fifteen months, from August 1846 to November 1847. As usual, House members are chosen by popular vote of all white men, with Senators selected by state legislators.

The results in the House are a serious blow to Polk and the Democrats -- as the Whigs pick up 37 seats to gain narrow control over the lower chamber.

House Election Results For 1846

Parties	1844	1846	Change
Democrats	143	112	-31
Whigs	79	116	+37
Others	6	6	NC

The largest gains for the Whigs – 26 of their new 37 seats – occur in the North. Fourteen of these are in New York State alone, where the Democratic rift between Van Buren men (the “Barnburners”) and the Polk backers (“Hunkers”) hands the outcome to the Whigs.

But Democrat losses also occur across the board, suggesting unease about extending the war with Mexico beyond the borders of Texas, and about the aftermath, as it relates to national strife over the slavery issue.

Whig Gains in the House: 1846 Election

	1844	1846	Change
Northeast	19	40	+21
New York	9	23	+14
Pennsylvania	10	16	+6
New Hampshire	0	1	+1
Northwest	10	15	+5
Ohio	8	11	+3

Indiana		4	+2
	2		
Border	9	10	+1
Maryland		4	+2
	2		
Kentucky		6	(1)
	7		
Southeast	7	14	+7
Virginia		6	+5
	1		
North Carolina		6	+3
	3		
Georgia		4	+1
	3		
Southwest	1	4	+3
Florida	0	1	+1
Alabama	1	2	+1
Mississippi		1	+1
	0		
Total Whig Gains			+37

In the Senate, with its staggered six year terms, only one-third of the seats are in play, and all votes are cast by state legislators rather than the public.

The results here are much more comforting to Polk than those in the House – with his Democrat Party ending up with a solid 37-21 majority.

Composition Of The Senate: 1846 Election

	Democrat	Whig	Total
Free States	16	10	26
Northeast		9	18
	9		
Northwest*		1	8
	7		
Slave States	19	11	30
Border		6	8
	2		
Southeast		3	8
	5		

Southwest		2	14
	12		
	35	21	56

* Iowa admitted in 1846, with two vacancies filled by Democrats in 1848.
Wisconsin will be admitted in 1848, restoring free/slave balance to 24/24

Time: Spring 1847

Important New Faces Join Congress In 1847



Abraham Lincoln (1809-1865)

By the time the 30th Congress convenes on December 6, 1847 for its first session, the South has assembled a roster of outspoken pro-slavery Senators who are determined to defeat the Wilmot Proviso and restore unity to the Democrat Party.

John C. Calhoun returns to the Senate after serving one year as Tyler’s Secretary of State. He is joined by his fellow South Carolinian, Andrew C. Butler, another fierce States’ Rights advocate.

Virginia also elects two new senators -- Robert T.M. Hunter, former Speaker of the House, and Calhoun’s close friend, James Mason.

Jefferson Davis graduates from the House to the Senate in August, 1847, after his heroic war duty at Buena Vista.

Three other sitting Democrat will complete the inner circle, one a Southerner and the other two, Northern men with strong pro-Southern sympathies. The Southerner is David Rice Atchison of Missouri, who is elected President Pro Temp of the Senate. The two Northerners – both future Presidential nominees – are Lewis Cass of Michigan and Stephen A. Douglas of Illinois.

As of 1847, opponents of the Southern agenda in the Senate lack enough depth and alignment to have their way.

The political turmoil impacting the House Democrats in New York State is muted in the Senate. Daniel Dickinson remains a Polk loyalist, offsetting the Van Buren “Barnburner,” John Dix.

On the Whig side, Henry Clay, has left the Senate after losing to Polk in the 1844 election. The equally formidable Daniel Webster continues to serve in the chamber, but his party support has faded after he chooses to remain Secretary of State under the “turn-coat Whig,” John Tyler. Two other esteemed Whigs, Senators John Bell of Tennessee and John J. Crittenden of Kentucky, are both from Slave States and uninclined toward any actions that might threaten the Union.

Still the South will need to contend with two aggressive adversaries in the Senate: the Whig, Tom Corwin of Ohio, and the Democrat-turned-Independent, John P. Hale of New Hampshire.

Hale has been a Democrat throughout his career, and supports the Polk-Dallas ticket in 1844. But he has also been a consistent critic of slavery, joining the Whig JQ Adams in the House in opposing various “Gag Rules.” This leads to an attempt by his state adversary, Franklin Pierce, to oust him from the party – a move that ends with a crusade by Hale to turn New Hampshire against slavery and his first election to the Senate in 1846.

While men like Hale and Corwin and Dix will begin to push back against the strong pro-Southern forces in the Senate, they will make little progress until additional support arrives in the election of 1848.

The House of Representatives is another story. It has already passed the Wilmot Proviso and is beginning to latch on to the powerful new notion of “free soil for free men” – and is eager to fight for both.

It is also joined in 1847 by a first term congressman from Illinois, Abraham Lincoln.

Lincoln is the lone Whig in a House delegation dominated by the members of Senator Stephen Douglas’ statewide machine. He will serve a single term before returning to his Springfield law practice – and a circuitous path toward the presidency.

Chapter 128 - General Scott Moves Inland In The South

Time: March 9-29, 1847

Scott Takes Vera Cruz By Siege and Moves Inland



Map Of Winfield Scott's Mexican Campaign

Two weeks after Taylor's victory at Buena Vista, Scott executes America's first major amphibious invasion, landing some 11,000 American troops on Sacrificios Island, just below the fortress city of Veracruz. The operation involves repeated trips ashore by 65 surf boats, each packed with 100 men and equipment, and lasts for over six hours. Once ashore, the men march north to surround the Mexican enclave, which includes 5,000 local civilians in addition to 4,400 garrisoned troops, under General Juan Morales.

The terrain leading into Veracruz is marked by the high chaparral and deep arroyos typical of Mexico's landscape. In addition to these natural obstacles, cannon are arrayed along a 15 foot high stone wall encircling the city and the road in is guarded by the formidable castle of San Juan D'Ulloa, and another 1,000 troops.

Scott immediately decides to siege the city. Colonel Joseph Totten oversees the plan, along with help from a 40-year old engineer, Captain Robert E. Lee. Lee's placements of three 32 pound naval guns, hauled on land, will prove critical as the siege develops. Aside from Lee, several other soon to be famous West Pointers experience their first taste of battle at Veracruz, including Thomas Jonathan Jackson and George McClellan.



Robert E. Lee (1807-1870)

On March 22 Scott is ready to launch an all-out bombardment from land and sea, but, before beginning, he asks Morales to surrender. When the offer is refused, Scott begins his attack.

The results are devastating. For three days Veracruz suffers under constant barrages from field artillery and naval guns. Mortars lob solid iron balls weighing upwards of 30 lbs. into the city from the west. In the bay to the east, the U.S. fleet unleashes its Paixhans guns, with 68 lb. shells that whistle in at low trajectories and explode on contact. Some 6700 shot and shell weighing over 450,000 lbs. rain down on the defenders.

Naval officer Sydney Smith Lee, Robert's older brother, observes the action from his frigate:

The battery's fire was terrific. The shells were constant and regular discharges, so beautiful in their flight and so destructive in their fall. It was awful! My heart bled for the inhabitants.



Sidney Lee (1802-1869), Robert's brother, on the left

By March 25, the buildings and walls of Veracruz are crumbling and morale has worn thin. When Morales's finally requests a truce to evacuate civilians, Scott refuses, insisting on a full surrender. After haggling, the final details are worked out on March 29.

Scott's siege has lasted 20 days, and he has sustained a mere 58 casualties.

His gaze now shifts toward Mexico City, 225 miles inland.

Scott knows that this will not be an easy target. His army will be outnumbered along the way, and fall further distant from its supply base as it marches off. His enemy will have superior knowledge of the terrain ahead, and be motivated by fighting on and for its homeland. Still the General is confident of success.

He also knows from studying Napoleon that strict discipline in the ranks will be required to avoid alienating the local population and provoking partisan activity. His General Order 20

outlines harsh penalties for all Americans, soldiers or civilians, involved in robbery, rape, murder, destruction of property, and any acts affecting Catholic churches and worship.

Time: April 17-18, 1847

The Battle At Cerro Gordo



Map Showing City Of Xalapa Where Battle Of Cerro Gordo Occurs

After securing his hold over Veracruz, Scott sends a lead force of 8,500 men out of the city on April 8, heading northwest along the national road, with General David Twiggs and his 2nd Division in the lead.



David Twiggs (1790-1862)

Six days later they are on the winding road to Xalapa, where Santa Anna plans to ambush and kill them.

The Mexican General knows this ground particularly well, since it lies on his private estate. His plan is to lure the U.S. troops into a cul du sac formed by the Rio del Plana flowing along his right flank and the 950 foot high Cerro Gordo (“fat hill”) guarding his immediate left.

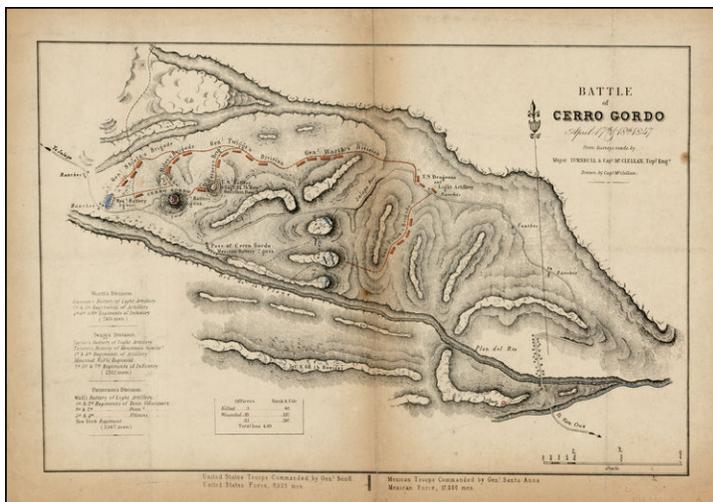
He arrays the bulk of his 12,000 troops in a classical L-shaped formation, with artillery batteries and infantry scattered across the Jalapa road and additional units ready to fire down from the Cerro Gordo on his left.

He also stations troops along a plateau to the east of the road, hoping to lure the Americans in or close off their subsequent line of retreat. With this shooting gallery in place, the Mexicans await the U.S. columns.

But Twiggs and his West Point engineers know an ambush when they see one, and they halt on April 14, north of the bend in the road leading down into Santa Anna's position.

After scouting the area, they settle on a plan involving a trap of their own.

It hinges on enveloping the Mexicans, by hacking out a new road across the gullies and plateaus north of Santa Anna's left flank, without being discovered. The work requires three full days to complete.



U.S. Troops (in red above) Encircle the Mexican Forces At Cerro Gordo



George B. McClellan (1826-1885)

On April 17 Scott divides his army and advances. His light left wing, under Polk's ex-law partner, General Gideon Pillow's, demonstrates against the Mexican forces east of the road, while his main body, comprising Twiggs' and Worth's divisions, swoop down on Santa Anna from behind Cerro Gordo.

Battery placements by Lt. George B. McClellan prove especially galling to the Mexicans, and the Lieutenant is cited for valor during the assault.

By nightfall the surprised Mexicans are desperately trying to organize a credible defensive line.

As daybreak dawns on April 18, Colonel William Harney and his First Brigade dragoons deprive them of all hope -- clawing their way to the top of Cerro Gordo and occupying the fortress there known as the Tower.

From this vantage point, American artillery now dominates the entire field below.

Once the American flag appears atop the Tower, Santa Anna knows that his position is hopeless.

His troops along the eastern plateau surrender to Pillow's command, and Santa Anna himself barely escapes with his life, on foot, amidst a panicked general retreat west toward Jalapa.

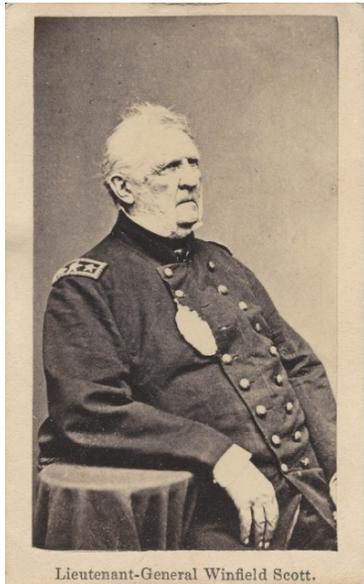


Gideon Pillow (1806-1878)

His losses are steep. Over 1100 Mexicans fall in the battle, and 3000 prisoners are taken, including five general officers. Another substantial depletion in artillery, smaller arms and ammunition also further weakens their capacity to fight on.

Time: May – July, 1847

Scott Pauses To Balance Diplomacy And Warfare



General Winfield Scott (1786-1866)

Scott's successes on the battlefield lead Polk and his cabinet to step up their plans for negotiating a treaty to end the conflict. The issues center on how much land they can convince the Mexicans to give up, and at what price. The cabinet agrees that an ideal outcome would involve all territory west, from where the upper Rio Grande touches New Mexico, to the Pacific – at a price not to exceed \$30 million.

Secretary of War Marcy drafts an outline of the plan, to be delivered to Scott by Nicholas Twist, the number two official at the state department under Buchanan. Twist arrives at Veracruz on May 6 on the start of what will be a long and rocky mission.

By this time, Scott's army has chased the Mexicans all the way from Cerro Gordo to Puebla, only 80 miles east of the capital.

This produces a mood within Mexico City itself that is a mixture of outrage and panic. After finally driving out the Spaniards to win independence, here comes another foreign invader – and a Protestant-dominated one at that – in search of conquest.

Calls go up in the capital to sack the government, declare martial law, draft all able-bodied men, commence guerrilla warfare.

The last thing Scott wants to hear is talk of a religious war involving guerrilla bands operating outside the boundaries of conventional warfare.

On May 8, 1847, he issues a carefully worded proclamation to the people of Mexico. It asserts that the war is with government leaders, not with the people; that it's about policy, not religion; and that, once ended, the Americans will exit Mexico, not occupy it.

With these reassurances comes a warning. Scott's army is powerful and about to double in size, and it would be wise for the population to stay peacefully in their homes until the fighting is over.

Mexicans!--At the head of a powerful army, soon to be doubled-a part of which is advancing upon your capital...I think myself called upon to address you.

Americans are not your enemies, but the enemies, for a time, of those men who, a year ago, misgoverned you, and brought about this unnatural war between two great republics. We are the friends of the peaceful inhabitants of the country we occupy, and the friends of your holy religion, its hierarchy and its priesthood. The same church is found in all parts of our own country, crowded with devout Catholics, and respected by our government, laws and people...

Let all good Mexicans remain at home, or at their peaceful occupation...should Mexicans wisely accept this, war may soon be happily ended, to the honor and advantage of both belligerents. Then Americans, will be happy to take leave of Mexico and return to their own country.

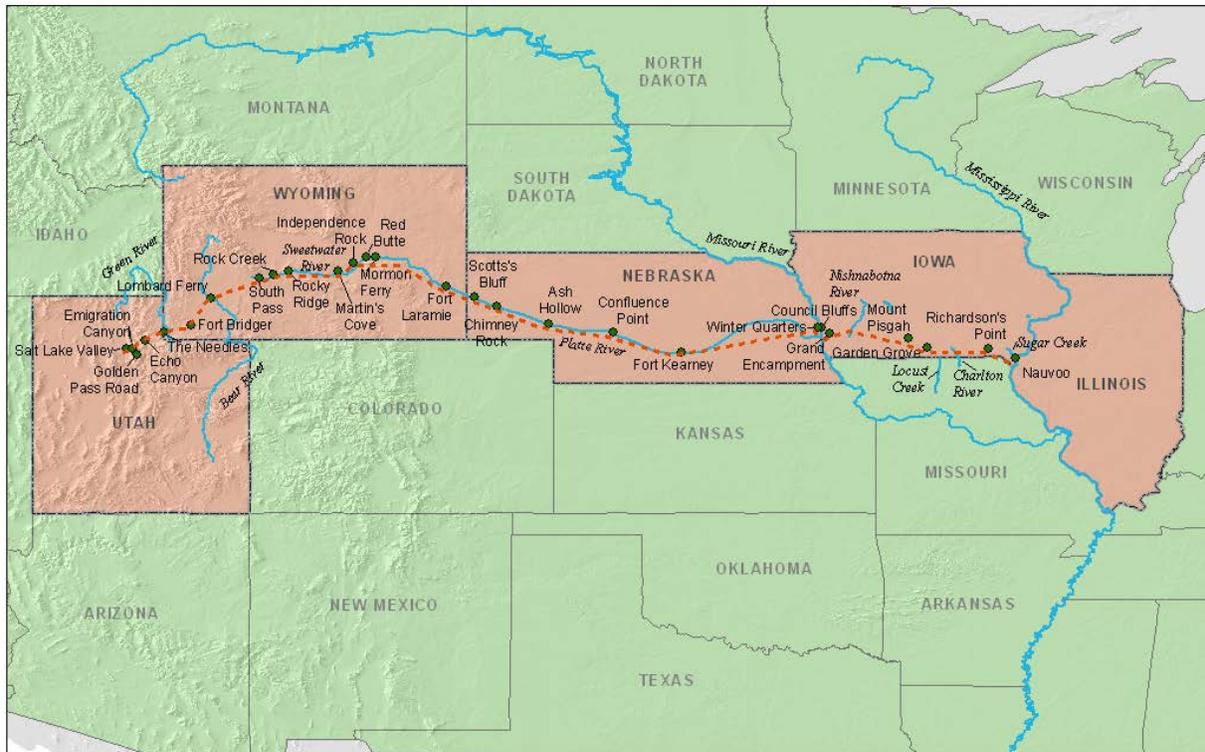
Truth be told, Scott's army in May is much less prepared to advance on the capital than he lets on.

The inevitable diseases that plague troops in the field have taken their toll, and the enlistment term for several volunteer regiments is about to expire. With his battle-ready forces under 6,000 men, he pauses in place at Puebla for eight weeks awaiting reinforcements.

Chapter 129 - The Mormons Find Their Home And Support The War

Time: July 24, 1847

The Mormons Arrive At Their “New Jerusalem” In Salt Lake City



Map Of Mormon Trail From Nauvoo, Illinois To Salt Lake City

While the U.S. Army marches toward Mexico City, followers of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, or Mormons, are on their way toward their “New Jerusalem” home in Salt Lake City.

Their journey has been marked by a long string of setbacks.

After being driven out of their home base in Missouri in 1839 for the practice of polygamy, they settle in Illinois, at the city of Nauvoo, on the banks of the Mississippi River, roughly 200 miles upstream from St. Louis. But here too local attacks on members of the sect soon materialize. Then on June 27, 1844, their charismatic leader, Joseph Smith, and his brother Hyrum are murdered while under arrest for ordering an attack on an opposition newspaper in town.

Many assume that Smith’s death will mark the end of the sect, among them *The New York Herald*, which writes:

The death of the modern mahomet (Mohammed) will seal the fate of Mormonism. They cannot get another Joe Smith. The holy city must tumble into ruins, and the 'latter-day saints' have indeed come to the latter day.

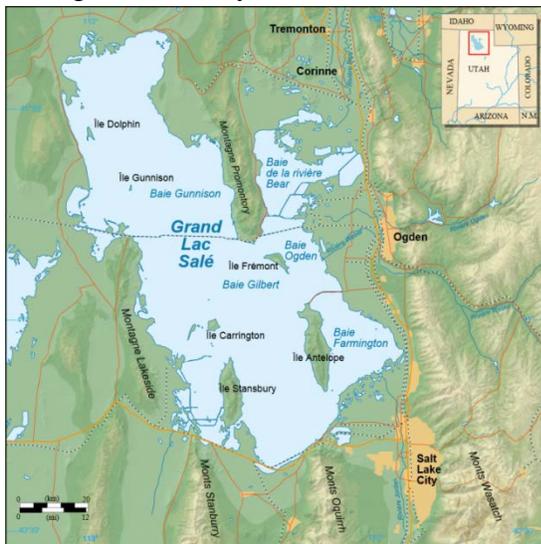
With Smith gone, the Mormons are indeed shaken, and deeply divided over the choice of a successor. When the main body settles in 1845 on Brigham Young, one of the Twelve Apostles, several splinter groups depart from Nauvoo and scatter to new sites. Young too recognizes the need to abandon the town and looks to the west in search of a permanent home.

In February of 1846 he leads an initial contingent of 4,000 of the faithful out of Nauvoo. They struggle across the frozen Mississippi some 300 miles to Council Bluffs, Iowa, where they set up winter quarters.

In the spring of 1847, a small group resumes what will become another laborious three month journey. Accompanying Young here are 143 men, three women and two boys, traveling in 72 wagons. As they set out, they are accompanied by some 93 horses, 66 oxen, 52 mules, 19 cows, 17 dogs and a batch of chickens.

Their path takes them due west along the Oregon Trail, the well-known and well-traveled route mapped in 1842 by the John Fremont expedition – whose records Young relies on to guide his way.

The Mormons pass through Ft. Kearney and Ft. Laramie and, after the usual hard uphill climb, Young crosses the Rockies at the “South Pass,” veering south from there to Ft. Bridger and down through Echo Canyon.



Map Of The Great Salt Lake And Vicinity

On July 22, 1847 an advance contingent emerges from the Wasatch Mountains and gazes upon a valley southwest of the 2,000 square mile Great Salt Lake -- the sixth largest lake in America, with salinity levels far in excess of ocean water. They set up camp and await the arrival of Young himself, who lags behind due to illness.

Two days later when Young arrives, several members of the party urge him to continue on to California – but he demurs, saying simply:

It is enough. This is the right place.

Land for the Mormon's Salt Lake Temple and the adjoining Tabernacle is dedicated within days, and the settlers begin to lay out their city grid, build homes, plant crops and begin their new lives.

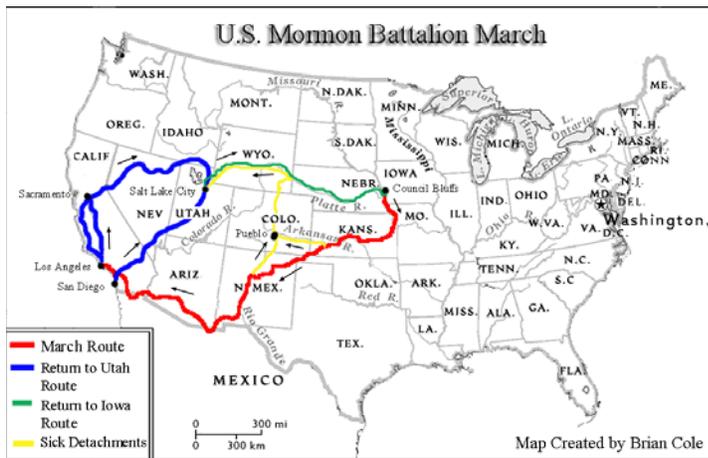
They will be soon be joined by thousands of others who hope to finally practice their religion in peace.

In December 1847, Brigham Young – “prophet, seer, and revelator to the world” -- becomes the Second President of the Church (succeeding Joseph Smith), an office he will hold until his death in 1877.

At long last, the Church of the Latter Day Saints have found their new leader and their permanent home.

Time: July 1846-47

A Mormon Brigade Supports The War With Mexico



Map Of The “Mormon Brigade’s” Overland March – July 1846-47

During their stay in Illinois, the Mormons have consistently supported the Democratic Party, including both Stephen Douglas and James Polk.

In 1845, Brigham Young writes to Polk, asking for government protection of his followers. Polk expresses his support for the Mormons, including a small personal donation of \$10 to their cause.

From that time on, Young looks for a way to repay the debt, and the opportunity arises as they trek toward Utah during the early days of the War with Mexico.

Polk desperately needs additional troops to prosecute the war, especially in the far west.

In 1846, he asks Young to assemble a 500 man force to support the fight, to demonstrate the sect's loyalty to the United States and, in turn, to dampen public opposition to their religious beliefs.

Thus the "Mormon Battalion," roughly 550 men strong, is mustered into the U.S. Army in July 1846, and sent on the longest overland military march in history, southwest through Kansas, New Mexico and Arizona to their destination at Los Angeles.

However, like most troops in the northern theater, the Mormon Battalion sees no actual combat.

After their one year-long enlistment expires; many Mormons stay on in California. One of them, a man named Henry Bigler, ends up in January 1847 on a sawmill construction project near Ft. Sutter – where he earns lasting fame, along with Jim Marshall, as the first to discover gold along the American River. Over time, a total of \$17,000 will be contributed to the Mormon cause by Brigade members who participate in the subsequent 1849 gold rush.

In the end, the Battalion's efforts have served Young's ends, establishing good will with Polk and the public, and also providing funds -- from the \$30,000 total pay the unit receives for its year of service -- to purchase livestock, wagons and supplies needed for the upcoming trek to find a new home.

Chapter 130 - General Scott Conquers Mexico City And Ends The War

Time: August 20, 1847

Fighting Resumes At Churubusco In The Valley Of Mexico

General Scott's pause after his victories at Vera Cruz and Cerro Gordo allows time for envoy Nicholas Trist to negotiate for peace, and for him to add more men before moving further inland toward his next goal, Mexico City.

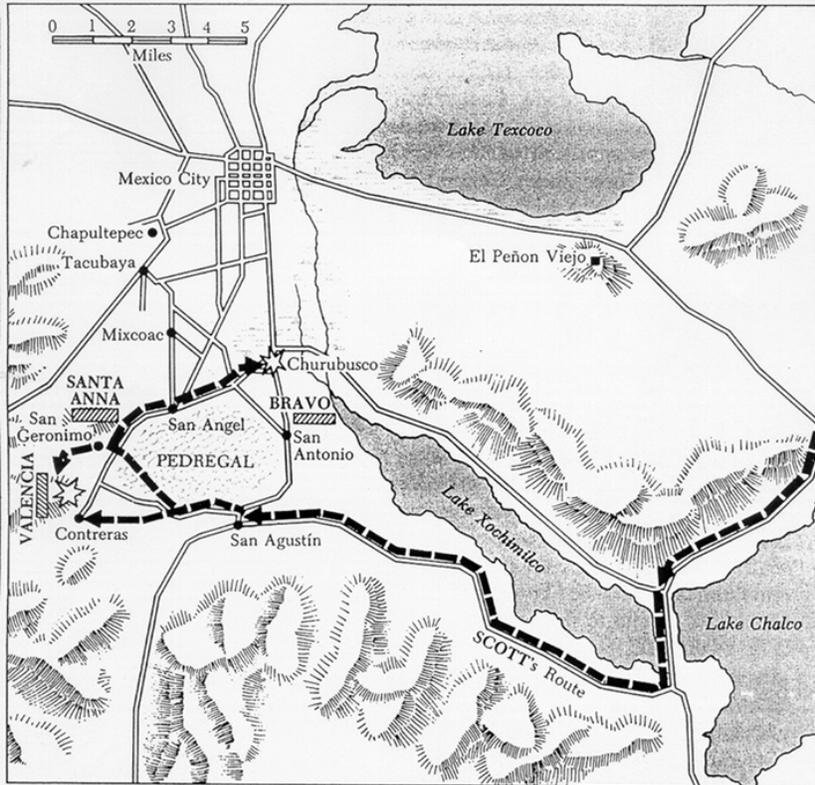
The first contingent of 2,000 troops arrives in July, followed soon by another 2,400, under Brigadier General Franklin Pierce. On August 10, 1847, Scott decides that he is ready, and his total force of 10,700 men – half new untested volunteers – heads west.

Soon they are cresting the mountains east of the capital where they come upon a dazzling landscape in the valley below. There, at 7250 feet above sea level, lays the city built by the Aztecs in 1325 and ruled by them until Cortez overthrows Montezuma in 1519. The historian, Horatio Ladd, in his 1883 chronicle of the war, describes the sight:

A few miles beyond Rio Frio they came suddenly upon an enchanting vision of the valley of Mexico. It was a dazzling picture of earthly beauty. The rich spring verdure of the plains dotted with the white walls of villages and haciendas, the silvery lines of mountain streams, the blue surfaces of lakes whose shores, winding about the base of mountains, stretched far into the green valleys and the hills rising to lofty ranges white with snow and glistening beneath the soft blue sky, all presented a scene that made the romance of Spanish conquests in the days of Montezuma appear like the truths of sober history.

Scott now must decide how he plans to conquer the capital city.

By August 16 he has reconnoitered the direct approach from the east over the National Road through El Penon Viejo, and concluded that it will leave him with only one line of assault on the capital. So he settles instead on a difficult 27 mile march heading south of Lake Chalcothen east along the Acapulco Road. He intends to bypass the Mexican defenses at San Antonio, march around the Padregal lava fields to the town of Contreras, and attack north from there.



Lake Chalco Where Scott Swings South To Attack The Capital From Below

Santa Anna, however, anticipates Scott's path and intends to attack him along the road from Contreras to Churubusco. He lays out strong positions over the entire route, with General Valencia's 7,000 men on a steep hill bordering Contreras, his own 11,000 men two miles to the north, General Ruicon with another 6,000 at Churubusco, guarding a river bridge, and General Bravo with 3,000 men above San Antonio.

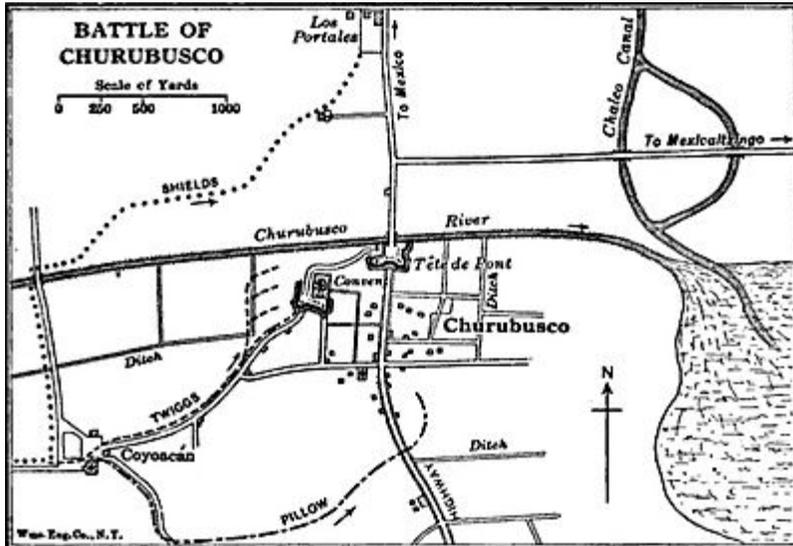
Once again, as at Cerro Gordo, Santa Anna is confident of victory. His 27,000 soldiers outnumber Scott by 3:1, and they are fighting to protect the capital city of their nation.

But once again, Scott finds a way to outmaneuver and defeat the Mexicans, despite their courageous efforts.

Coming up first against Valencia on August 19, General Persifor Smith's brigade is beaten back and left in a trapped position at the foot of the Contreras hill. That night Valencia celebrates, passing out brevets along with hard liquor to his troops. As the Mexicans revel, Smith's engineers find a way out of their trap – a passable ravine that circles to the right of the hill and comes up on Valencia's rear. At 3AM on the 20th, Smith's men race up the slopes and a rout ensues. According to Smith, it has "taken just 17 minutes" to clear the Mexicans off the hill and send them scurrying toward Churubusco.

Santa Anna tries to stabilize his troops throughout the day, but to no avail. General William Worth forces his way through San Antonio on the Mexican left and unites with Twiggs and

Pillow at Churubusco. They are slowed briefly by stiff resistance from a heavily fortified church convent, but soon break through and seize the key bridge over the Churubusco River.



Map Showing Twiggs And Pillow Assaulting Churubusco

The first line of defense protecting the capital city has been breached by Scott in his three victories on August 20, 1847. American casualties for the day total 120 killed and 816 wounded. The Mexicans suffer 3,250 total casualties, along with 2,627 prisoners.

Four and a half months have elapsed since U.S. forces left Veracruz on their audacious mission.

Now all that's left is one final push.

But instead of rushing headlong to the capital, Scott turns momentarily cautious. He fears that his army has been fought out at Churubusco, and wants time for his engineers to plot the best approaches into the city.

When he halts, Santa Anna sends emissaries out under a flag of truce to explore an armistice. Buchanan's man, Twist, joins the talks, and soon the lull in battle reaches two weeks. By then Scott concludes that Santa Anna is simply stalling for time to strengthen his defenses, and he ends the armistice on September 7.

His army is refitted and his strategy laid out. On September 8, 1847, he resumes his advance.



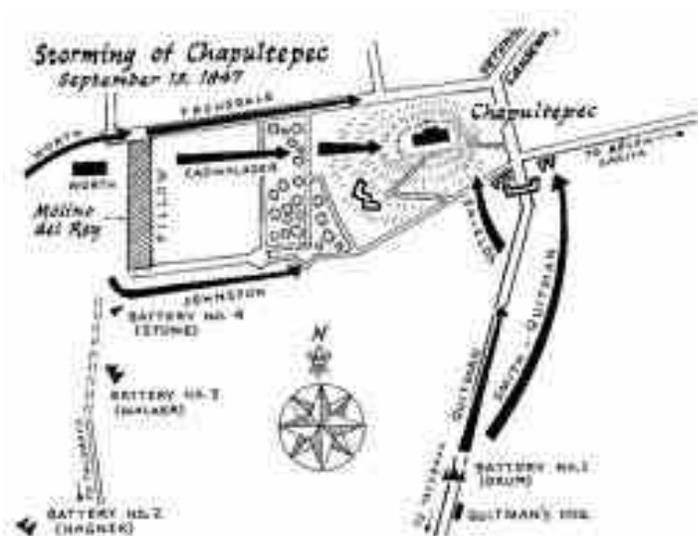
John G. Foster (1823-1874)

At dawn on September 8, Lt. John Foster leads the first head-on attempt to storm the Molino. This ends in a hail of musket fire and grapeshot that repulses the Americans and leaves Foster lying with a shattered leg on the field. And there he stays for another two hours of sustained violence in what turns out to be one of the bloodiest battles of the war.

The Americans eventually prevail at both the Molino and the Casa de Mata citadel, but at a cost of 729 casualties, including 58 officers. The Mexican losses top 3,000, with Santa Anna's top two commanders killed outright, General Leon at Molino and General Valderez at de Mata.

Time: September 16, 1847

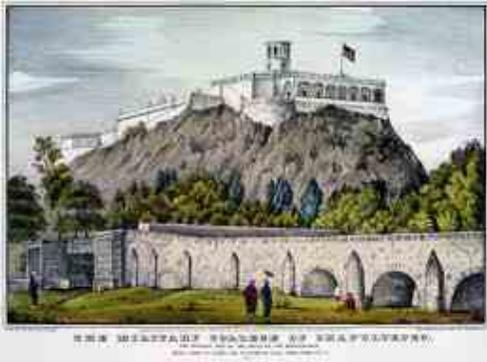
Assault On Chapultepec Castle And The Halls Of Montezuma



U.S. Attack On Chapultepec Castle In Mexico City

With the Molino secured, Scott decides that he will storm the capitol from two directions. His main attack will come from the west, under General Pillow, along the six foot high causeway leading to the San Cosme (customs house) Gate. Pillow will be supported by infantry units under the Mississippi General, John Quitman, driving from the south against the Belen Gate.

To succeed, Pillow must first pass the Chapultepec Castle, jutting out on a rock ledge 150 feet above the ground, surrounded by walls that are 4 feet thick and 20 feet high. The castle, formerly home to Aztec emperors, is now the site of the Mexican Military Academy, their West Point.



Chapultepec Castle by Nathaniel Currier, 1847

But not even this imposing barrier can hold up under the advanced artillery hardware and engineering tactics that have helped the Americans prevail from one battle to the next.

On September 12, four U.S. batteries, in easy range and well sheltered, begin to reduce the fort's defenses.

On September 13, as the bombardment continues, the Americans storm Chapultepec.



A post-war photo of the Mexican citadel

Pillow's troops race through the Molino grounds and into a cypress grove, where the General falls with a severe wound to his ankle. His men, however, move steadily forward and deploy scaling ladders to begin their ascent of the rocky hill leading to the castle itself. One officer who particularly distinguishes himself in this action is Lt. Tom Jackson, who wins another brevet for his artillery work alongside Captain John Magruder.



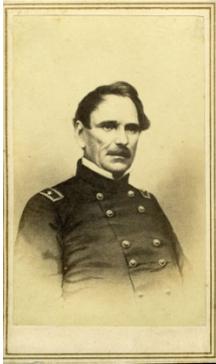
Lt. Tom Jackson, later Stonewall (1824-1863)

Pillow's troops are quickly joined by General Quitman coming up from the other side of the hill. Both contingents encounter fierce resistance, but nothing is about to deny the Americans at this point. By late morning shouts go up across the battlefield as the Stars & Stripes appear on the castle ramparts.

During this brave assault on the castle, a litany of future civil war military heroes have suffered wounds. Lt. PGT Beauregard is hit twice in the action. Major William Loring loses his left arm. Second Lt. James Longstreet goes down with a bullet to his thigh while carrying a regimental flag he hands off to Lt. George Pickett. Others wounded include Lt. Colonel Joseph Johnston, Captains Silas Casey and Magruder, Lts. Innis Palmer, Lewis Armistead, Earl Van Dorn, Isaac Stevens, and John Brannan.

The Mexican troops are both astonished and demoralized by the fall of Chapultepec, and they flee east along the two major causeways toward the central city.

The Americans follow post haste – with Worth picking up the lead for Pillow toward the San Cosme Gate, and Quitman’s forces, under the wounded General James Shields, closing on Belen.



James Shields (1810-1879)

Shields is a hot-headed Irish politician from Springfield, Illinois, who, in 1842, had challenged Abraham Lincoln to duel over a perceived slight. His battle temper is similarly up as he chases after the Mexicans, and he breaks through Belen and into the city proper by 1PM, only to come under heavy fire from the Citadel in the central Plaza. By evening Shields and Quitman are hunkered down and waiting on Scott’s next orders.



Ulysses S. Grant (1822-1885) and His Horse Cincinnati

Worth’s drive toward San Cosme proves to be much slower going, despite courageous initiatives from men like Second Lieutenant Ulysses S. Grant, who sets up a howitzer in the belfry of a church and scatters defenders in his front. Rearguard skirmishes and sniper fire continue on this causeway throughout the afternoon, and Worth halts his men by 8PM within easy artillery range of his assigned gate.

The scene is now set for the climax of Scott’s campaign to occupy Mexico City, which began on March 9, with the landing at Veracruz.

September 14 opens with the sight of emissaries from the city coming out to meet Scott. They inform him that Santa Anna has resigned his presidency and that the main body of the Mexican army has fled overnight out the backdoor exit along the National Road. They also request that control over the population, some 200,000 strong, be assigned to municipal authorities and the church.

Scott has not come this far to leave the capital in Mexican hands, and he immediately orders his troops forward.



General John Quitman (1798-1858)

The right wing, under Quitman and Shields, are already inside the city, and they proceed rapidly toward the Grand Plaza and the National Palace, seat of the Mexican government. Once there, General Quitman is given the honor of raising the American flag in the square.

Clean-up operations against diehards continue over the next day and a half, until the morning of September 16, when control over the entire city has been secured.

On September 16, 1847, Scott names Quitman military governor of Mexico City, a position he will hold all the way until July 20, 1848 when the U.S. occupation ends. At the same time, Scott allows the local city council to continue to function, along with the local police force and justice system. The Americans fine the city 150,000 pesos to care for wounded soldiers, and insure payment by controlling the customs gates. Eventually some of the funds collected go against efforts to rebuild the city.

Since entering the Valley of Mexico on August 10 with 10,700 troops, Scott has suffered 2,703 killed or wounded, including 383 officers. Mexican losses are pegged at 7,000 total casualties, along with 3,700 prisoners. When asked about “why” his massively outnumbered forces have prevailed in Mexico, Scott points to the superior military training and leadership of his West Point officer corps.

I give it as my fixed opinion, but that but for our graduated cadets the war between the United States and Mexico might, and probably would, have lasted some four or five years, with, in its first half, more defeats than victories falling to our share; whereas in two campaigns we conquered a great country and (won) peace without the loss of a single battle or skirmish.

If West Point had only produced the Corps of Engineers, the country ought to be proud of that institution.

The 78 year old Duke of Wellington, victor at Waterloo, attributes the victory to Scott, calling him “the greatest living soldier” and his Mexican expedition “unsurpassed in military annals.” On the other hand, General Pillow declares himself the “hero of Chapultepec” and is court marshaled by Scott, along with Worth, for writing after-battle reports considered self-laudatory and unprofessional.

Scott’s attention now turns to working toward a peace treaty, in conjunction with Nicholas Twist.

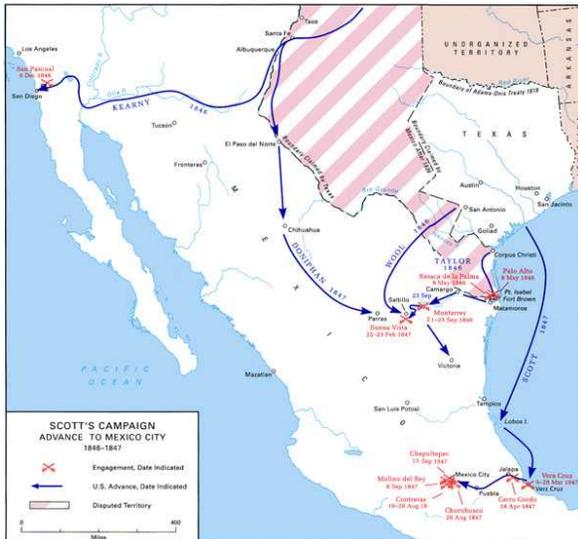
Sidebar: Milestones In Scott's Drive To Mexico City

Scott's 275 Mile Drive From Vera Cruz To Mexico City

Date	Events
March 29, 1847	Amphibious assault at Vera Cruz
April 20	Battle of Xalapa/ Cerro Gordo
Spring	Pause as Trist negotiations proceed
August 27	Win at Cherubusco
September 8	Molina del Rey
September 16	Mexico City

Time: September 1847

Land Occupied In Mexico By The End Of War



Map Of Kearny, Doniphan And Scott Advances Through Mexico

Despite some sporadic, mostly guerrilla, fighting after the capital falls, America is now the de facto ruler of all Mexico, only 26 years after that nation's independence from Spain.

Occupational garrisons are set up across all three theaters of the conflict.

To the north, General Kearny and Commodore Stockton control key cities roughly due west from Amarillo in northern Texas through Santa Fe and Albuquerque and over to Los Angeles.

In the center, Generals Doniphan and Taylor have gouged out a huge semicircle of land below the originally disputed Rio Grande border. Doniphan has driven down from Santa Fe to victories at El Paso on December 25, 1846 and Chihuahua on February 1847 and over to meet Taylor, who has secured Palo Alto, Monterrey and Buena Vista.

To the South, Scott holds a horizontal slash of 300 miles west from Veracruz to Mexico City.

At this point two questions remain for the conquerors: what land do they want to acquire permanently and how can they get the Mexicans to agree in a final peace treaty?

Sidebar: Some Other Civil War Generals Who Fight Together In The Mexican War

The fighting in Mexico will serve as a dress rehearsal for the strategies and tactics employed fifteen years hence in the American Civil War.

It also provides the cauldron of combat that produces many of that war's senior commanders – some 194 Union and 142 Confederate general officers in all.

Before these men are enemies at Bull Run, Antietam and Gettysburg, they have been brothers at Buena Vista, Monterrey and Veracruz. Together their deeds are nothing short of remarkable.

The capture of Mexico City is one of them. As future CSA General William Gardner (West Point class of 1846) says:

The idea of 10,000 men marching through a hostile country upon a capital containing upwards of 200,000 inhabitants, defended by 30,000 troops equipped with 100 pieces of cannon, and fortified by both nature and art! The capture of the city of Mexico under such conditions was a feat of arms to astound the world.

Confederates/CSA



James Longstreet (1821-1904)

George Pickett (1825-1875)

Joe Johnston (1807-1891)



Ambrose P. Hill (1825-1865) P.G.T. Beauregard (1818-1893) A. S. Johnston (1803-1862)

Union/USA



Samuel French (1818-191) John Gibbon (1827-1896) Winfield Scott Hancock (1824-1886)



Joseph Hooker (1814-1879)



Henry Hunt (1819-1889)



George Meade (1815-1872)

Chapter 131 - Two Splinter Parties Nominate Their Presidential Candidates Early On

Time: September 10-11, 1847

The Native American Party Selects Zachary Taylor



Derogatory Depiction Of Irish Catholic Immigrants In The 1840's

With the Mexican War winding down, Lewis Levin and his anti-immigrant Native American Party try to get a jump on the 1848 election by holding their first national convention.

The party has won six House seats in the 1844 race, but is down to one – Levin himself -- after the off-year balloting. Its goal now is to revitalize itself, arrive at a platform and try to strengthen its organization and broaden its base of voters.

The name of Levin's party will vary over the next decade.

At first it's known as the American Republican Association. This morphs into the Native American Party by 1847, or the American Party for short. An off-shoot calling itself The Order of the Star Spangled Banner surfaces in 1849, before a skeptical journalist, Horace Greeley, finds members reciting a set response when asked about the party principles – "I know nothing."

Greeley responds by handing the group its enduring nickname, the "Know Nothing Party."

The party convention is held on September 10-11 at the Assembly Building in Philadelphia, with roughly one hundred delegates in attendance.

A full party platform won't be fleshed out until 1852, but for now they agree on several things:

- The country should "belong" to American born, white Protestant citizens.

- The sharp rise in overall immigration in the 1840's threatens this outcome.
- The danger is compounded by the fact that many immigrants are Catholics, beholden to Rome.

In turn, the solution to “saving the country” lies in a host of actions aimed at the “foreign invaders” – from shutting down further immigration to waging “war to the hilt” against Catholics already in the country.

When the time comes for the American Party to nominate their choice for 1848, they settle on the warrior of the Mexican War, General Zachary Taylor.

For Vice-President it is 64 year old Henry A. S. Dearborn, son of Revolutionary War General Henry Dearborn, and current Mayor of Roxbury, Massachusetts.

Time: October 20, 1847

The Liberty Party Splits In Two

The 1848 race will be the third and final campaign for the abolitionist Liberty Party.



Salmon P. Chase (1808-1873)

Its roots trace back to 1839 and the schism within the movement between the Boston-based followers of Lloyd Garrison and the New Yorkers, drawn to the philanthropists, Gerritt Smith and the Tappan brothers, and the Cincinnati journalist, James Birney.

Both groups share the same ends -- immediate emancipation and full citizenship for all who remain enslaved – but differ on the means.

The Garrisonians refuse to be drawn into the political arena, arguing that the Constitution and the DC office holders have kept the Africans in chains, and that change will occur only through appealing directly to the good will of the public. They point to the steady progress made by their Anti-Slavery Societies and local lecture tours to support their convictions.

In 1846 Garrison labels the Mexican War “the greatest crime of our age” and campaigns against it. He calls the 1846 Wilmot Proviso a “landmark of anti-slavery resistance,” and in the Fall of 1847, lectures to some 20,000 people across fifteen towns, frequently referring to the Union as “a sinful abomination.” He also burns the U.S. Constitution as a public protest.

But his inflammatory rhetoric and anti-political posture is gradually costing him some support, including that of his long-time protégé, Frederick Douglass. In 1847 Douglass decides to start up his own abolition paper, *The North Star*, in 1847, without first informing Garrison. From then on their relationship grows distant.

Others, like the strategist, Salmon Chase, simply conclude that Garrison's strategy is naïve, and that the only realistic path to ending slavery will be to undermine its support in Congress through new legislation. The Liberty Party is born out of this belief in 1840.

Its election performance, however, proves anemic. In 1840, James Birney tops the ticket and receives only 7,000 votes nationally. In 1844 he is again nominated, garnering 62,000 votes or 2% of the ballots cast.

These results provoke an internal split between the Gerritt Smith faction and the Salmon Chase faction, which surfaces at the party convention held in Buffalo on October 20, 1847.

The politically astute Chase is impressed by the anti-slavery traction evident in the congressional votes cast on the Wilmot Proviso, and argues that the Liberty Party would be better off in the short run by fighting the westward spread of slavery rather than by focusing exclusively on total abolition now.

The majority of the delegates line up behind this tactical shift, and nominate the vocal anti-slavery Senator John P. Hale of New Hampshire over his one competitor, Gerritt Smith, on the first and only ballot.

Initial Vote Of Liberty Party (1847)

Candidate	Votes
John P. Hale	103
Gerritt Smith	41

When Smith learns of this outcome, he claims that the party has been hijacked by moderates who would forfeit the abolition crusade for a few more political votes.

His response is to hold a convention of his own on June 2, 1848 in Rochester, New York, where his loyalists back him for President and Presbyterian minister Charles C. Foote of Michigan as Vice-President.

Chapter 132 - Polk Gets The Independent Treasury He Wants

Time: 1800 – 1845

Controversy Over A Federal Bank Continues



James K. Polk (1795-1849)

With the Mexican War essentially won and the Wilmot Proviso threat apparently contained, Polk returns to his search for a satisfactory federal money management plan for the nation.

Going all the way back to Jefferson, Democrats distrust the notion of a privately run bank corporation having control over the government's money and, in turn, the future direction of the economy. From their perspective, this puts too much power in the hands of un-elected officials, offers too many temptations to put selfish interests above the public good, and lacks the transparency needed to avoid corruption.

Polk's mentor, Andrew Jackson, launches a personal crusade against the Second Bank of the United States which he calls "the monster on Chestnut Street." In 1834 he discovers that rampant speculation by banks has driven up land prices for western settlers and undermined the true value of all soft money. In response he abruptly shuts down the BUS, provoking the financial panic of 1837.

At that time, Thomas Hart Benton, offers an option to the BUS which he calls the National Exchequer Bank. It would still handle all revenue deposits and sell insurance backing independent transactions, but have nothing whatsoever to do with impacting the course of the economy. Jackson likes this option, but Congress refuses to go along.

After the crash of 1837, Van Buren proposes an Independent Treasury, run by government officials and not private investors. It would receive tax payments in hard money, and operate within a narrow charter – depositing federal revenue, disbursing funds to cover federal spending, and making loans to demonstrably solvent state banks.

Van Buren finally gets congressional approval in 1840, at the end of his term. Jackson applauds the move as does his hard money advisor, William Gough, who cites the utter simplicity of the solution:

So plain would be the accounts that we might choose for the chief bookkeeper...a cordwainer (shoemaker)...who daily threw into the leg of one boot his receipts for the day, and into another...his expenditures.

But the Independent Treasury stands for only one year before Henry Clay and his Whigs repeal the bill – hoping to establish a Third U.S. Bank, to keep more credit in the marketplace, and to back their spending on infrastructure.

When Tyler vetoes this effort, all federal revenues are deposited directly into state banks.

Time: August 6, 1848

An Independent Treasury Is Established With Help From Benton

In 1846 the need to fund the Mexican War forces Polk's hand on the banking system.

He has begun as a strict Jacksonian, inclined to hard money and suspicious of all private banks and bankers. But he grudgingly comes around to seeing the need for banknotes to support daily commerce and for a public agency to handle the government's cash flow and insure the value of the currency.

He decides that Van Buren's Independent Treasury is the best path to meeting these goals – and supports a bill to re-instate it, along with a clause giving Secretary Walker the power to issue short-term notes (bonds) to bolster cash-on-hand, as needed.

The Independent Treasury Act passes Congress on July 29, 1846, with vote cast along straight party lines.

“Old Bullions” Benton applauds it as the final divorce between the State and the Banks.

Henceforth decisions about spending federal money would rest with elected officials and not private corporations.

Chapter 133 - Gold Is Discovered In California

Time: 1841-1843

Johan Sutter Dreams Of A “New Switzerland” Community Along The California Trail

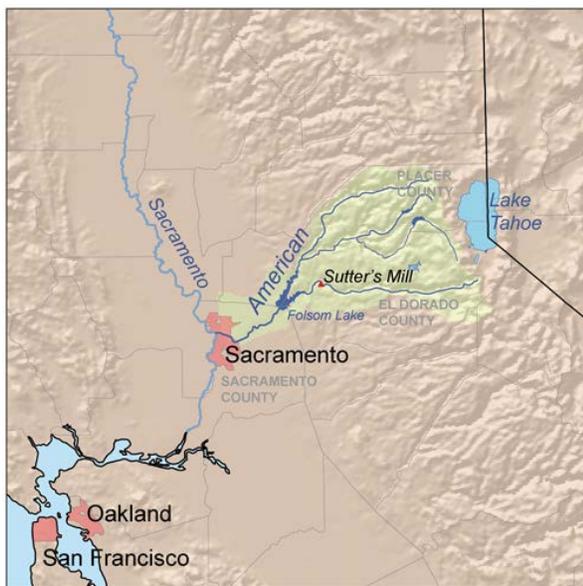


John Sutter (1803-1880)

The U.S. conquest of the Mexican province of Alta California takes on new and dramatic importance in January 1848 with the announcement that gold has been discovered some 35 miles northeast of Sacramento, at a sawmill being constructed near Fort Sutter.

The fort is named for the German immigrant, Johann August Suter, who flees from a debt-ridden past in Switzerland in 1834 to start a new life in America. He is 31 years old at the time, and anglicizes himself as “Captain John Sutter of the Swiss Guard.” He is multi-lingual and mixes easily in the French, German and Spanish communities around St. Louis, before joining the westward tide, first to Santa Fe and then to the “Oregon Country.”

Once there, he learns the fur trapping and trading business, and decides to settle down in northern California.



Map Showing Fort Sutter And The Surrounding Area

Since the territory is in the hands of Mexico at the time, he goes through the laborious process of gaining permission to settle on the land, although his legal rights to the property will later be contested, much to his misfortune. In August 1840 he qualifies as a Mexican citizen and in June 1841 is given title to 49,000 acres along the American River. He christens the site “New Helvetia (Switzerland)” and dreams of establishing an old world agricultural community there, capable of thriving economically and fending off threats from both local tribes and the Mexican militia, if need be.

Between 1841 and 1843 he constructs his town center, Fort Sutter, comprising roughly six acres of land surrounded by walls that are 2.5 feet thick and stand fifteen feet high. Inside the

compound is housing, a large kitchen and bakery, a smithy, carpentry shop, distillery, jail, a blanket factory, extensive storage facilities, and a supply depot and grocery store for travelers heading up or down the California Trail. Outside the compound is a flour mill, herds of cattle, and farmland, capable of providing the food and cash crops needed to sustain both settlers and guests.

The American River runs along the west side of the fort, with a dock and boats that ferry passengers some ninety miles down to San Francisco Bay.

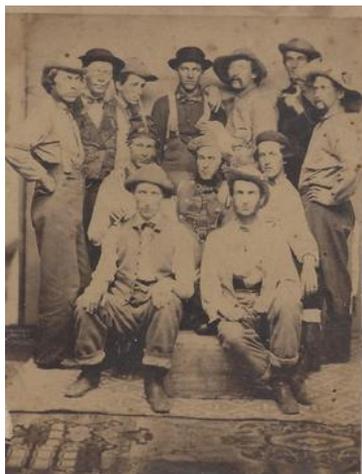
“New Helvetia” thrives, and Sutter is soon in need of additional lumber to keep up with his plans to expand the town. To supply it, he decides to construct his own sawmill at Coloma, some 40 miles upstream from the fort. Work on the mill is contracted out to James Marshall, who comes to the fort as a carpenter in 1845, and goes on to fight alongside John C. Fremont in the 1846 “Bear Flag Revolt,” before rejoining Sutter in 1847.

The two form a partnership, with Marshall charged with building the sawmill in exchange for wages and a share of the lumber produced. He hires a construction crew composed of local Nisenan tribesmen, and members of the “Mormon Battalion” who have stopped temporarily at the fort after the Mexican War, on their way home to Salt Lake City/

Work on the mill gets under way in August 1847.

Time: January 24, 1848

Gold Is Discovered Nearby At Sutter’s Sawmill



A Full Dozen Of Western Miners

Constructing a nineteenth century water-powered saw mill is a complex endeavor, and when Marshall tries to start his up in January 1848, he immediately encounters a problem. The flow of water into and through the wheel which drives the saw blades is not fast enough to generate the rotations per minute needed. Marshall analyzes the flow and concludes that the run-off ditch (or “trace”) below the wheel must be deepened and widened. A crew begins digging to widen this trace.

On the morning of January 24, 1848, Marshall is inspecting progress on the new ditch when he spots an unusual mineral formation. One of the Mormon crew on the scene at the time, James S. Brown, later records Marshall’s words at the time:

This is a curious rock, I am afraid that it will give us trouble...I believe that it contains minerals of some kind, and I believe that there is gold in these hills... Well, we will hoist the gates and turn in all the water that we can to-night, and tomorrow morning we will shut it off and come down, and I believe we will find gold or some kind of mineral here.

The drama continues the next day, as recalled by Brown:

Marshall said, Boys, I have got her now. I, being the nearest to him, and having more curiosity than the rest of the men, jumped from the pit and stepped to him, and on looking in his hat discovered say ten or twelve pieces of small scales of what proved to be gold. I picked up the largest piece, worth about fifty cents, and tested it with my teeth, and as it did not give, I held it aloft and exclaimed, "gold, boys, gold!" At that they all dropped their tools and gathered around Mr. Marshall.

The crew on the scene agrees to keep the find a secret among themselves, while fanning out across the area around the mill for their own discoveries. Over the next few days, more nuggets materialize and the excitement builds.

Marshall decides that he must share the news with Sutter, and he sends a message back to the fort with an Indian courier. Sutter's reactions are predictable. He first tries to contain the news locally, and then to determine whether he has any claims to the land around the mill.

Containment fails owing to a shady figure named Samuel Brannan, a Mormon and an early settler in California, who founds a newspaper in San Francisco and tries to convince Brigham Young to settle there. One of Brannan's duties is to collect tithes for the church, and he learns of the find when several Mormons at the sawmill hand him bits of gold on his visit. His response is immediate. He buys up all of the gold mining equipment he can find – using the church tithes along with his own money – and opens a supply store near Fort Sutter – then walks the streets of San Francisco shouting out the news of “gold found along the American River!”

For his efforts, Brannan becomes one of the first gold rush millionaires, albeit after expulsion by the Mormon church for fraud.

Sutter also learns that all of the land around his sawmill is considered “in the public domain,” and is available to any miner who stakes out a claim to mineral rights on “their plot.” In response, he heads to Coloma and tries his hand at mining, but never makes a strike.

The gold rush also proves unkind to Sutter's utopian wish for New Helvetia.

Get-rich-quick explorers from across the globe are soon squatting on his land and siphoning off his crops and livestock. His attempts to regain control are simply overwhelmed by the hoards, and his debts mount quickly. In 1849 he sells his fort for \$7,000, deeds his remaining land to his son, and takes up residence in Yuba City, some fifty miles to the north. For the next thirty years,

John Sutter attempts to convince the U.S. Congress to reimburse him for the loss of the land originally granted to him by Mexico, and for his important contribution to colonizing California. In June 18, 1880, his \$50,000 is again ignored, and he dies two days later of heart failure at his latest residence in Lititz, Pennsylvania.

Time: 1849

The Miner 49ers Rush To California To Get Rich Quick



At first, news of the “find” at John Sutter’s sawmill on the American River is regarded with the usual skepticism by the public at large. This, despite an initial report by James Gordon Bennett’s prestigious *New York Herald* published on August 19, 1848.

The response changes in dramatic fashion on December 5, 1848, when President Polk confirms the discovery of quantities of the precious ore that “would scarcely command belief:”

Recent discoveries render it probable that these mines are more extensive and valuable than was anticipated. The accounts of the abundance of gold in that territory are of such an extraordinary character as would scarcely command belief were they not corroborated by the authentic reports of officers in the public service who have visited the mineral district and derived the facts which they detail from personal observation.

With that, the rush is on!

Two Mining Pards Off To Make Their Fortunes

The first challenge for the 49ers lies in getting to California from the east. Primary paths are identified in the press: across the Isthmus of Panama; through Nicaragua; around Cape Horn; overland along the Oregon and California Trails or various southern routes over the former or current Mexican territory. A Cape Horn ship is the safest and fastest (25-30 days) option, but the price quickly skyrockets to \$400.

One adventurer who sets out in January 1849 is Samuel McNeil, a shoemaker living in Lancaster, Ohio. His journey there will cover over 3300 miles, take roughly five full months to complete, and be memorialized in his publication, *McNeil’s Travels In 1849 In California*.

He reaches New Orleans by steamboat down the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers on February 20. His intent is to continue west through Nicaragua, but instead ends up on the overland route across Mexico, first reaching the town of Brazos, where he buys a mule and rides it for over 1,000 miles to the coast at Mazatlán, arriving there on May 10. The remaining 1500 miles of his trip is completed on May 30, 1849, when the ship he is on puts in at the port of San Francisco – still a tent city, comprising less than one thousand residents.



Of Samuel McNeil's Brief Dig On The Feather & Bear Rivers

McNeil is finally ready to try his hand at mining for gold. He is armed with a pick and shovel, “cradle” and pan, acquired at grossly inflated prices, and whatever knowledge he has gleaned from various “how-to” write-ups that are already appearing widely in print. His destination ends up being “Smith’s Bar,” north of Sacramento, at the fork of the Bear and Feather Rivers.

Once there, McNeil makes his claim to mineral rights (but not land ownership) by putting stakes down on the plot he will be actively working day in and day out. Early on, these plots are invariably either along the banks of a river or creek or even mid-stream in the water flow. The searching Site

process is done by hand, with the miner scooping shovels of black sand and gravel into either a 4-foot long “cradle” or a simple pan, and then draining off the water and shaking the container in search of flecks or nuggets of gold.

It is a back-breaking task, but made tolerable by the pay-off for success. Thus, while day laborers back east are lucky to be earning \$1.00 a day in wages,

McNeil reports that the average prospector is finding \$16 a day in gold, and that some fabulous finds are yielding \$9,000 a week.

Such good fortune does not befall McNeil himself. He gives up after several futile weeks, and decides to earn his fortune in a different fashion – by opening “The Sycamore Tree Establishment,” evidently a combination saloon and brothel. While business is brisk, he is soon homesick for Ohio. On September 2, 1849 – only three months after his arrival in California – he has sold his saloon, clearing a \$2,000 profits, and is back on a ship headed home to resume his former life and publish his memoirs.

As McNeil departs, other more determined 49ers are pouring into San Francisco.

By 1850 it is a full-fledged “boom town,” with 25,000 settled residents, and some 300,000 prospectors passing through over the next decade. Included here are thousands of Chinese immigrants, who are mistreated in ways generally reserved for the native tribes. Upwards of 90% of the additions are males, whose lifestyles justify the wild-wild west label they are handed.

The value of the gold they produce is staggering – reaching a high of \$81 million in 1852 and then tapering off to around \$45million just prior to the war. The individual prospector, panning by hand in the middle of a river, soon gives way to larger enterprises using industrialized equipment familiar in other mining operations.

Gold Produced In California

Year	Gold Output (000)
1848	\$245.3
1849	\$10,151.4
1850	41,273.1
1851	75,938.2
1852	81,294.7
1853	67,613.5
1854	69,433.9
1855	55,485.4
1856	57,509.4
1857	43,628.2
1858	46,095.1
1859	44,095.2

Along with the rapid growth in people and wealth comes a merchant class eager to service every wish of successful miners with gold to spend. Demand for goods and services perpetually outstrips supply, and those capable of meeting immediate needs often profit more than the average miners themselves.

Success stories abound. Two start-up bankers, Henry Wells and William Fargo, provide their customers with a safe place for their daily finds. They also open a stage-coach service which ferries travelers, along with mail, back and forth across the prairie.

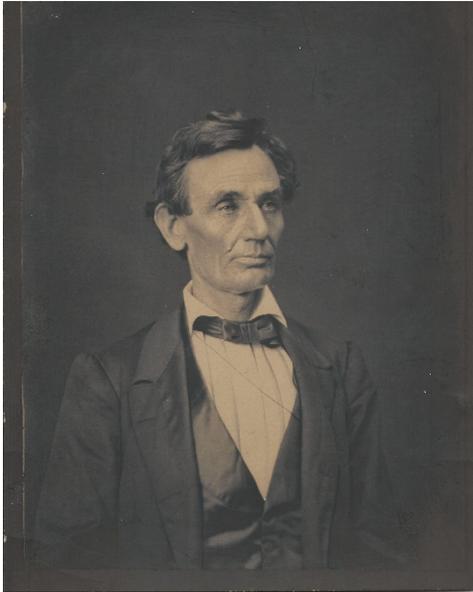
One John Studebaker is making wheelbarrows just south of the gold-fields when the news breaks, and uses the profits from their sales to become a leader in manufacturing carriages. The German immigrant Levi Strauss arrives in 1850 with plans to make canvas tarps for covered wagons, then shifts to blue denim work pants quickly popularized in dry goods stores. The famous butcher and meatpacker, Philip Armour, builds his business from the \$8,000 bankroll he accumulates during the rush period.

Aside from the personal fortunes created and the impact on the national economy, the gold rush of 1849 puts the issue of governance of the territory of California front and center on the agenda for the politicians in Washington.

Chapter 134 - Political Battles Intensify Over A Proper Peace Treaty With Mexico

Time: Winter-Spring 1847

Disputes Exist Over Terms For Peace



Abraham Lincoln (1809-1865)

By the winter of 1847, Polk realized that winning the war with Mexico has not ended the political battles surrounding the original annexation of Texas and the Wilmot Proviso ban on slavery in land acquired by the conflict.

Even within his own Democratic Party, divisions run deep about what to do with Mexico and its territory.

Polk's Treasury Secretary, Robert Walker, wants to annex the entire country.

James Buchanan, who publicly opposed any land acquisition when the war began, now turns acquisitive, to boost his odds for the presidential nomination. Once again Polk is enraged by his erratic Secretary of State.

Senator John C. Calhoun, whose hawkishness over Texas provoked the war, expresses horror at this thought – which would blemish America's racial purity.

We have never dreamt of incorporating into our Union any but the Caucasian race – the free white race. To incorporate Mexico, would be the very first instance of (including) an Indian race. Ours, sir, is the government of the white man... To erect these Mexicans into a territorial government and place them on an equality with the people of the United States is (something) I protest.

Then there is the especially galling New York wing of the party, now being called the “Wilmot Proviso Democrats,” who continue to insist on the slavery ban.

Polk himself opposes a wholesale annexation, but argues that America must be “indemnified” (i.e. compensated) for the costs of a war Mexico started by “their invading U.S. soil” along the Rio Grande on April 25, 1846. He decides to “wait out” the Mexicans, hoping they will offer up attractive peace terms.

He has sent his version of the territorial boundaries he favors to Nicholas Trist of the State Department, to advance talks toward a treaty.

But gradually he learns that Trist is negotiating on his own terms, with potential concessions in Texas and Alta (upper) California that Polk opposes. He also hears that Scott has court marshaled his confidante, Pillow, and joined Trist in working out a treaty, including a possible \$1 million bribe to Santa Anna.

At this point, Polk concludes that the time has come to sack both Trist and Scott -- but he is emotionally so averse to personal confrontations that both men stay on by default.

Time: Feb 12, 1848

The Whig, Abraham Lincoln, Calls The War A “Sheer Deception”



Abraham Lincoln (1809-1865)

Polk’s troubles from his Democrats are now matched by an increasingly vocal Whig opposition, with its 116-112 majority in the House.

On November 13, 1847, Henry Clay lays out the Whig position in a speech in Lexington, Kentucky. The war was one of “aggression,” not defense, initiated by Polk’s false claim that Mexico invaded U.S. land. The end must not lie in annexing all of Mexico or in any extension of slavery into new land. Hearing these words, Polk’s supporters label Clay a convert to the abolitionist movement.

As the second session of the 30th Congress convenes, Clay’s arguments are amplified in two addresses by the 38 year old freshman representative from Illinois, Abraham Lincoln.

Since speaking out after the 1837 murder of the abolitionist Elijah Lovejoy, Lincoln has devoted his energy to building a law practice in Springfield, courting and marrying Mary Todd in 1842, buying a home, and raising his first two sons, Robert and Willie. He has also dabbled in local politics, serving four terms in the Illinois House. In 1846, he is elected to the US House as the only Whig in a delegation dominated by Douglas and his Democrats.

Lincoln’s reputation is that of a “free soil man,” opposing those who would seek to extend slavery geographically, while not calling for abolishing it entirely. As such he will vote five times in favor of Wilmot’s proviso during his term in office.

His first address to the House, on December 22, 1847, is very brief, but pointed. It becomes known as the “spot speech” for its “respectful request” of the President to inform the members...

1st. Whether the spot on which the blood of our citizens was shed, as his messages declared, was or was not within the territory of Spain, at least after the treaty of 1819, until the Mexican revolution.

2d. Whether that spot is or is not within the territory which was wrested from Spain by the revolutionary Government of Mexico.

3d. Whether that spot is or is not within a settlement of people, which has existed ever since long before the Texas revolution, and until its inhabitants fled before the approach of the United States army.

After eight such constructions, Lincoln has made the case that American was intruding on Mexican land, and not vice versa, when the fighting began.

Lincoln’s second speech comes nine days after the House has passed a resolution by a vote of 85-81 saying that the war was “unnecessarily and unconstitutionally begun by the President of the United States.” It paints a picture of a President who deceived the nation into starting a war to grab land belonging to Mexico, and is now “bewildered” about how to force the Mexicans into a treaty that makes it all look legal.

Mr. Chairman: Some if not all the gentlemen on the other side of the House... have spoken complainingly ...of the vote given a week or ten days ago declaring that the war with Mexico was unnecessarily and unconstitutionally commenced by the President...I am one of those who joined in that vote; and I did so under my best impression of the truth of the case

The President, in his first war message of May, 1846, declares that the soil was ours on which hostilities were commenced by Mexico... Now, I propose to try to show that the whole of this issue and evidence is from beginning to end the sheerest deception.

All of this is but naked claim; and what I have already said about claims is strictly applicable to this. If I should claim your land by word of mouth, that certainly would not make it mine.

I am now through the whole of the President's evidence... (and) I more than suspect already that he is deeply conscious of being in the wrong.

My way of living leads me to be about the courts of justice; and there I have sometimes seen a good lawyer, struggling for his client's neck in a desperate case, employing every artifice to work round, befog, and cover up with many words some point arising in the

case which he dared not admit and yet could not deny and from just such necessity, is the President's struggle in this case.

He insists that the separate national existence of Mexico shall be maintained; but he does not tell us how this can be done, after we shall have taken all her territory...As to the mode of terminating the war and securing peace, the President is equally wandering and indefinite.

As I have before said, he knows not where he is. He is a bewildered, confounded, and miserably perplexed man. God grant he may be able to show there is not something about his conscience more painful than his mental perplexity.

A decade later, Stephen Douglas will cite these speeches as evidence of Lincoln's "lack of patriotism" when the two pair off in a race for a senate seat.

Chapter 135 - “Popular Sovereignty” Becomes The Democrat’s Answer to The Wilmot Proviso

Time: Winter 1847-48

The Democrats Search For A “Solution” To The Wilmot Proviso



Daniel Dickinson (1800-1866)

While the Whigs continue to hammer away at Polk over his motives for the war, the Democrats are desperately searching for a path to securing peace within their own party.

To do so, they must arrive at an option to Wilmot’s total ban on the expansion of slavery into the west, which is anathema to their entire Southern wing.

Their first choice – declaring that the 34’30” Missouri Compromise line be the boundary for Slave vs. Free State designation in all newly acquired land – has been rejected repeatedly in the House.

As a fallback, they turn to a new option, one will become known as “popular sovereignty.”

On the surface the idea is simple and altogether consistent with the original spirit of personal liberty in America – namely, that the people themselves should determine the rules by which they will be governed.

John Calhoun’s February 15, 1847 address in opposition to the Wilmot Proviso cites this theme in his “fourth resolve:”

Resolved, That it is a fundamental principle in our political creed, that a people, in forming a constitution, have the unconditional right to form and adopt the government which they may think best calculated to secure their liberty, prosperity, and happiness; and that, in conformity thereto, no other condition is imposed by the Federal Constitution on a State, in order to be admitted into this Union, except that its constitution shall be republican; and that the imposition of any other by Congress would not only be in violation of the constitution, but in direct conflict with the principle on which our political system rests.”

This is the classical argument of the States’ Rights Democrats going all the way back to Jefferson, and forever disputed by the Federalist conviction that local “sovereignty” is trumped by the majority will of the nation as a whole. Sixty years after the 1787 “constitutional contract”

this fundamental dispute still simmers – and, as always, within the context of Southern demands related to slavery and its economic imperatives.

The notion of a “popular sovereignty” solution is floated out on the floor of the Senate on December 22, 1847, by Senator Daniel Dickinson of New York. He is a member of the “Hunker” faction in the state, men who seek to smooth tensions with the South, and who oppose the “Barnburner” wing’s attempt to stop the spread of slavery.

The Enduring Rift Within The New York Democrats

Factions	Key Members
“Barnburners” (Pro-Wilmot)	Martin Van Buren, John Van Buren, Preston King, Silas Wright, John Dix
“Hunkers” (Anti-Wilmot)	Daniel Dickinson, William Marcy, Horatio Seymour, Edwin Crosswell, Samuel Beardsley

Healing the division in New York is critical to the Democrat’s chances in the 1848 political race, since the Empire state remains the top prize in the Electoral College with 36 votes. It is also considered “in play” in 1848 – with the Whig Harrison having carried it in 1840 and Polk in 1844.

Top Ten Electoral Vote States In 1848

N.Y.	Pa	Ohio	Va	Tenn	Mass	Ky	Ind	NC	Ga	All-Other	Total US
36	26	23	17	13	12	12	12	11	10	172	290

It will now be up to two powerful Western Democrats – Lewis Cass of Michigan and Stephen Douglas of Illinois – to make the case for “popular sovereignty” as the road to alignment and victory in 1848.

With Polk holding true to his promise of one term in office, both men also have their eyes on the nomination.

Time: Winter 1847-48

Democratic Senator Stephen Douglas Promotes “Popular Sovereignty



It is the 35 year old Douglas who becomes the most visible spokesperson for “pop sov” from the beginning.

Two raw ambitions drive “the Little Giant” from early on: power and wealth.

Power has come to him through a meteoric political career, organizing the Democratic Party machine in Illinois, then heading to the U.S. House in 1843 and the Senate in 1847.

Stephen A. Douglas 1813-1861

His idol all along has been Andrew Jackson, and like the ex-President, he is an outright racist, as his harsh rhetoric demonstrates. In March 1847, he also becomes a slave-owner through his marriage to Martha Martin, who inherits a large cotton plantation in Mississippi.

This property will provide Douglas with wealth and spare capital, which he uses throughout his career to buy up land around Chicago, always with an eye to windfall profits if he can someday route a trans-continental railroad through the city.

To protect his political image in the North, Douglas manages his Mississippi plantation surreptitiously.

Both his views on blacks and his personal stake in the future of cotton and slaves make him an ideal ally for his Southern colleagues in the capital. In fact, while in DC, he shares his living quarters with four leading Southerners, and their slave servants, in what becomes known as the “F-Street mess.” Three of his housemates chair important Senate Committees -- Finance (Robert TM Hunter of Virginia), Foreign Affairs (James Mason of Virginia), and Judiciary (Andrew Butler of South Carolina). The fourth is the outspoken pro-slavery Missouri Senator, David Atchison.

Douglas himself is Chairman of the Committee on Territories, a perfect position from which to both shape and promote “popular sovereignty” in the new western lands. He describes the process to statehood as follows:

- Once a sizable number settle in a new Territory, they will hold a State convention.
- At this convention, they will write and debate a State Constitution.

- Included in this document will be a “free state” or “slave state” declaration.
- The Constitution will then be voted on – yes or no – by all citizens of the State.
- Once a Constitution has passed, the Territory will apply to Washington for recognition.

In other words, popular sovereignty becomes...

Simply let the people decide!

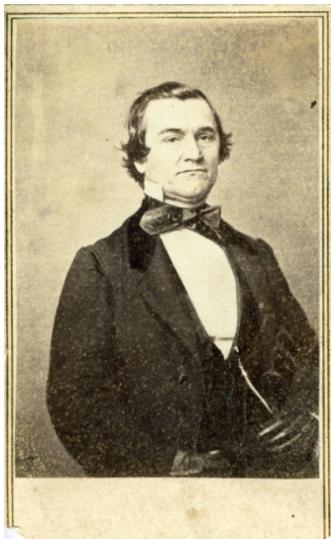
Once formulated, Douglas and Lewis Cass attempt to rally the party and the public to their solution.

With this formulation, they are convinced that “popular sovereignty” will thread the political needle between Northerners, uncertain about extending slavery into the west, and Southerners, demanding it. His next step is to try it out among his Southern colleagues.

Date: February 14-15, 1848

The Southern “Fire-Eaters” Respond With The 1848 “Alabama Platform”

What Douglas and Cass find when they go to “sell popular sovereignty” is a growing band of Southern Democrats who will become known as the “Fire-eaters” – whose zeal around expanding slavery is every bit as intense as the Northern “Barnburners” wish to contain it.



William L. Yancey (1814-1863)

The Fire-Eaters understand that the entire economic future of the South rests on raising cotton and selling slaves west of the Mississippi, from Texas to California – and they want “guarantees” of this outcome from Washington.

“Popular sovereignty” boosts their odds of success above Wilmot’s flat-out ban; but it falls well short of the “certainties” they point to in the U.S. Constitution and even the 1820 Missouri Compromise. Simply put, the risks of a pop-sov vote going against them are too high to bear.

One “Fire-Eater” who now joins Calhoun in attempting to unite the South behind a better option is Senator William L. Yancey of Alabama.

Yancey is born in Georgia and educated at Williams College in Massachusetts. His step-father is a New School Presbyterian minister who supports abolition, and other family members are strongly pro-Union.

After college he moves to South Carolina, edits a local newspaper, and speaks out against the 1832 “Nullification Bill” proposed by John Calhoun. In 1834 he passes the bar and begins to practice law.

At this point he looks like anything but a future pro-slavery secessionist.

His views shift, however, in 1835 when he marries the daughter of a wealthy Alabama planter and receives, as a dowry, extensive cotton land and 35 slaves of his own, near the town of Cahaba. Yancey takes up residence there and quickly blends in to the lifestyle of the southern aristocrat. To give voice to his now outspoken support of slavery, he becomes editor of *The Cahaba Southern Democrat*, and enters politics, first in the state legislature, then, in 1844, as a member of the Alabama delegation to the U.S. House.

In his personal life, Yancey embraces the “code duello,” which defines “honorable behavior” for men of the South. Included here are a series of “how-to’s” – how to manage a plantation, treat women and slaves, interact in society, serve one’s country, uphold traditions. Also, how to avenge insults or sleights, something Yancey does on two noteworthy occasions: first, when he kills a doctor who offends him, in a brawl, which leads to a jail term; and second, in 1846, when he fights a harmless duel with Thomas Clingman, a Whig congressman, who criticizes his speech on the Texas Annexation.

In 1848 Yancey focuses his ire on the continuing push in Congress to approve the Wilmot Proviso.

Like Calhoun, he believes the time has come for the South to take a united stand against all threats to abolish or limit the expansion of slavery. To create this united front, he orchestrates the development of five principles related to the Mexican Cession lands that become known as the “Alabama Platform:”

1. Mexico’s 1821 law abolishing slavery must be revoked for the new US territories.
2. Settlers must be able to bring slaves into any territory once it is opened up.
3. The federal government must protect the rights of slave-holders in the territory.
4. Slavery will be legal until and unless a formal state Convention votes to prohibit it.
5. Alabama delegates will oppose all presidential candidates supporting either Wilmot or a “pop sov” version that prohibits bringing slaves into any new territories.

Yancey’s demands are all aimed at “rigging” any popular voting in favor of slavery by making it a fait d’accompli in a new territory well in advance of any state constitution or election.

This will be accomplished, Yancey believes, by rushing slaves onto farms and plantations in new territories as quickly as possible and then delaying any popular vote until the institution is well established. On the premise that removing slavery once it has taken root will be more difficult than banning it from the start.

Yancey admits that his “fait d’accompli strategy” is not the ironclad guarantee the South would ideally seek, but it does build off the Democrat’s “popular sovereignty” platform, while tipping the scales of any live vote in favor of slavery.

The 5-point “Alabama Platform” is approved by his home state legislature on February 14-15, 1848, and Yancey then tries to “sell it” across the South. He succeeds in three other states – Virginia, Georgia and Florida – and will take his case to the May 22 Democratic National Convention in Baltimore.

Chapter 136 - The Treaty Of Guadalupe Hidalgo Ends The War With Mexico

Time: February 19 - March 10, 1848

A Negotiating Breakthrough Leads To The Mexican Cession Of Southwestern Land



Map Of Land Acquired From Mexico In The Guadalupe Hidalgo Treaty

With political pressures mounting on Polk, good news arrives from Mexico City saying that the controversial Nicholas Trist has achieved a breakthrough on a treaty with Manuel de la Pena y Pena, the ex-Supreme Court justice named interim president after Santa Anna's resignation.

Since arriving in Veracruz on May 6, 1846, Trist's negotiations have violated all diplomatic norms. After Polk orders him to return home in December, he learns that Trist and General Winfield Scott are moving forward essentially on their own. The two men by now share a common disdain for Pillow, Buchanan and Polk and a belief that they are America's best hope for reaching a settlement of the war.



Manuel de la Peña y Peña (1789-1850)

Unlike the strident Santa Anna, Peña y Peña is eager to resolve the conflict, assuming it allows Mexico to retain its standing as an independent nation. Trist knows that Polk supports this outcome, and so the talks, at the town of Guadalupe Hidalgo outside Mexico City, focus on drawing territorial boundaries in the north and agreeing on a cash payment.

Trist walks a fine line with Polk's instructions here. He agrees to a border that is slightly farther north than Polk wants, both in Arizona and in Alta (upper) California, while still insisting on control over the important port city of San Diego. At the same time he convinces the Mexicans to accept \$15 million for the land, well under the \$30 million Polk sets as a maximum.

On February 2, 1848, Trist and Peña y Peña sign the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo and send it off hoping for final approval in Washington. Polk receives a copy on February 19, and finds the terms acceptable, despite his ongoing anger over Trist's rogue methods. The next day, he forwards it to the Senate.

As expected, the treaty becomes a political football, with both the Democrats and Whigs trying to stake out their positions on the war and the treaty in advance of the 1848 presidential race.

The contentiousness is momentarily muted by news on February 23 that ex-President John Quincy Adams has died, following a sudden collapse on the floor of the House. After a hiatus to honor him, the Trist Treaty is finally approved on March 10 by a vote of 38-14.

With the Mexican Cession in place, America has both extended and secured, once and for all, its borders, and its recognition as one of the world's most powerful nations.

But the victory comes with a "poison pill" that will haunt and divide the nation going forward: whether or not slavery will be allowed to take hold in the Mexican Cession land just acquired. This is exactly the issue that kept Andrew Jackson and other Presidents prior to Polk from prior invasions in the west.

Sidebar: Death Of The Remarkable John Quincy Adams



John Quincy Adams (1767-1848)

No Whig has been more strongly opposed to the aggressive war against Mexico or more supportive of Wilmot's ban on expanding slavery than John Quincy Adams.

In February 1848, the ex-President is serving his eighth term in the House. He is 80 years old and still standing after the death in 1845 of his bete noir, Andrew Jackson, a man he forever regards as a "murderer, adulterer and slanderer."

In November 1846 he suffers a slight stroke that impairs his right side for several months and leaves him frail upon his return to the second session of the 30th Congress. Still his compelling sense of duty has him back on the floor on February 21, 1848, registering his final opposition to the war, when he topples over, into the arms of his colleagues.

He is carried to the Speaker's office, but is soon comatose. Two days later, on February 23, he dies in the Capitol building. He is survived by Louisa, his London born wife of fifty years and by one of the couple's children, Charles Francis Adams, who follows in his father's diplomatic and political footsteps.

In the end, JQ Adams has spent his entire life trying to live up to the "good son and public servant" dictates of his iron-willed parents, John and Abigail Adams.

As a small boy he has witnessed the American Revolution, and at age fourteen, in 1781, his father sends him on his first diplomatic journey to Russia. All else follows on from there, as if on iron rails. His life has never been easy, but he sums it up well in his own words:

With regard to what is called the wheel of Fortune, my career in life has been, with severe vicissitudes, on the whole highly auspicious.

Public Service Record Of JQ Adams

Dates	Age	Office
1781 -- 1784	14-17	Assistant to US Minister to Russia
1794 – 1797	27-30	Minister to Netherlands

1797 -- 1801	30-34	Minister to Prussia
1803 – 1808	36-41	U.S. Senator from Massachusetts
1809 – 1814	42-47	Minister to Russia
1814 – 1817	47-50	Ambassador to Britain
1817 – 1825	50-58	Secretary of State (Monroe)
1825 – 1829	58-62	President of the United States
1831 -- 1848	64-80	U.S. House of Representatives

Chapter 137 - Women Reformers Begin To Battle For Gender Equality

Time: 1820-1845

The Second Awakening Sparks Debate Over The Roles And Rights Of Women

While the two major parties are focused on slavery and politics, a movement to reshape the roles and rights of women in society is quietly picking up momentum.

From Jamestown forward, women and men operate in different spheres, codified by Blackstone's English common law, biblical admonitions and social norms.

Men are born to rule, to be masters of their own households, to become the nation's ministers, lawyers, doctors and businessmen, to venture out into the affairs of state, participating in the militia, politics, and the civic arena.

Women's defined role is one of domesticity and subservience, first in relation to their fathers and then to their husbands.

Those who "fail" to marry become "spinsters," relegated to living at home with their likely-to-be disappointed parents.

As single women (*feme sole*), however, they do retain their personal "rights" to own property, run a business, retain wages, write and sign contracts, create a will and dispose of their own possessions.

Once married, women "surrender" these rights to their husbands under the English law of "coverture" – whereby her wishes are assumed to be "covered," or subjugated, under the will of her husband.

From then on, her charge lies in supporting her husband, first by producing heirs – ten lifetime pregnancies being common – and then by providing a well-run household. The duties here are non-stop and laborious. Laundry done with well water, cooking over an open fire, mending clothes, gardening, milking cows, helping with crops, raising children, caring for sick family members, attending church and instilling proper moral values.

The effect is the near total exclusion of women from the civic arena. Speaking out in a public forum, especially with men present, becomes a "radical" act, and voting in elections is considered out of the question. As Thomas Jefferson put it...

The ballot must be reserved for every man who fights and pays.

The notion of separate spheres between the sexes is reinforced in popular publications of the day. A Southern journal sums it up as follows:

His aspirations are for thrones and large dominions; she is queen of the household; her diadem is the social affections; her scepter, love.

Godey's Ladies Book offers a “Code of Instructions For Ladies,” with a full litany of “nevers” – never contradict your husband, give advice unless asked, criticize his behavior, respond during arguments, censor his morals, and so forth.

Testimonials to the traditional hierarchy abound, this one from a contented wife in Georgia:

True to my sex, I...love to feel my woman's weakness protected by man's superior strength.

Few challenges to this hierarchy materialize during the Revolutionary era. The rare exceptions originate with women like the anti-British political pamphleteer, Mercy Otis Warren and Abigail Adams, the outspoken wife of the second U.S. President, who warns of a “Ladies rebellion.”

It is not, however, until the height of the Second Great Awakening phenomenon between 1820 and 1845 that America begins to seriously rethink “women’s roles and rights” – along with other social reforms like temperance, slavery, debtor’s prisons, poverty, and abuses of child labor and the physically handicapped.

The spirit here is every bit consistent with the nation’s revolutionary instinct to challenge all orthodoxies associated with its European heritage.

Under the umbrella of “liberty and power to the individual,” Americans re-think the structure of their government, their churches, their financial institution, and their economy. How natural then to reconsider the structure within their own households – especially given its overtones of monarchy and serfdom!

Time: 1830's Forward

Educational Advances Expand The Horizons For Women

The women who initiate the debates on gender tend to benefit from parents who encourage their early intellectual curiosity and provide them with a formal education – often through tutors or attendance at one of the new “female seminaries” that spring up between 1820 and 1840, during the height of the Awakening.

These seminaries are the successors to earlier “dame schools” or “finishing schools,” where young girls are taught the four values required to lead a virtuous life: religious piety, submission to a husband’s will, sexual faithfulness, and home-making skills, including cooking, sewing, gardening and child care.

The founders of these new schools are intent on replacing this narrow “domesticity” curriculum with one that mirrors that being offered to males – world literature, languages, mathematics, and science. Since for-men-only colleges refuse to recognize the merits of these subjects for females, the “radicals” who start up these seminaries plow forward on their own – often under the more acceptable guise of training women to become better teachers.

Lurking within the halls of these new “female seminaries,” however, are educators like Mary Lyon of Mount Holyoke, and students like Lucy Stone, who are dedicated to using their schools to reshape the ambitions and opportunities for women in American society.

Earliest Colleges Admitting Women In America

Date	Name	Where	Curriculum
1742	Bethlehem Female Seminary Moravian College	Germantown, Pa.	Link to Moravian Church, becomes a secondary school for girls 8-15, broad academic curriculum along moral guidance, vocational training, physical exercise, and social skills.
1772	Single Sister’s House Salem Female Academy	Winston-Salem, N.C.	Link to Moravian Church, similar to Bethlehem on structure, among the first to accept black students.
1792	Litchfield Academy	Litchfield, Connecticut	Founded by Sarah Pierce to provide “Republican Motherhood” vision of women as capable teachers of their own children. Pierce also authors her own history textbooks.
1796	Nine Partners School	So. Millbrook, New York	Quaker run co-ed school for ages 7-15 years. Both Lucretia and James Mott attended the school and later taught there.
1803	Bradford Academy Bradford Teachers Seminary	Bradford, Mass.	Three year college prep school which shifted to women only in 1836, with focus on preparing teachers. Cost of \$4-6 per semester.
1806	Byfield Female Seminary	Byfield, Mass	Run by Congregationalist minister, Joseph Emerson, attendees include Zilpah Grant and Mary Lyon.

1811	Boston Lyceum For Young Women	Boston, Mass	Founded by educator and journalist, John Park and attended by Margaret Fuller
1818	Elizabeth Female Academy	Washington, Miss.	Methodist Church connections, with emphasis on spirituality, James Audubon taught drawing in 1822, and Varina Davis was attendee.
1821	Troy Female Seminary Emma Willard School	Troy, New York	College prep boarding school founded by Emma Willard who, with Beecher and Lyon, created curriculum matching that taught to boys. Grads include Elizabeth Cady Stanton.
1823	Hartford Female Academy	Hartford, Connecticut	Founded by educator, Catharine Beecher, with emphasis on early childhood education.
1825	Science Hill School	Shelbyville, Ky	Founder is Julia Ann Hieronymous Tevis, with focus on teaching science to young women.
1827	Linden Wood School For Girls	St. Charles, Missouri	Presbyterian Church, founded by the teacher, Mary Easton, and her explorer husband, George Sibley. Full range of courses for college prep.
1828	Ipswich Female Seminary	Ipswich, Mass.	Founded by Zilpah Grant, colleague of Mary Lyon, focus on joy of learning vs. rote memorization.
1830	Charleston Female Seminary	Charleston, Mass.	Opened by Baptist ministers, then educator Martha Whiting, attendees include Mary Livermore
1833	Columbia Female Academy	Columbia, Missouri	Baptist link, first mistress was Lucy Wales, college prep.
1833	Friends Select School	Philadelphia, Pa.	Quaker run, Anna Dickinson attended.
1834	Wheaton Female Seminary	Norton, Mass	Founded by education pioneer, Mary Lyon, with "curriculum mirroring that offered to men." No church ties.
1837	St. Mary's Hall	Burlington, New Jersey	All-girls academic boarding school, founded by Episcopal Bishop, George Doane.
1837	Mount Holyoke Female Academy	South Hadley, Mass.	Educator Mary Lyon's finest legacy, emphasizes science and math, moral purpose, physical fitness, campus work to defray costs, affordable to all, major

			advances in educating teachers. Sister school to Andover Academy For Boys.
1839	Georgia Female College Wesleyan Female College	Macon, Georgia	Methodist Church links, first president was Rev. George Pierce, college level courses focused on the sciences.
1842	Quaboag Seminary	Warren, Mass	College prep for both sexes, Lucy Stone attends before going on to Oberlin.
1844	St. Mary's College	Notre Dame, Indiana	Sisters of the Holy Cross of France, Catholic college prep boarding school.
1848	Philadelphia School of Design for Women	Philadelphia, Pa.	Founded by Sarah Worthington King to prepare poor women with skills to enter trade, teaches wood carving, lithography and household design.

Each of the four women who will lead the “Women’s Movement” attend one of these progressive schools -- Lucretia Mott (Nine Partners), Elizabeth Cady Stanton (Troy), Lucy Stone (Oberlin College), and Susan B. Anthony (Moulson’s Female Seminary).

Time: Into The 1840’s

Roll Call For The Women’s Rights Movement



Lydia Marie Child (1802-1880)



Mary Livermore (1820-1905)



Louisa May Alcott (1832-1888)

But early education is only one mark of those leaders.

With few exceptions, they are all confirmed, and activist, abolitionists.

Several join Lloyd Garrison's inner circle --Lucretia Mott becomes, in effect, his spiritual advisor; Sojourner Truth, the Grimke sisters, Abby Kelley and Maria Weston Chapman are traveling lecturers and agents; Margaret Fuller, Lydia Marie Child, Anna Dickinson and others contribute essays to his *Liberator* newspaper.

Religion typically plays a significant role in their upbringing. Several are Quakers, among them Mott, the Grimke's, and Abby Kelley. Some belong to mainstream Protestant sects or break-aways, such as the Unitarians (Lucy Stone, Howe, Chapman, and Alcott) and the Universalists. Others, like Susan B. Anthony, move from one sect to another, only to abandon all formal affiliation out of frustration with the failure of church officials to deal with the "degradations" suffered by blacks and women.

A few are so-called "Freethinkers" from early on, aware of the formal religious traditions, but inclined to rely on their own reason and instincts to move through life. The utopian socialist Fanny Wright and the precocious Lydia Marie Child belong here – as does the always unconventional Elizabeth Cady Stanton.

With very few exceptions, women in the movement marry – almost always to husbands who are supportive of their full equality. Most also become mothers, although as a group they are much less inclined toward very large families common at the time. Stanton is one exception, giving birth on eight separate occasions.

Even with only one or two children, they are left with the challenge of taking care of their families, while simultaneously devoting their remaining time to their causes and personal careers. These careers are fundamental to altering their spheres of influence, beyond home and church, and into arenas historically reserved for men.

Many begin in a safe zone by teaching or tutoring. From there, however, they break out in multiple directions.

Some establish and run their own academies: Sarah Pierce, Zilpah Grant, Mary Easton, Emma Willard, Mary Lyon, Catherine Beecher.

Others turn to writing, from fiction and poetry (Alcott, Child) to hard-hitting essays (Warren, Fuller, Stanton, Child, McClintock, Howe) to running newspapers (Mary Shad Cary, the Forten sisters, Fuller, Stanton, Anthony, and others).

Lucretia Mott and Antoinette Brown Blackwell are both ordained ministers, the former in the Quaker Church, the latter a Congregationalist. Mary Walker earns an MD degree and practices medicine, while others labor as nurses.

Many are responsible for founding and operating major reform organizations. Early on they include the Female Anti-Slavery Societies, in Philadelphia (Mott, the sisters Grimke and Forten) and in Boston (Maria Weston Chapman). When the American Anti-Slavery Society finally admits women – in 1839, six years after its founding – the roster includes Mott, the Grimkes, Kelley, Stanton, Stone, Anthony and others.

Later on, Stanton and Anthony found the National Woman Suffrage Association (1869), Stone and Brown the American Woman Suffrage Association (1869) and Francis Willard the Women’s Christian Temperance Union (1873).

Together these courageous leaders will fundamentally change the rights and roles of women during the second half of the nineteenth century.

Some Of The Leading Figures In The Women’s Movement During The 19th Century

Name	Dates	Their Education	Religion	Marry?	Abol?
Mercy Otis Warren	1728-1814	Tutored by local minister	Puritan	Y- 5 children	
Abigail Adams	1744-1818	Home schooled by mother	Unitarian	Y- 6	
Sarah Pierce	1767-1852	NY school for teachers	Presby		
Emma Willard	1787-1870	Public school in Berlin, Conn.	Christian	Y-1	
Sarah Grimke	1792-1873	Private tutors on plantation	Quaker	Y-0	Y
Lucretia Coffin Mott	1793-1880	Nine Partners School	Quaker	Y-6	Y
Zilpah P. Grant	1794-1874	Byfield Female Seminary	Congreg.	Y-0	
Fanny Wright	1795-1852	Home school in UK by aunt	Freethinker	Y-1	Y
Mary Lyon	1797-1849	Byfield Female Seminary	Congreg.		
Sojourner Truth *	1797-1883	Enslaved, education banned	Methodist	Y-5	Y
Catharine Beecher	1800-1878	Litchfield Academy + self-taught	Presby		
Mary Easton Sibley	1800-1878	Women’s boarding school in Ky.	Presby	Y-0	
Mary Ann McClintock	1800-1884	Westtown School	Quaker	Y-5	Y
Lydia Maria Child	1802-1880	Self-taught	Freethinker	Y-0	Y

Amy Post	1802-1889	Self-taught	Quaker	Y-4	Y
Angelina Grimke Weld	1805-1879	Private tutors on plantation	Quaker	Y-0	Y
William Lloyd Garrison	1805-1879				
Martha Coffin Wright	1806-1875	Quaker schools in Philadelphia	Quaker/left	Y-7	Y
Margaretta Forten *	1806-1875	Private black academy in Phil	AME		Y
Maria Weston Chapman	1806-1885	Schools in UK	Unitarian	Y-4	Y
Margaret Fuller	1810-1850	Father tutor, then Boston Lyceum	Transcend.	Y-1	Y
Harriet Forten Purvis *	1810-1875	Private black academy in Phil	AME	Y-8	Y
William Henry Channing	1810-1884				
Ernestine Potovsky Rose	1810-1892	Hebrew school in Poland	Judaism/left	Y-0	Y
Abby Kelley Foster	1811-1887	New England Friends School	Quaker	Y-1	Y
Wendell Phillips	1811-1884				
Jane Hunt	1812-1889	Home school	Quaker	Y-4	Y
Paulina Wright Davis	1813-1876	Public school in NY	Presby	Y-2	Y
Elizabeth Cady Stanton	1815-1902	Troy Female Seminary	Freethinker	Y-8	Y
Lucy Colman	1817-1906	Self-taught	Spiritualist	Y-1	Y
Lucy Stone	1818-1893	Oberlin College '50	Unitarian	Y-1	Y
Amelia Bloomer	1818-1894	New York public grade school	Episcopal		
Julia Ward Howe	1818-1910	Home schooled by tutors	Unitarian	Y-6	Y
Susan B. Anthony	1820-1906	Moulson's Female Seminary	Q/Uni/left		Y
Mary Livermore	1820-1905	Charleston Female Seminary	Universalist	Y-0	Y

Elizabeth Smith Miller	1822-1911	Philadelphia Friends School	Unknown		Y
Mary Ann Shadd Cary *	1823-1893	Quaker school in Pa.	AME/left	Y-2	Y
Edna Dow Cheney	1824-1905	Private girls schools	Transcend.	Y-2	Y
Antoinette Brown Blackwell	1825-1921	Oberlin College '47	Congreg.	Y-7	
Thomas Higginson	1828-1911				
Louisa May Alcott	1832-1888	Father + Transcendentalist tutors	Unitarian		Y
Dr. Mary Walker	1832-1919	Syracuse Medical College	Freethinker	Y-0/Divorce	Y
Victoria Woodhull	1838-1927	Public grade school in Ohio	Spiritualist	Y-2/Divorce	
Frances Willard	1839-1898	Northwestern Female College	Methodist		
Anna Dickinson	1842-1932	Friends Select School in Pa.	Quaker		Y

* African-Americans Y=Yes, Blank=No

Time: 1820 Forward

Lucretia Mott Emerges As The Role Model For The Women's Movement



Lucretia Mott (1793-1880)

No single figure has greater impact on the women's movement than Lucretia Coffin Mott.

Her remarkable life begins in 1793 on the island of Nantucket, some thirty miles south of Cape Cod, Massachusetts. Her father is a seafarer, captain of a sailing vessel, trading in seal skins, voyaging as far away as South America and China. His often year-long absences place the burden of caring for the family -- which includes eight children -- and for a small supply store, directly into the hands of his wife. Later in life, Lucretia recalls the skills and independence evidenced by the women of the Island while their husbands were away.

I remember how our mothers were employed, while our fathers were at sea. They were obliged to go to Boston... mingle with men, make their trades and with all of this, have very little help in the family, to which they must discharge their duties.

In addition to witnessing and admiring her mother's self-confidence and initiative, she also grows up in a Quaker community that rejects hierarchical privilege, believes in co-education, encourage women to think for themselves, to speak up in mixed public forums, even to serve in the official church ministry.

In 1804 the Coffin family moves to Boston, with her father transitioning from the risky life at sea to more stable pursuits as a tradesman. At age thirteen, Lucretia begins her studies at the Nine Partners co-educational school in Poughkeepsie, NY. The venue is a Quaker Meeting House and the superintendent is one Adam Mott, who fosters a sense of duty among his students on behalf of abolition. Lucretia is moved by her reading about slavery and by those who speak against it like the Quaker preacher, Elias Hicks.

My sympathy was early enlisted for the poor slave, by the class-books read in our schools, and the pictures of the slave-ship, as published by Clarkson. The ministry of Elias Hicks and others, on the subject of the unrequited labor of slaves, and their example in refusing the products of slave labor, all had their effect in awakening a strong feeling in their behalf.

From Hicks, Lucretia is also persuaded that one's moral compass should be guided by "obedience to the light within" rather than conformity to often misguided institutional norms.

By fifteen, she is hired at Nine Partners as an assistant teacher, and learns a distressing lesson about such norms around the issue of wage difference between women and men.

The unequal condition of women in society also early impressed my mind. Learning, while at school, that when they became teachers, women received but half as much as men for their services, the injustice of this was so apparent, that I early resolved to claim for my sex all that an impartial Creator had bestowed.

One of Lucretia's fellow teachers is James Mott, son of the superintendent, and the man she marries in 1811, after her family moves to Philadelphia. Together they will become activists on behalf of abolition and gender equality over the next 57 years together, up to his death in 1867.

Putting an end to slavery tops Lucretia's list from the beginning. In 1815 she joins forces with another Quaker, Benjamin Lundy, in trying to convince the Friends General Assembly to publicly support abolition. In 1819 she sees slaves first-hand on a trip into Virginia.

The sight of the poor slaves was indeed affecting: though...we were told their situation was rendered less deplorable, by kind treatment from their masters.

While raising her children – eventually numbering six – she masters her Bible studies to the point where, in 1821, age twenty-eight, she is ordained as a Quaker minister. From there she is drawn into leading “a more public life:”

At twenty-five years of age, surrounded with a little family and many cares, I felt called to a more public life of devotion to duty, and engaged in the ministry in our Society, receiving every encouragement from those in authority, until a separation among us...when my convictions led me to adhere to the sufficiency of the light within us, resting on truth as authority, rather than taking authority for truth.

This puts her on-stage in front of large audiences for the first time. It instills the courage she will need to advocate in public for her causes, as well as providing a model for other women to participate in civil discourse.

In 1823 she and James initiate the Philadelphia Free Produce Society, a co-op dedicated to boycotting the use of all products derived from slave labor – from sugar to cotton to tobacco. Conforming to this ban proves challenging to the Mott’s financial future, and it comes at a time of pressure from within the Quaker community to denounce their “Hicksite” convictions.

Lucretia simply moves forward amidst the upheavals, balancing her private and public responsibilities. This trait is repeatedly commented upon by other women...

She is proof that it is possible for a woman to widen her sphere without deserting her home life.

On January 1, 1831, the nascent abolitionist movement is transformed by William Lloyd Garrison, a new arrival, who publishes the first edition of his paper, *The Liberator*. Garrison is quick to mobilize his forces, and in December 1833 some 62 delegates (21 Quakers) meet in Philadelphia to found the American Anti-Slavery Society, which, over the next five years will boast a quarter million members, eventually including the four main leaders of the Women’s Rights movement, Mott, Stanton, Stone and Anthony.

At the opening convention, however, a vote is taken and women are denied membership!

Despite this affront, Lucretia is undismayed, and speaks out at the plenary session about the wording of the “pledge of faith.” This meeting also marks the beginning what will be her lifelong association with Lloyd Garrison.

Along with Lydia Maria Child and Margaretta Forten, the African-American daughter of the black abolitionist, James Forten, Mott soon founds the Philadelphia Female Anti-Slavery Society. Its mission includes gathering petitions, collecting money for black schools, writing pamphlets and lecturing to public audiences. In 1835 the fiery southern white abolitionist Angelina Grimke joins Mott as an itinerant lecturer, further emboldening more women to speak their minds on a range of reform issues.

Along with their zeal comes not only verbal abuse but also physical risk. In 1838 a mob breaks up an anti-slavery meeting at the Pennsylvania Hall, then burns it to the ground and threatens the homes of local abolitionists, including Lucretia and James Mott. Such attacks are not unusual and the gentle “Mother Mott” will continue to face them.

In June 1840, at the first World Anti-Slavery Convention in London, the Women’s Rights movement becomes a cause celebre. The meeting is called to applaud the English for freeing some 800,000 slaves since their emancipation act of 1833, and to encourage other nations, especially the U.S., to follow suit. A total of roughly 300 official delegates are present, including 50 from America. Seven women are invited, among them the now famous Mott and the baroness widow of the English poet, Lord Byron.

At the opening session, the question of seating the female delegates suddenly takes center stage, with a lively debate consuming most of the day. One irate U.S. delegate sums up the situation as follows....

What a misnomer to call this a world convention of abolitionists when some of the oldest and most thorough going supporters are denied the right to be represented.

But a final vote goes against the women by a 90% nay to 10% yea margin, and the females, including Lucretia Mott, are forced to observe the session away from the official floor. This well-publicized “degradation” will energize those a host of women intent on changing their status in society.

The 1840 London Convention is also remembered as the first encounter between the 47 year old icon, Mott, and one of her eventual protégés, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, the 24 year old newlywed accompanying her husband Henry Stanton, a US delegate. Elizabeth’s reaction to Mott is one of awe:

It seemed to me like meeting a being from some larger planet, to find a woman who dared question the opinions of Popes, Kings, Synods, Parliaments, with the same freedom that she would criticize an editorial in the London Times, recognizing no higher authority than the judgment of a pure-minded, educated woman.

Mott is likewise impressed by Stanton’s views on changing the standing of women and by her self-assurance. Over the next eight years, the two are in frequent touch, with the culmination being the landmark Seneca Falls Convention of 1848, and Stanton’s famous Declaration of Sentiments on behalf of women.

Time: 1830 Forward

Elizabeth Cady Stanton Becomes Chief Strategist For The Women's Movement



Elizabeth Cady Stanton (1815-1902)

Stanton's family lineage is considerably more prestigious than others in the inner circle of the women's movement.

Her maternal roots trace back to Colonel James Livingston, whose service in the Revolutionary War is rewarded with a 3500 acre land grant in New York State. One of his daughters marries Peter Smith, a fabulously wealthy partner of John Jacob Astor, and father of the philanthropist reformer, Gerrit Smith. Another daughter, Margaret, weds Daniel Cady, a prosperous attorney, who serves a term in the U.S. House (1815-17), before eventually being named a justice on the New York Supreme Court.

"Judge Cady" and Margaret have eleven children, with Elizabeth, born in 1815, the eighth in line. She is raised in Johnstown, New York, amidst privileges that include horseback riding, chess lessons, access to her father's extensive library, and a formal education -- first in a local grammar school and then at Troy Female Seminary, Emma Willard's college prep boarding school which opens in 1821. She enrolls there in 1831, at age sixteen, and completes an academic curriculum, from math to science, classical languages, religion and composition.

Reflecting on her youth, she later admits to the pain of her father's "preference for boys," and her desire to win his affection by matching her brother's every accomplishments. Her formula is simple:

I thought that the chief thing to be done in order to equal boys was to be learned and courageous. So I decided to study Greek and learn to manage a horse.

After graduating from Troy, she connects with her well-to-do cousin, Gerrit Smith, eighteen years her senior, and his circle of friends, already engaged in temperance and abolitionist activities. Ironically Elizabeth has grown up with a slave in her own household, owned by her father until freed in 1827 under New York law.

One of Gerrit Smith's acquaintances is Henry Stanton, who begins his career as a journalist before enrolling in 1832 at Lane Theological Seminary, intending to become a Presbyterian minister. The school is embroiled at the time with debates over slavery, and Stanton leaves

before graduation to become a lecturer on behalf of abolition, and to help Smith found the Liberty Party in 1840.

Elizabeth is also drawn into the reform fervor of the 1830's and finds in Stanton a man who is a decade older, and already making his mark as a public speaker and writer on causes she favors. Despite her father's uncertainties about Henry's future prospects, the two are married in 1840, agreeing that "obey your husband" be omitted in the vows.

Six weeks after the wedding they are in London attending the World Anti-Slavery Convention, a pivotal moment where she meets Lucretia Mott and witnesses first-hand the refusal to seat female delegates, which she recalls as...

A burning indignation that filled my soul.

Garrison remembers her as "a fearless woman...who goes for woman's rights with all her soul."

One signal of her commitment lies in what she calls her "debut in public" in a speech on temperance. She recounts this in an 1841 letter to her friend, Eliza Neall, saying that one hundred men were present and that the "homeopathic doses of Women's Rights" she infuses brought tears to the eyes of her audience and herself. She also concludes that...

The more I think on the present condition of women, the more am I oppressed with the reality of her degradation. The laws of our country, how unjust are they! our customs, how vicious! What God has made sinful, both in man and woman, custom has made sinful in woman alone.

From this speaking triumph also comes a life-long lesson:

The best protection any woman can have ... is courage.

Eight years will elapse between the 1840 London Convention on slavery and the landmark 1848 Seneca Falls gathering on women's rights. Much of that time for Elizabeth is spent in Boston, raising her seven children (one dies at birth), and mingling with activists, like Garrison and Fred Douglass, and intellectuals, like Emerson and the Alcotts.

While the Mexican War and sectional tensions over slavery dominate public discourse, a small cadre of protesters form up on behalf of "the women's issues." In 1845 the Transcendentalist Margaret Fuller publishes her treatise on *Women In The Nineteenth Century*, laying out a litany of basic rights denied and directing a scathing attack against men who exhibit a "tone of feeling toward females as toward slaves."

A smattering of men also lobby for change. Judge Elisha Hurlbut condemns "coverture" as "the law of the male sex gathering unto themselves dominion and power at the sacrifice of the female." Wendell Phillips and Garrison add their support. The Unitarian minister, Samuel May,

goes so far as to tell his congregation that justice demands equality for women, including an astonishing plea for their right to vote.

Elizabeth's outward protests remain fairly muted so far. She refuses to be called "Mrs. Stanton," and adopts a new form of less formal dress favored by liberated women.

But in her few spare moments away from housekeeping she dashes off a series of essays on women's roles and rights that prove forerunners to the legally cast declarations she will offer at the Seneca Falls Convention of 1848, which will change her destiny.

Time: 1840 Forward

Lucy Stone Adds Her Indomitable Will On Behalf Of Gender Equality



Lucy Stone (1818-1893)

A third pioneer in the women's movement is Lucy Stone.

As a child she lives under the shadow of the words her mother tells her she used to report her birth to her father: "Oh dear, I am sorry it is a girl."

The time is 1818, and Francis Stone is hoping for another son to help work his farm in western Massachusetts, not a girl, unlikely to even offset her own consumption with the light labor she can provide. Throughout her youth, her father rules his domain with an iron hand, while her mother is left to comply on all things.

There was only one will in our family, and that was my father's.

The effect of this on Lucy is to steel herself against repeating this subservience in her own life. This leads to her vows to become as educated as a man, to always earn and keep her own wages, and above all to avoid the surrender of her basic rights through marriage.

She is also upset as a youth by events outside her own home. She hears that Congress refuses to accept anti-slavery petitions written by women. Ministers in her own Congregational Church condemn the abolitionist Sarah Grimke for "assuming the place of a man" by speaking out in public. She learns that a Connecticut anti-slavery meeting refuses to count the vote of the firebrand Abby Kelley, who proceeds to defiantly raise her hand anyway.

Her early education in a local school is limited, but still sufficient to land her a position in teaching at the age of sixteen. When she enquires about her wages, she is told that “women can afford to teach for one half, or even less, the salary which men would ask.”

In 1838, Lucy reads newspaper excerpts of Sarah Grimke’s *Letters On The Equality Of The Sexes*, aimed at demolishing biblical justifications for subjugating women and forcing them to operate in different spheres from men.

In 1839, her thirst for education finds her enrolling at Mount Holyoke, only to discover that open support for abolition and women’s rights is frowned upon by school officials. She transfers to Quaboag Seminary, especially to learn enough Latin and Greek to pass college entrance exams. In 1843 she has accumulated enough savings to apply to Oberlin College, which nine years earlier becomes the first university accepting women.

Lucy thrives at Oberlin, mastering its classical curriculum. She works part-time to pay her way, and convinces the administration to adjust her wages upward to equal her male counterparts. She protests faculty resistance to a visiting lecture by abolitionist Kelley, and sets up a clandestine female debating society, where she hones her own speaking skills. In 1847 she graduates with honors, but refuses to write a commencement address after learning that it must be read by a man.

Her Oberlin phase also leads to a lasting friendship with Antoinette Brown, later the first woman ordained to the ministry by the Congregational Church. The two are sisters-in-law six years later, after Lucy changes her mind and decides to marry Henry Blackwell. He is an Englishman by birth, who immigrates to America, becomes a successful hardware salesman, and falls in love with Lucy after hearing one of her lectures. The marriage is preceded by an extensive pre-nuptial agreement, vacating all of the “coverture” rules abhorrent to Lucy since her youth.

In 1848, Abby Kelley convinces her to become a Lecturing Agent for the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society, which fully connects her to Lloyd Garrison’s supporters, including Lucretia Mott.

Lucy is now right where she belongs. Standing in front of a mixed and often openly hostile crowd. Sporting a short, almost masculine haircut and wearing a loose fitting jacket over “bloomer” trousers. Vigorously making the case for the cause of equality for women.

Over the coming decade her prowess and fearlessness as a public speaker will make her famous nationwide.

Sidebar: Oberlin College

Lucy Stone's Oberlin College begins in 1833 within the context of yet another of the era's "utopian communities," this one imagined by two young religious zealots seeking "moral perfection."



Tappan Hall On The Campus Of Oberlin College

One is Reverend John Shipherd, influenced by revivalist preacher, Charles Finney, and conducting his own evangelical meetings in 1832 in Elmyra, Ohio. The other is his friend from prep school, Philo

Stewart, serving as a missionary to the Choctaw tribes in the area. Both are troubled by the lack of religious dedication in the west, and decide to found

a colony, whose "sole mission is to save souls and prepare the world for the coming millennium of Christ."

With support from their Congregational church back east, they acquire 550 acres of land some thirty miles southeast of Cleveland, and christen their colony Oberlin, after a French educator they admire.

As with other utopian experiments, Oberlin suffers severe financial difficulties, until one of Shipherd's fundraising trips connects him with the philanthropist Lewis Tappan -- who has just learned that attempts to promote abolition at Lane Theological Seminary have run afoul of its conservative head, Lyman Beecher. This results in a walk-out from Lane of about 50 students and trustee, Asa Mahan.

Shipherd now works out a quid pro quo, whereby Tappan will donate \$10,000 and 8 professorships to Oberlin if the local college there guarantees that students do manual labor to pay operating expenses, and will agree to enroll both women and blacks, in addition to men.

Shipherd willingly accepts the deal on his own, and, in 1833, the Oberlin Collegiate Institute opens its doors, with Asa Mahan as its first president and a class largely composed of the Lane defectors.

By 1835, however, the community Trustees have still not lived up to the deal with Tappan. Their resistance demonstrates the disparagement toward females and blacks that prevails at the time -- even among this supposedly idealistic white enclave.

While admitting women has been approved, it comes with the caveat that their curriculum be confined to two departments – “Female” and “Teachers” – and not “Collegiate” and “Theological.”

Enrolling blacks is another matter entirely, and the responses here are symbolic of the intense racial bias that dominates America’s white society, South and North. Opponents argue that enrolling blacks at Oberlin would be madness, that internal church funding would disappear, and that...

Hundreds of Negroes would be flooding in...and as soon as the darkies begin to come, the whites will begin to leave...and we will become a Negro school.

At first, Shipherd tries to counter with moral persuasion, while tempering his plea with assurances that hands-off distance can still be maintained between whites and the inferior blacks.

None of you will be compelled to receive them into your families, unless, like Christ, the love of your neighbor compels you to...as Christ ate with publicans and sinners... But this should be passed because it is a right principle and God will bless us in doing right...If we refuse to deliver our black brethren... I cannot hope that God will smile upon us.

This too fails, and the Trustees opposition is strengthened by a student vote of 32-26 vote against admitting blacks. All that’s left for Shipherd is threat, and on February 9, 1835, he tells the Trustees that the school will not only lose Tappan’s crucial financial support, but that he will also leave the community unless they go along. By a margin of one last vote, cast by the abolitionist minister, John Keep, the motion to admit blacks carries.

From that moment on, Oberlin College will become a beacon of light shining across America on behalf of educating females and blacks – even though actual progress proceeds in fits and starts.

Five years will pass before sixteen year old George Vashon becomes the first black enrolled. He is the son of Pennsylvania abolitionist, John Vashon, and goes on to graduate with honors in 1844, followed by a distinguished career as a lawyer, professor and reformer.

Progress happens faster for the Oberlin women. The curriculum for females is expanded to include the full range of “Collegiate” courses, with three women signing up for these in 1837, and two going on to be first in the nation to receive an AB degree, in 1841. Twenty-one years later, one Mary Patterson will be the first black woman awarded that degree, also from Oberlin.

Lucy Stone will enroll at Oberlin in 1843 and graduate in 1847. Her experiences there will reinforce many of the prejudices against women that are the norm in her day, including wage

inequities and efforts to stifle her voice at campus debates and commencement. But, her time at Oberlin also proves transformative, as she begins her leadership in the Women's Rights Movement. As she later observes:

Whatever the reason, the idea was born that women could and should be educated. It lifted a mountain load from woman. It shattered the idea, everywhere pervasive as the atmosphere, that women were incapable of education, and would be less womanly, less desirable in every way, if they had it.

And what of Shipherd and Stewart, the two men who fought so hard to create a utopian community and college in 1832 in the backwoods of Ohio? Sadly, Shipherd dies of malaria at age forty-two in Michigan, in the process of founding Olivet University, his "next Oberlin" in the west. Stewart lives on to seventy and continues to help fund Oberlin through profits from a patented stove he invents.

Time: 1840 Forward

Susan B. Anthony Brings Her Unique Organizational Talents To The Cause



Susan B. Anthony (1820-1906)

The fourth member of the early women's movement is Susan Brownell Anthony.

She is born in 1820, which makes her five years younger than Elizabeth Cady Stanton and two years younger than Lucy Stone.

Her early life is spent on a modest farm situated in the far northwestern edge of Massachusetts. To supplement the family income, her father Daniel operates a small cotton mill, which employs local women, several of whom are housed on the farm. This exposes Susan from an early age to the hard labor demands placed on women, in their households and in factories.

Daniel is a “Hicksite Quaker,” like Lucretia Mott, who relies on his “inner light” rather than church authority to shape his beliefs. He is not only a freethinker but also a reformer, dedicated especially to temperance, abolition and equal education for women.

In 1826, Daniel and a wealthy friend form a partnership to operate a much larger cotton mill, and the family moves some forty miles north to a new home in Battenville, New York. Once settled in, he constructs a one room schoolhouse on his new property, and hires a teacher, Mary Perkins, to instruct his own children and those of his mill workers. Susan is an eager student and is ever ready to expand her educational horizons.

At age seventeen a chance arises and she is off to Deborah Moulson’s Female Seminary, a Quaker boarding school in Philadelphia. The curriculum is ideal – math, science, literature, physiology – but she finds the environment stifling, with Moulson an overbearing religious zealot, perpetually criticizing her work along with her sunny disposition.

This bittersweet academic interlude ends abruptly when the aftershocks of Andrew Jackson’s Bank Panic of 1835 crush her father’s business and leave the entire family in poverty.

In 1838, she returns home, determined to help pay off the family debts.

To do so, she begins teaching in 1840 at Eunice Kenyon’s Friends Seminary in New Rochelle, New York. While there, she becomes increasingly self-confident and brushes off several marriage proposals, to protect her independence. Her anti-slavery instincts are heightened in New Rochelle by the systematic humiliations she sees free blacks suffering at the hands of “supposedly Christian” whites. She also learns to her dismay that the wage she is being paid at the Seminary is only one-fourth of her male counterparts.

In 1845 she is back home again in a Quaker community near Rochester, on a farm which becomes a gathering place for activists, including the famous Unitarian minister, Samuel May, preaching in nearby Syracuse, and, over time, Frederick Douglass, who will become Susan’s lifelong friend. Three “causes” are bubbling up for her – temperance, abolition, and the career and wage constraints placed on women by traditional social norms.

A year later, in 1846, she ventures out again on her own. This time for a position her uncle arranges as headmistress of the “Female” Department at Canajoharie Academy – where she teaches for three years and earns a reputation for intelligence and drive. While there, she joins the Daughters of Temperance, and also begins to break away from some of her strict Quaker heritage, evident in a more colorful choice of dresses and involvement with theater and dance.

The landmark Seneca Falls Convention on women’s rights takes place on July 19-20, 1848, while she is still living and teaching at Canajoharie. But both of her parents and her younger sister, Mary, attend the Rochester Women’s Rights Convention which follows on August 2, and sign the Declaration of Sentiments document, which defines the movement.

Susan returns to Rochester in 1849 when Canajoharie closes, and takes on responsibility for overseeing her parent's farm, while her father sets up a new insurance business. But she is soon drawn into applying the skills she has acquired on behalf of her causes – and, like Lucy Stone, goes forth as a traveling lecturer.

It is not until May 1851 that Amelia Bloomer introduces Anthony to Elizabeth Cady Stanton at a Lloyd Garrison event in Seneca Falls. This begins a partnership that defines the Women's Rights Movement over the next fifty years. The two are perfect complements – Stanton, the theoretician, Anthony, the get-it-done practitioner. It is Anthony who sums this up in an 1902 eulogy for her friend:

She forged the thunderbolts and I fired them.

Sidebar: The “Look” Of The Liberated Woman



Dr. Mary Walker (1832-1919)
Wearing Trousers!

While the women's movement enjoys near unanimity on its messages, settling on the “proper look” for its messengers stirs lots of controversy.

In one camp are those who insist that a change in appearance is required to signal a change in station. This leads them toward shorter haircuts and loose fitting trousers worn under waist or knee-length jackets, and away from the traditional whalebone corsets and hoop skirts -- some weighing up to twelve pounds – most have worn since their teens.

Others feel that these changes will open them up to mockery “for trying to look like men” -- and that this in

turn will detract attention from the arguments they wish to make.

The leading early proponent of the new look is Amelia Bloomer, a Seneca Falls journalist and advocate for female rights. She claims that women, not men, should determine the dress they prefer, and that the choice should be driven by what they find comfortable and healthy.

The costume of women should be suited to her wants and necessities. It should conduce at once to her health, comfort, and usefulness; and, while it should not fail also to conduce to her personal adornment, it should make that end of secondary importance.

Be they straight legged or puffed out in a Turkish design, the trousers are christened “bloomers” in honor of their sponsor – and the entire ensemble becomes “the Bloomer Costume.”

The visual impact of the new look is dramatic. Gone is the static, ornamental, predictable impression of the hoop skirts; on comes a much heightened sense of motion, energy and substance. Women dressing for action, rather than women dressing for men.

The stage actress, Fanny Kemble, an abolitionist once married to the scurrilous slave owner, Pierce Meese Butler, causes an early stir by donning the “Turkish dress” at public events. Proponents of physical fitness for women discard their corsets. A group calling themselves the “Lowell Bloomer Institute” declare their intent to abandon...

The whimsical and dictatorial French goddess Fashion (in favor of) the demands and proffers of Nature.

The feminist Elizabeth Smith Miller introduces the new look to her cousin, Stanton, who appreciates the freedom of movement it provides, and begins to debut it at her lectures.

Another Stanton cousin, Gerritt Smith supports a Dress Reform Association along with Amelia Bloomer’s efforts to promote the new designs to a mass market.

But, of course, the nay-sayers latch unto “the bloomer look” as one more reason to ridicule the radical women.

The accusations range from tasteless and unladylike to impersonating men and encouraging promiscuity. A variety of “Bloomer Polkas” add fodder to the put-downs.

In the end, most of the reformers, including Stanton, decide to reverse course. Paulina Wright Davis sums up the entire fashion matter as follows:

If I put on this dress, it would cripple my movements in regard to our work at this time, and crucify me ere my hour had come.

Chapter 138 - The Seneca Falls Convention Coalesces The Women's Rights Movement

Time: July 19-20, 1848

The Female Declaration Of Independence At Seneca Falls



Elizabeth Cady Stanton (1815-1902)

Eight years after Mott and Stanton experience the “seating humiliation” at the 1840 Anti-Slavery Convention in London, the topic of injustices against women comes up at a tea party they attend at Jane Mott’s house in Boston. The date is July 9, 1848, but Stanton recalls it decades later:

I poured out, that day, the torrent of my long-accumulating discontent, with such vehemence and indignation that I stirred myself, as well as the rest of the party, to do and dare anything.

What she decides to do mirrors the founding fathers, circa 1776 – hold her own continental congress and announce a Declaration of Independence from an authoritarian rule which governs her life without her consent.

Immediately the wheels are set in motion for an event to be held on July 19-20 at the Wesleyan Methodist Chapel in Seneca Falls, New York, to...

Discuss the social, civil and religious condition and rights of women.

To boost attendance, word goes out that reform luminaries such as Mott, Sarah Grimke, Lydia Marie Child and Frederick Douglass will be present. Next comes an agenda for the session, with Day One reserved for women only and Day Two open to both sexes. The burden of writing and delivering the keynote addresses falls to Stanton. She is assisted by the Quaker reformer, Mary McClintock, and by her attorney husband, who searches for historical precedents to make her arguments.

They decide to document the case using the frameworks laid out by the founders against Britain – beginning with a list of “Sentiments” that capture their grievances and followed by “Resolves” describing the remedies they intend to pursue in response.

Time: July 19, 1848

Day One Of The Seneca Falls Convention

The first day of the convention opens with roughly two hundred women filling the chapel. Stanton and Mott begin with keynotes encouraging the attendees to listen with open minds to the ideas presented -- especially regarding the “depth of their degradation” at the moment -- and to make a personal commitment to changing the status quo.

Excitement builds when Stanton reads her “Declaration of Sentiments,” fashioned after the bill of particulars supporting the 1776 break with Britain. In this case, the rupture is cast as “one portion of the family of man...seeking a position different from that which they have hitherto occupied.”

When, in the course of human events, it becomes necessary for one portion of the family of man to assume among the people of the earth a position different from that which they have hitherto occupied, but one to which the laws of nature and of nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes that impel them to such a course.

Then come the ringing assertions that “all men and women are created equal,” that they share the same “unalienable rights;” that in the face of an “absolute despotism” which violates these rights, it is proper to “throw off” the sources of oppression and “demand the equal station to which they are entitled.”

With this foundation established in the preamble, Stanton enumerates the “degradations” which justify the revolution she demands. These are captured in sixteen “repeated injuries and usurpations on the part of man toward women” intended to “establish an absolute tyranny over her.”

1. *He has never permitted her to exercise her inalienable right to the elective franchise.*
2. *He has compelled her to submit to laws, in the formation of which she had no voice.*
3. *He has withheld from her rights which are given to the most ignorant and degraded men—both natives and foreigners.*
4. *Having deprived her of this first right of a citizen, the elective franchise, thereby leaving her without representation in the halls of legislation, he has oppressed her on all sides.*
5. *He has made her, if married, in the eye of the law, civilly dead.*
6. *He has taken from her all right in property, even to the wages she earns.*
7. *He has made her, morally, an irresponsible being, as she can commit many crimes with impunity, provided they be done in the presence of her husband. In the covenant of marriage, she is compelled to promise obedience to her husband, he becoming, to all*

intents and purposes, her master—the law giving him power to deprive her of her liberty, and to administer chastisement.

8. *He has so framed the laws of divorce, as to what shall be the proper causes of divorce; in case of separation, to whom the guardianship of the children shall be given; as to be wholly regardless of the happiness of women—the law, in all cases, going upon the false supposition of the supremacy of man, and giving all power into his hands.*
9. *After depriving her of all rights as a married woman, if single and the owner of property, he has taxed her to support a government which recognizes her only when her property can be made profitable to it.*
10. *He has monopolized nearly all the profitable employments, and from those she is permitted to follow, she receives but a scanty remuneration.*
11. *He closes against her all the avenues to wealth and distinction, which he considers most honorable to himself. As a teacher of theology, medicine, or law, she is not known.*
12. *He has denied her the facilities for obtaining a thorough education—all colleges being closed against her.⁶*
13. *He allows her in Church as well as State, but a subordinate position, claiming Apostolic authority for her exclusion from the ministry, and, with some exceptions, from any public participation in the affairs of the Church.*
14. *He has created a false public sentiment, by giving to the world a different code of morals for men and women, by which moral delinquencies which exclude women from society, are not only tolerated but deemed of little account in man.*
15. *He has usurped the prerogative of Jehovah himself, claiming it as his right to assign for her a sphere of action, when that belongs to her conscience and her God.*
16. *He has endeavored, in every way that he could to destroy her confidence in her own powers, to lessen her self-respect, and to make her willing to lead a dependent and abject life.*

The call for redress, in the form of full citizenship, follows:

Now, in view of this entire disfranchisement of one-half the people of this country, their social and religious degradation,—in view of the unjust laws above mentioned, and because women do feel themselves aggrieved, oppressed, and fraudulently deprived of their most sacred rights, we insist that they have immediate admission to all the rights and privileges which belong to them as citizens of these United States.

Along with recognition of the likely resistance to be faced and a determination to press on.

In entering upon the great work before us, we anticipate no small amount of misconception, misrepresentation, and ridicule; but we shall use every instrumentality within our power to affect our object. We shall employ agents, circulate tracts, petition the State and national Legislatures, and endeavor to enlist the pulpit and the press in our behalf. We hope this Convention will be followed by a series of Conventions, embracing every part of the country.

Stanton closes with a call to end the “degradation of women” so that America can finally become the “great and virtuous nation” the founders intended.

The world has never yet seen a truly great and virtuous nation, because in the degradation of women the very fountains of life are poisoned at their source.

Date: July 19, 1848

The Demand For Voting Rights Stirs Controversy

After reading the “Sentiments” through from start to finish, Stanton opens up the floor to discuss them individually.

She finds near unanimous agreement in the hall, with one exception – the issue of women’s suffrage.



Garritt Smith (1797-1874)

This is not a surprise to her.

Just four weeks earlier, her cousin Gerritt Smith is roundly criticized when the platform of his Liberty Party calls for universal suffrage.

She is also warned by those who help with the draft that the majority of women would prefer to focus on changes related to the social and religious arenas -- and to stay away from politics. This admonition reflects the generally accepted orthodoxy that men’s intellectual superiority equips them to engage in the civic arena, while women’s innate moral superiority is best focused on home and church.

Even Lucretia Mott tries to convince Stanton to back off from the “voting rights” call:

Why Lizzie, thee will make us ridiculous.

And her almost always supportive husband seconds the caution.

You will turn the proceeding into a farce.

But with Garrison-like certainty, she will have none of this -- as evidenced by her decision to launch her list of “degradations” with being deprived of her “inalienable right to the elective franchise,” and “submitting to laws” in which she has no voice.

When the Sentiments are read aloud on Day One, the only stumbling block to outright consensus centers on reservations about female suffrage – and Stanton decides to hold this topic over for further discussion.

Time: July 19, 1848

Eleven “Resolutions” Are Then Presented

Stanton’s Sentiments lay the predicate that women have been ill-treated when it comes to coverture, employment, wage equality, suing for divorce, education, admission to the ministry – even to the erosion of their self-confidence and self-respect. With all of these violations tracing to the “false supposition of the supremacy of man.”

In lawyerly fashion, she turns during the afternoon session on July 19 from the list of grievances to a list of proposed solutions. These are presented in the form of eleven “Resolutions:”

1. *Resolved, That such laws as conflict, in any way, with the true and substantial happiness of woman, are contrary to the great precept of nature, and of no validity; for this is "superior in obligation to any other.*
2. *Resolved, That all laws which prevent woman from occupying such a station in society as her conscience shall dictate, or which place her in a position inferior to that of man, are contrary to the great precept of nature, and therefore of no force or authority.*
3. *Resolved, That woman is man's equal—was intended to be so by the Creator, and the highest good of the race demands that she should be recognized as such.*
4. *Resolved, That the women of this country ought to be enlightened in regard to the laws under which they -live, that they may no longer publish their degradation, by declaring themselves satisfied with their present position, nor their ignorance, by asserting that they have all the rights they want.*
5. *Resolved, That inasmuch as man, while claiming for himself intellectual superiority, does accord to woman moral superiority, it is pre-eminently his duty to encourage her to speak, and teach, as she has an opportunity, in all religious assemblies.*
6. *Resolved, That the same amount of virtue, delicacy, and refinement of behavior, that is required of woman in the social state, should also be required of man, and the same transgressions should be visited with equal severity on both man and woman.*
7. *Resolved, That the objection of indelicacy and impropriety, which is so often brought against woman when she addresses a public audience, comes with a very ill grace from those who encourage, by their attendance, her appearance on the stage, in the concert, or in the feats of the circus.*

8. *Resolved, That woman has too long rested satisfied in the circumscribed limits which corrupt customs and a perverted application of the Scriptures have marked out for her, and that it is time she should move in the enlarged sphere which her great Creator has assigned her.*
9. *Resolved, That it is the duty of the women of this country to secure to themselves their sacred right to the elective franchise.*
10. *Resolved, That the equality of human rights results necessarily from the fact of the identity of the race in capabilities and responsibilities.*
11. *Resolved, therefore, That, being invested by the Creator with the same capabilities, and the same consciousness of responsibility for their exercise, it is demonstrably the right and duty of woman, equally with man, to promote every righteous cause, by every righteous means; and especially in regard to the great subjects of morals and religion, it is self-evidently her right to participate with her brother in teaching them, both in private and in public, by writing and by speaking, by any instrumentalities proper to be used, and in any assemblies proper to be held; and this being a self-evident truth, growing out of the divinely implanted principles of human nature, any custom or authority adverse to it, whether modern or wearing the hoary sanction of antiquity, is to be regarded as self-evident falsehood, and at war with the interests of mankind.*

After further discussion of each Resolve, the convention adjourns for the day, with these assertions on the table:

- Women and men are created equal;
- Women deserve equal treatment under the law;
- The traditions of coverture must be abandoned;
- All other forms of female degradation must end;
- Their educational opportunities should be expanded;
- The voice of women should be heard in public;
- Their career options should extend beyond teaching and nursing;
- They should receive equal pay for equal work;
- They must be granted the “sacred right to vote.”

Time: July 20, 1848

Day Two At Seneca Falls

The audience on the second day grows, as men are invited to join in and speak up.

Their presence shifts some of the dynamics in the hall – one sign being that a man, James Mott, Lucretia’s husband, is asked to chair the meeting, given the “mixed” audience. Despite the revolutionary spirit in the air, traditional gender decorum still prevails at the moment.

The morning session is filled with various speeches, including a hopeful update about a “married women’s property act” currently being considered at a New York state constitutional convention. This reinforces the feeling that laws must be changed for the movement to ultimately succeed.

After lunch, Stanton re-reads the “Sentiments” and the “Resolves,” which leads to renewed debate about “female suffrage.” Ironically it is none other than the ex-slave Frederick Douglass who speaks up on the topic -- arguing that if he as a black man deserves the vote, then justice demands the same right for all women. His endorsement rallies enough support in the room to have the call for suffrage included in the final documents.

The closing session is again chaired by a man, Thomas McClintock, whose wife Mary has helped plan the event. Both speak to the audience. He provides a detailed review of the onerous laws of coverture currently on the books; she follows with a plea to lobby on behalf of their repeal.

With the July temperature hovering in the nineties, the convention heads into the homestretch.

Much awaited talks by the convention’s two most famous figures, Frederick Douglas and Lucretia Mott, lead into a call for attendees to step forward and sign the Sentiments and the Resolves.

As with the 1776 Declaration of Independence, the act of affirming a controversial document in writing is not taken lightly, and less than half of those present do so. Still one hundred sign on. The gender split is 68 women and 32 men; their ages range from 14 to 81 years old; 25 are Quakers; Douglass is the lone black; only one of the signers will live to 1920 when the Nineteen Amendment finally grants female suffrage.

The end of the convention brings a sigh of relief to Stanton, Motts and the other organizers, who are generally pleased with the outcomes.

What they cannot realize at the moment is how transformative their hastily assembled event will be in the long march ahead toward equality. It is not a stretch to speak of July 10-20 at Seneca Falls in the same breath as July 4 at Philadelphia. Both put a permanent stake in the ground on behalf of revolutionary change impacting the nation.

Time: 1848

Publicity About The Convention Varies Widely



Horace Greeley (1811-1872)

The Seneca Falls Convention does not go unnoticed in the popular press, first locally and then broadly. The reactions are about evenly split.

Some papers like the St. Louis *Daily Reveille* are content to simply acknowledge the event itself, without taking a stance one way or the other on the issues debated.

The flag of independence has been hoisted for the second time on this side of the Atlantic, and a solemn league and covenant has just been entered into by a convention of women at Seneca Falls, New York.

Others like *The Oneida Whig* go on the attack – while exhibiting in their rhetoric the exact brand of female “degradation” decried at the event.

This bolt is the most shocking and unnatural incident ever recorded in the history of womanity. If our ladies will insist on voting and legislating, where, gentleman, will be our dinners and our elbows? Where our domestic firesides and the holes in our stockings?

The Philadelphia *Public Ledger and Daily Transcript* is similarly clumsy in its ringing affirmation of “the ladies” who remain in their proper place, as wives and mothers, not crusaders.

A woman is nobody. A wife is everything... and a mother is, next to God, all powerful...The ladies of Philadelphia, therefore, ...are resolved to maintain their rights as Wives, Belles, Virgins, and Mothers, and not as Women

The Seneca County Courier finds the convention’s assertions startling, and their resolutions radical:

The meeting was novel in its character and the doctrines broached in it are startling to those who are wedded to the present usages and laws of society. The resolutions are of the kind called radical.”

Meanwhile, leave it to Horace Greeley, the 37 year old editor of *The New York Tribune*, to support that which so many of his colleagues consider radical. Greeley dabbles in various

utopian movements, becomes an outspoken abolitionist, adopts a vegetarian diet -- and his staff includes Margaret Fuller, one of the earliest and most articulate advocates for female equality. Greeley's editorial applauds the revolutionary spirit and proposed reforms at Seneca Falls, albeit with some reservations about suffrage:

When a sincere republican is asked to say in sober earnest what adequate reason he can give, for refusing the demand of women to an equal participation with men in political rights, he must answer, None at all...however unwise and mistaken the demand, it is but the assertion of a natural right, and such must be conceded.

Time: 1848 Forward

The Intrepid Female Agents Of Change



Frances Willard (1839-1898)

And so time will pass.

Some thirty years after the Seneca Falls Convention, Stanton recalls the aftermath in particularly painful terms:

So pronounced was the popular voice against us, in the parlor, press, and pulpit that most of the ladies who had attended the convention and signed the declaration, one by one, withdrew their names and influence and joined our persecutors. Our friends gave us the cold shoulder and felt themselves disgraced by the whole proceeding.

For her and others, the battle for gender equality proves every bit as challenging and lengthy as black emancipation.

The sage Lucretia Mott foretells this early on, with a warning to her young colleagues:

Thou wilt have hard work to prove the intellectual equality of women with men – facts being so against such an assumption in the present stage of women's development.

For those in the front lines, the fight for the rights of women follows naturally from their efforts against slavery.

The plight of America's slaves and women is by no means equivalent! But both groups suffer many of the same indignities. Both share a sense of bondage, be it to a master or a husband. Both

are systematically deprived of education and of basic legal rights and remedies. Both are often pushed beyond their physical limits, between constant pregnancies and daily labor. It is not by accident that Stanton chooses the word “degradations” to characterize the experience.

But above all else, what nineteenth century American women have in common with slaves is the stigma of being born as a lesser being – the stigma that leads Lucy Stone’s mother to apologize to her father for delivering another girl.

Fighting back from this stigma requires courage. As Anthony says:

Cautious, careful people always casting about to preserve their reputation and social standing can never bring about a reform

The litmus test of leadership falls to those brave women who take to the lecture circuit – in front of an audience including men, often appalled at the sight of a short-haired woman, dressed in a jacket and trousers, speaking up and challenging the role they have been assigned in society, by the Bible, the common law, and tradition.

The traveling routine itself is a challenge: lining up venues, often finding either tiny or hostile audiences, flopping into rented rooms, and then moving on to the next site, especially, as Amelia Bloomer reports, in the dead of winter:

My ardor in the cause of women chills at the thought of stage rides in temperatures of twenty-five below zero.

Even that most tenacious lecturer, Lucy Stone, recalls the physical and mental toll of these tours:

I am completely exhausted by long & hard field service, and my back is giving me so much pain, I am going home to rest.

For those who dare, however, the moments of public speaking are quintessentially liberating.

And once the battle is joined at Seneca Falls, the women’s rights movement picks up momentum. The lessons learned from the campaign against slavery are soon repeated – more organized conventions, the creation of “societies,” petitions to congress, pamphlets and publicity.

Stanton’s essays are a constant goad to all opponents, especially those in government. In February 1854, she makes the case to the New York state legislature:

We demand full recognition of our rights as citizens of the Empire State. We are persons; native, free born citizens; property-holders, tax-payers. We support ourselves, and, in part, your schools, churches, poor-houses, prisons, army, navy, the whole machinery of

government, and yet we have no voice in your councils. We have every qualification required by age constitution, necessary to the legal other, but the one of sex.

In 1869 the National Women Suffrage Association starts up, with Stanton as president and Anthony alongside

That same year also finds the two of them editing and publishing their own newspaper, *The Revolution*, dedicated to the cause.

As with almost all reform groups, an internal schism occurs, in this case over the 14th and 15th Amendments, which guarantee the rights of blacks, including the vote for men. Stanton and Anthony are outraged by the absence of equal entitlements for women. As Stanton tells congressmen at the time:

You now place the negro, so unjustly degraded by you, in a superior position to your own wives and mothers.

Meanwhile Lucy Stone, along with Paulina Wright Davis and her clerical sister-in-law, Antoinette Brown, are unwilling to try to derail any advances for the former slaves, even if they are disappointed by the outcome. This leads them to found a separate group, the American Women Suffrage Association. Unlike the NWSA, it allows men to participate, and tends to favor the Republican Party.

The NWSA or Stanton-Anthony wing of the movement is also inclined to more confrontational tactics, especially “storming the polls” on election days. In 1872, Stanton herself votes, before being arrested, fined, and released.

These wounds heal by 1890, and the old warriors reunite under the merged banner, National American Women Suffrage Association, with Anthony serving as president. She is seventy years old at the time, with Stanton at seventy-five and Lucy Stone at seventy-two.

Their time on stage is almost up. Stone dies in 1893, Stanton in 1902, Anthony in 1906. So none live to see women granted the vote, either in America in 1920 or in the UK in 1928.

They will, however, remain eternally together, along with Lucretia Mott and others, on the rolls of those who liberated women from bondage, always, as Stanton said, by overcoming fear and speaking the truth.

The moment we begin to fear the opinions of others and hesitate to tell the truth that is in us, and from motives of policy are silent when we should speak, the divine floods of light and life no longer flow into our souls

A next generation of leaders will carry this tradition forward – and, fittingly, it includes both Harriot Stanton Blatch (1856-1940) and Alice Stone Blackwell (1857-1950), every inch their mother's daughters.

Chapter 139 - James Knox Polk's Consequential Presidency

Dates: March 4, 1845 – March 5, 1849

Polk Achieves The Goals He Set For Himself

As time runs out on Polk's presidency, his stamina is dwindling and, despite pleas from supporters, he is not about to try for a second term.

Few will miss his temperament which lacks the charisma, spontaneity and the out-going nature of his sponsor, Andrew Jackson. Instead his manner is typically described as guarded-to-aloof, and his work-style as nothing short of compulsive. What the two Tennessee men share, however, is the capacity to accomplish their agendas – to match talk with decisive action.

Polk actually completes many of the former President's top priorities, especially territorial expansion.

While Jackson longed to acquire the western land owned by Mexico and possessed the warrior credentials to follow through, he backed off for fear of the disruption to national unity that might follow a war. Polk sees some risks here, but charges forward anyway, backed by the popular cry of "manifest destiny."

In the end, his efforts in Texas, Oregon and the Mexican Cession tack on 41% of the nation's total land, and even in the last months of office he is still trying to pry Cuba loose from the Spanish. Many criticize his "war of aggression," but America reaches from sea to shining sea as he leaves office.

Expansion Of America's Land Mass

Year	Land Gained	From	Via	Square Miles	% US
1784	13 colonies to Miss R	Britain	War	888,811	29%
1803	Louisiana Territory	France	Buy	827,192	27
1819	Florida	Spain	Buy	72,003	2
1845	Texas Territories	Mexico	Annex	390,144	13
1846	Oregon Territories	Britain	Buy	285,580	10
1848	Mexico Cession	Mexico	War	529,017	18
1853	Gadsden Purchase	Mexico	Buy	29,640	1
	Total (48 states)			3,022,387	100%

Polk's impact on the economy and the financial system is also sizable.

His move to a lower tariff not only enhances free trade and exports, but also signals the manufacturing sector's ability to now hold its own without "protection." The Independent Treasury ends Jackson's war on the Federal Banks and stabilizes the currency. Annual growth in GDP averages in double-digits, and the lucky strike discovery of gold in California will help propel future gains.

Despite all these advances, the downside of Polk's term is that the aftermath of the war intensifies the North-South impasse over the future of slavery.

As a plantation owner himself, Polk is well aware that the Southern economy rests on expanding slavery, and that the firebrands will demand it be allowed in the new Mexican territories. But he also remains confident that, if resistance occurs, his Democratic Party coalition will again work out whatever accommodations are needed.

In this, he is proven wrong.

The curse on his administration is the Wilmot Proviso, proposed by a fellow House Democrat, and calling for a flat ban on the spread of slavery into all new land acquired in the west. Polk is able to rely on the Senate to temporarily palliate this damage, but the unity which has driven his party to dominate federal politics begins to slip away on his watch – and it will not return.

The result is a another dramatic restructuring of America’s political parties that splits the Democrats, sees the advent of the Free Soil movement, and leads on to the dissolution of the Whigs and the eventual creation of the Republican Party and its victory in 1860.

Another defining characteristic of Polk’s term is the blossoming of various social reform movements associated with the Second Great Awakening. Chief among them are much more organized resistance in the North to slavery and the early efforts by American women to achieve gender equality.

Taken together, events during Polk’s single term are extremely consequential and will have profound effects on shaping the future course of American history.

As with many presidents, the challenges presented have been all-consuming, and he claims to be “exceedingly relieved” to leave office.

Time: June 15, 1849

An Early Death Follows

His departure begins with a farewell tour across the south where he is welcomed throughout by large and approving crowds. In New Orleans, however, he begins to suffer fatigue and diarrhea, and is forced to retire to his estate in Nashville, for the final three weeks of his life.

There he is gripped by cholera and his condition steadily deteriorates. On his deathbed he is given the Methodist baptism delayed during his childhood, before succumbing on June 15, 1849. He is only fifty-three years old at the time.



Sarah Childress Polk (1803-1891)

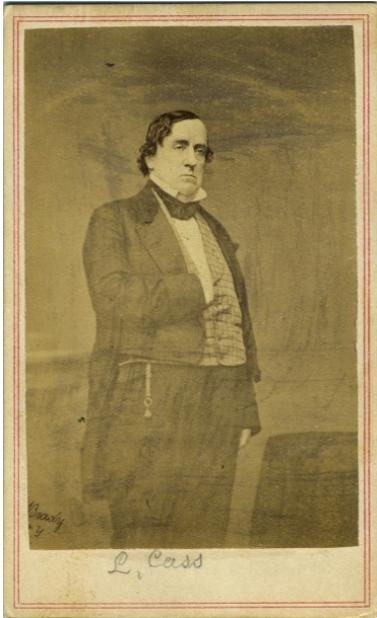
Polk's wife, Sarah, will survive her husband by 42 years, living at *Polk Place*, faithfully attending her Presbyterian church, and dressing daily in black clothes to mourn his memory. While childless, she inherits his 53 slaves, with the stipulation they be freed upon her death.

When the Civil War breaks out, Sarah declares herself a "neutral."

Chapter 140 - The Two Major Parties Select Their Candidates For The 1848 Race

Time: May 22, 1848

The Democrats Nominate Cass



Lewis Cass (1782-1866)

On May 22, 1848, ten weeks after the Mexican War Treaty is signed, the Democrats convene in Baltimore to pick a presidential nominee to succeed Polk, who keeps his promise of serving only one term.

Delegates from all 30 states are present, with the total count evenly split between northerners and southerners.

As expected, the issue of “slavery in the new western territories” is front and center for all.

Its divisive character is evident right away in a floor fight over seating the New York delegation, with both the Barnburners and the Hunkers claiming to represent the state. After heated debate, the convention decides, by a margin of 126-125, on a compromise, with each faction awarded 18 votes.

This results in the first “walk-out,” with the Barnburners exiting the convention to explore an alliance with other “free soil” groups, across parties, who oppose the spread of slavery.

The second walk-out occurs after Fire-Eater William Yancey presents the “Alabama Platform” proposals to the delegates, and they are voted down by a wide 216-36 margin. In protest, the hot-tempered Yancey leaves the hall.

As the actual balloting begins, it’s clear that no Southern dark horse, like Polk in 1844, will win the day.

Instead, three Northerners are in the running.

One is Supreme Court Justice, Levi Woodbury, ex-Senator and Governor of New Hampshire, and a solid Jackson man. His cause, however, is hurt by his role as Secretary of the Treasury during the Bank Panic of 1837 and the following recession.

A second contender is Polk’s Secretary of State, James Buchanan, of Pennsylvania, who received a trickle of votes in the 1844 convention. The President comes to regard Buchanan as self-serving, untrustworthy and lacking in good judgment. His handling of the Oregon dispute almost leads to war with Britain; he tries to torpedo Scott’s plan to conquer Mexico City; and he plays politics with the final peace treaty, attempting to hide his early vocal opposition to acquiring any new land from the war. Despite these gaffes, Buchanan’s “resume” is sufficient for him to make a second run at the nomination.

As in 1844, however, the early front runner is again Senator from Michigan, Lewis Cass.

The 68 year old Cass is first off a tried and true Democrat, who has served in Jackson’s cabinet, consistently backs Polk, favors annexing all of Mexico, and never wavers on the rights of slave owners. On top of that, he is known forever as “General Cass,” conqueror of Tecumseh and “hero of the War of 1812” – a legacy the party hopes will allow him to offset the popular appeal enjoyed by the potential Whig military candidates, Taylor and Scott.

The voting favors Cass from the start, and he wins handily on the fourth ballot.

Voting For Democratic Party Nomination

Candidate	1	2	3	4
Lewis Cass	125	133	156	179
Levi Woodbury	53	56	53	38
James Buchanan	55	54	39	33
John Calhoun	9	0	0	0
Others	9	9	5	5
Abstaining	39	38	37	35

His running mate will be General William O. Butler, whose military career has spanned the War of 1812 through the Mexican War, where he is second in command to Taylor and wounded at the Battle of Monterrey. Butler is from Kentucky, and has served two terms in the U.S. House (1839-43) before joining Cass on the ticket.

In the end, the nomination of Cass from Michigan is symbolic of what becomes the Democrat’s search for a North-South presidential compromise -- something that will be repeated in 1852 with Franklin Pierce and in 1856 with James Buchanan.

All are Northern men who embrace Southern sympathies in their drive to win the presidency.

Over time they will all share the same epithet in the Northern press, that of “Doughfaces” – men lacking in firm principles, as pliable as bread dough when it comes to standing up to the South on tough issues like slavery.

Time: 1848

The Whigs Face Opportunities And Challenges Going Into 1848

The Whigs are once again optimistic as they look ahead to the 1848 election, while still having internal policy issues on slavery needing resolution.

As a party, they have added 37 House seats to their side in 1846, giving them a slim 116-112 majority. Twenty of these pick-ups come from New York and Pennsylvania, where the Wilmot Proviso garners widespread public support.

But Wilmot's proposed ban is a two-edged sword, even for the Whigs, where 17 of their 19 Southern House members vote "no" on August 8, 1846, when it is attached to Polk's initial Appropriations Bill.

The strategic question for the Whigs is therefore how to leverage the popularity of the Wilmot ban in the North without alienating their membership in the South.

One advantage they have over the Democrats is that much of their party strength lies in the upper South rather than in the hard-core cotton belt. The Border states of Kentucky, Maryland and Delaware, together with Tennessee, account for 7 of their 21 senators, and 16 representatives. The old South states of North Carolina, Virginia, and Georgia add 3 more in the Senate and 16 in the House.

What these Whig-heavy states have in common is a less cotton/slave-centric economy, a long-standing commitment to the Union, and a conservative hesitancy toward any talk of secession.

The Southern Whigs also boast many established congressional leaders -- men like Senators John J. Crittenden of Kentucky, John Clayton of Delaware, Reverdy Johnson of Maryland, and John Bell of Tennessee -- who share personal reservations about slavery and do their best to moderate threats from the emerging Southern "Fire-Eaters."

In the House they are joined by the likes of the Virginians, John Minor Botts and William Preston, Daniel Barringer and George Badger of North Carolina, and two exceptional Georgia Whigs, Alexander Stephens and Robert Toombs, who will persevere through many ups and downs in search of compromises to protect the Union.

Southern States Where Whigs Have Strengths In 1848

Border	House	Senate	“Influentials”
Kentucky	6	2	JJ Crittenden, Charles Morehead
Maryland	4	2	Reverdy Johnson, James Pearce
Delaware	1	2	John Clayton
Southeast			
North Carolina	6	2	Daniel Barringer, George Badger
Georgia	4	1	Alex Stephens, Robert Toombs
Virginia	6	0	John Minor Botts, William Preston
Southwest			
Tennessee	5	1	John Bell
Alabama	2	0	
Louisiana	1	1	

Time: June 7, 1848

The Whigs Meet In Philadelphia To Choose A Nominee



Thurlow Weed (1797-1872)

Two weeks after the Democrats nominate Lewis Cass, Philadelphia hosts its first national convention, as the Whigs pour into the “Chinese Museum” venue on Ninth Street, so-called for its historical display of eastern artifacts.

What’s on the mind of the delegates is finally electing a President who will put into practice the “American System” principles that Henry Clay laid out some twenty years ago.

They come close in 1840, until General Harrison, “Old Tippecanoe,” dies one month after his inauguration, only to be replaced by the “turncoat” Tyler, at heart a thoroughgoing Virginia Democrat. Their disappointment is repeated in 1844, when Clay, making his third run, loses a tight race to Polk.

But circumstances in 1848 appear much more hopeful. Unity within the Democratic Party has been severely tested by the Wilmot controversy, and the sitting president, Polk, has given way to a less formidable foe in Cass. Victory should be in store, if the party can nominate the right candidate.

With Clay’s influence waning, the two leading strategists for the Whigs are Kentucky Senator John Crittenden, and journalist, Thurlow Weed, who controls party politics in New York. In

1830 Weed launched the Anti-Mason Party to bring down Andrew Jackson, and his drive to unseat the Democrats remains undiminished. Together the two men will play the kingmaker role at the convention.

Crittenden himself is regarded by many as a possible candidate, but he dismisses the idea. Clay remains a favorite, but lacks momentum after prior defeats. Senator John Clayton sparks interest, but his tiny home state of Delaware works against him. A few back Supreme Court Justice John McLean of Ohio, while Webster's decision to remain in Tyler's administration eliminates him.

This leaves two men in the spotlight – the recent war heroes, Generals Winfield Scott and Zachary Taylor.

The Democrats fear Scott more than Taylor, and Polk acts to diminish his reputation and deprive him of getting the nomination. He does so by initiating a “court of inquiry,” charging that Scott “compromised military operations” in Mexico by dealing directly with Santa Anna to end the war. Future war heroes such as Robert E. Lee and George McClellan decry Polk's cynical ploy and Scott is acquitted – but not before the Whig convention is over.

All eyes then turn to Zachary Taylor – still a very uncertain candidate in the months leading up to the convention.

Time: June 7, 1848

Taylor Is Chosen On The Fourth Ballot

Two questions have surrounded Taylor from the beginning: does he want to be President and is he really a Whig?

His own words, recorded soon after his February 1847 victory at Buena Vista, seem to rule out a run.

On the subject of the presidency...under no circumstances have I any aspirations for the office, nor do I have the vanity to consider myself qualified.

In fact, since departing Mexico in November 1847, Taylor has been happily retired at *Cypress Grove Plantation*, one of several he owns around Baton Rouge, Louisiana. He lives modestly in a small cottage, spending his days mixing easily with townspeople and overseeing the labor of his slaves, which number over one hundred.

When asked about politics, he claims that he is an Independent, not a Whig, and admits that he has never voted before in an election.

Despite these “limitations,” Thurlow Weed is certain that Taylor will win, if nominated. Like Harrison, he is a military hero, a southerner, a slave holder, and one who believes in the sanctity of the Union. Moreover he arrives on stage with no political baggage, no public positions on controversial issues like the Wilmot Proviso, nothing liable to offend one side or the other.

Still Weed recognizes that Taylor must publicly embrace the Whig Party prior to the Philadelphia convention.

He communicates this to Colonel William Bliss, a military aide to the General, who sends a contingent to Baton Rouge in late April 1848 to extract the needed pledge. It comes in the form of what could only be characterized as a tepid commitment:

I reiterate what I have often said...I am a Whig but not an ultra Whig. If elected I would not be the president of a party (but) would endeavor to act independent of party domination and should feel bound to administer the Government untrammelled by party schemes.

Along with a promise to insure a strong banking system, this is enough for Weed and Crittenden to proceed, and they rally a diverse band of supporters for Taylor. Included here are seven congressmen known as the “Young Indians,” including Abraham Lincoln and two Georgians, Robert Toombs and Alexander Stephens. Endorsements also appear from non-Whigs, the General’s son-in-law, Jefferson Davis, a Democrat, and the leader of the Nativist American Party, Lewis Levin. Even Scott writes glowingly about Taylor in a September 16 note to one D.F. Miller:

I know General Taylor to be one of the best citizens in our land. In point of integrity he can have no superior. His firmness of purpose is equally remarkable, and I consider him a man of excellent sense and sound judgement. He has always been known as a republican in principles and manners....

Crittenden serves as Taylor’s floor manager on June 7 and steers his way through a variety of derailers: a motion to force the nominee to obey the party platform; a denunciation from a Massachusetts delegate that the General would “continue the rule of slavery for four more years;” and the demand by backers of other candidates to register their preferences in the early balloting.

In the end, Taylor leads from the first vote forward. Clay is shown the respect he deserves, before his support drifts to the two generals. On the fourth reckoning, Taylor goes over the top.

Whig Nomination For President - 1848

Candidate	1	2	3	4
Taylor	111	118	133	171
Clay	97	86	74	32
Scott	43	49	54	63
Webster	22	22	17	14
Clayton	4	3	1	0
McLean	2	1	0	0

Time: June 7, 1848

Millard Fillmore Is The Nominee For Vice President

With Taylor heading the ticket, the Whigs turn to selecting a running mate.

They have learned from the John Tyler fiasco of 1840 that their choice needs to be certifiably Whiggish in regard to his political beliefs and history – a litmus test that is doubly true this time given uncertainties surrounding Taylor.

Out of fourteen names teed up at the convention, four are given serious consideration – two New Yorkers, ex-Governor William Seward and State Comptroller, Millard Fillmore; the textile tycoon from Massachusetts, Abbot Lawrence; and former Treasury Secretary under Harrison/Tyler, Thomas Ewing of Ohio.

Ewing is supremely qualified, but is eliminated by a dirty trick in the form of a false assertion on the floor that he wants his name withdrawn from consideration.

Thurlow Weed is forever firmly behind Seward, with both regarding Fillmore as a serious threat to their control over New York state politics. Seward also opposes much of what Fillmore has come to represent: lukewarm opposition to slavery, fierce anti-Catholic and anti-immigrant attacks, and a lack of curiosity, depth and decisiveness regarding national affairs.

At the same time, the energetic Seward has relatively little interest in serving as Vice-President and, along with Weed, throws his support behind Lawrence.

Lawrence, however, faces sharp divisions within his own Massachusetts delegation. Daniel Webster never forgives him for backing Clay for the 1840 nomination, while the anti-slavery “Conscience Whigs” regard him as far too aligned with Southern cotton interests, who supply his mills.

With Ewings out by deception and Seward by intent, the race comes down to Lawrence versus Fillmore.

Fillmore has climbed out of poverty as a youth to a successful legal career, four terms in the U.S. House, the founding of Buffalo University, and his current position as Comptroller of New York, overseeing accounting practices and financial reporting for state government. He is intent on returning to the national stage, and has campaigned over a year for the Vice-Presidency.

He is also well organized at the convention, and offers the delegates a Northerner who appears to be mildly against the spread of slavery, thus balancing Polk, the Southern slave owner.

The first ballot is tight, but Fillmore pulls away on the second and wins the position he is after – along with a destiny that will surpass his wildest ambition.

Ballot Results For Vice-President

Candidate	1	2
Fillmore	115	173
Lawrence	109	87
Others	51	

Chapter 141 - A Host Of Splinter Groups Threaten Party Unity

Time: 1848

The Southern Fire-Eaters

Despite efforts by the two major political parties to achieve unity in 1848, both conventions end with a host of angry delegates looking for alternative policies or candidates.

On the Democratic side, the Southern Fire-eaters are particularly dismayed by the results on May 22 in Baltimore.

In response to the devastating threat inherent in the Wilmot Proviso, they are left with a Northerner, Lewis Cass, heading the ticket, and “popular sovereignty” as their best hope for expanding slavery into the west.



John C. Calhoun (1782-1850)

This is not enough for the likes of William Yancey of Alabama, the Virginians, Robert Hunter and James Mason, Jefferson Davis of Mississippi, David Atchison of Missouri, and others who now join John C. Calhoun in the search to defend their wealth and way of life.

Together they begin to really dig in behind the “legal guarantees” they see in the 1787 Constitution, especially the right of citizens to transport their “property” (in slaves) to all new territories and existing states.

This assertion will become a central part of their expansion strategy for the west – to establish the presence of slaves on the land in advance of any attempts to ban their presence through legislative actions.

In addition to the economic threats, Southern Fire-eaters are galled by what they regard as increasing attacks on their personal integrity and values.

Constant goading by abolitionists like Garrison provoke sharp, often violent reactions, as do jibes in Congress from Anti-Slavery Society petitions and from provocateurs like Giddings of Ohio and Hale of New Hampshire, who openly refer to their region as the “Slavocracy.”

These attacks prompt the search for new rationales in defense of slavery.

Among these is the assertion that slaves in the South experience better treatment than white men and women working for wages across the North.

The (Northern) laborer must work or starve. He is more of a slave than the Negro because he works longer and harder for less allowance than the slave and has no holiday, because the cares of life with him begin when its labors end. He has no liberty, and not a single right.

Needless to say, this comparison is roundly rejected across the North, and the “free soil” movement is quick to respond, saying that it “dishonors” white men and the “dignity” of their labor.

Time: 1848

The Van Buren Loyalists



Martin Van Buren (1782-1862)

Other Democrats dissatisfied with the Cass-Butler ticket are the “Barnburners,” ready to bring down the party structure to have their own way.

Within this faction, the most outspoken are the Van Buren loyalists, including New Yorkers like Senator John Dix, Van Buren’s son, “Prince” John, and Governor Silas Wright, along with Senators John Niles of Connecticut, Thomas Hart Benton of Missouri, and the Massachusetts’s lawyer and political insider, Benjamin Butler.

These and others have still not forgotten the 1844 convention in Baltimore, supposedly destined to re-nominate ex-President Van Buren, who has devoted his entire life to building the Democratic machine.

Instead a carefully orchestrated anti-Van Buren campaign led by Southerners, including Andrew Jackson, and the ever ambitious Pennsylvanian, James Buchanan, eventually hands the nomination to the Tennessee slave-owner, James Polk.

This outcome is accompanied by fistfights on the floor and vows, especially by Van Buren’s son, that “scores would be settled” in due course.

The chance for retribution comes after the 1848 convention.

The personal animosities that prompt it are masked under a theme put forth by Dix and Niles – to the effect that the time has come for the Free States to assume “that control in the affairs of the government to which they are entitled.”

The key weapon in this counter-attack is, of course, Martin Van Buren himself.

“The Little Magician” may be sixty-six year old, but he will soon jump back into the political arena as one last shot at the presidency comes his way.

Time: 1848

The Wilmot Democrats

The other wing of the “Barnburner” faction is driven more by their commitment to the Wilmot Proviso banning slavery in the land acquired from Mexico, than to personal revenge for Van Buren.

Among this group are the two men most associated with introducing the amendment in the first place: David Wilmot from Pennsylvania, and Preston King, his house colleague, from New York.

But their reasons for backing the ban differ sharply.

Wilmot’s stated objective is to keep the new land free of plantation slavery in order to provide the best possible setting for white settlers to realize the American Dream.

For King, the goal is different. Along with Congressman Jacob Brinkerhoff of Ohio and Maine Senator Hannibal Hamlin, he regards the ban as an important step in ending the curse of slavery.

Ironically these two contrary streams of thought will soon flow together into the “free soil” movement.

Time: 1848

The “Conscience Whigs”



Charles Sumner (1811-1874)

On the Whig side, the nomination on June 7 of another Southern slave-holder, Zachary Taylor, is beyond the pale for many delegates, most notably a contingent from Massachusetts who will go on to play key roles in the emancipation movement.

Their most vocal member is the thirty-seven year old Boston lawyer, Charles Sumner, a literally towering presence at six feet four inches. He graduates from Harvard, mingles with the New England intelligentsia, and enlists in the anti-slavery crusade in 1845 alongside Horace Mann, both trying to end school segregation.

Sumner is joined in his criticism of the Mexican War and of Zachary Taylor by two other Massachusetts men whose political careers to date have been limited to their home state legislatures.

One is Henry Wilson, impoverished as a child and self-educated, who apprentices as a shoemaker in Natick, before launching his own successful business manufacturing “brogans,” and then drifting into politics as a Whig. Known as the “Natick Cobbler,” Wilson dedicates his life to the abolitionist cause after witnessing slave families being broken apart and sold off to traders on a visit to Washington

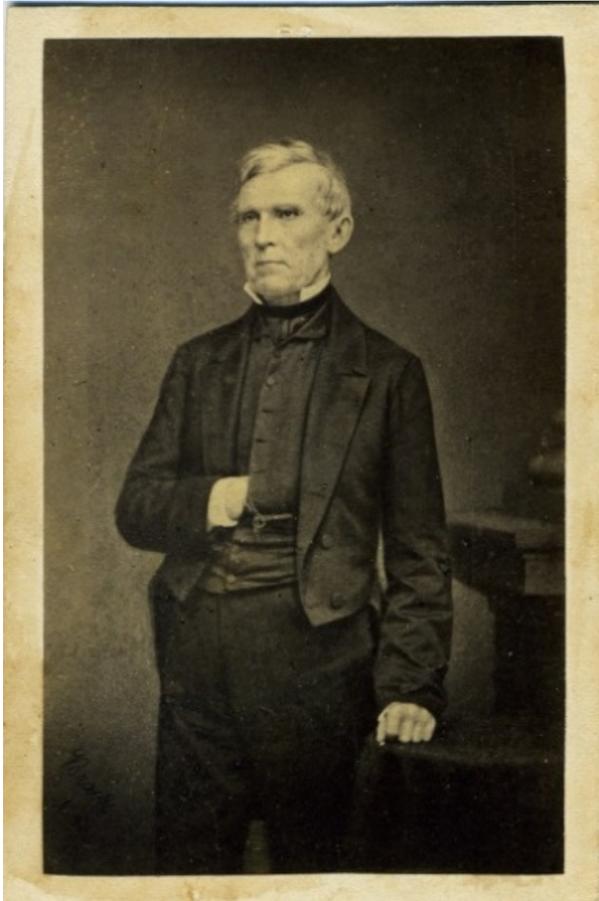
The third key member of what becomes known as the Massachusetts’ “Conscience Whigs” is Charles Francis Adams, the only surviving child of President John Quincy Adams, and one who follows in his footsteps – from Harvard to politics to eventual diplomatic service and a lifelong dedication to wiping out the moral stain of slavery.

These “Conscience Whigs” are opposed in their home state by “Cotton Whigs,” conservatives aligned with Daniel Webster, among them ex-Governor Edward Everett, and Speaker of the U.S. House, Robert Winthrop. Together they fear that aggressive attacks on Southern slavery will threaten their local textile manufacturers and might lead on to the break-up of the Union.

But for the “Conscience Whigs,” even passive support for Taylor is out of the question, and like the Van Buren Democrats, they will soon be drawn toward the “free soil” movement.

Time: 1848

The Devoted Southern Unionists



John J. Crittenden (1787-1863)

The Whig conservatives of Massachusetts are not alone in fearing that the two party conventions have failed to address the sectional conflicts over slavery amplified by the Mexican War.

Despite decades of political infighting, both Democrats and Whigs have always come together around Andrew Jackson's famous 1830 toast/dictate during the Nullification crisis:

Our Union – it must be preserved!

Historically the burden to achieve this outcome has fallen on Henry Clay, the “Great Compromiser,” whose task has been to conjure up a sectional accommodation and then sell it to the hard core Northerner, Daniel Webster, and the Southerner, John C. Calhoun. By now, however, the stars of this “great triumphirate” are fading -- with Calhoun about to be dead in March 1850, Clay in June 1852 and Webster in October 1852.

Still the impulse to Union burns bright in 1848 – and again it is the border state Whigs who take the lead.

They are championed by sixty-one year old John J. Crittenden of Kentucky and three other senior Whig Senators, all fifty-two years old – John Bell of Tennessee, John Clayton of Delaware and Maryland's Reverdy Johnson.

Joining them are younger House Whigs from the old South – two influential Georgians, Robert Toombs (38) and Alexander Stephens (36), and the Virginian, John Minor Botts (46).

Their challenge lies in reaching out on behalf of the Union to other Southern Democrats, especially those drifting toward the hard line positions of the Fire-Eaters, in order to protect their economic interests.

One of their key allies across the aisle will be Howell Cobb, a rising force in Democratic politics. Cobb is a Phi Beta Kappa graduate of the University of Georgia, a lawyer and a slave-holder, who is elected to the House in 1843 at age twenty-eight on his way to becoming Speaker in 1849 and then serving as Treasury Secretary under James Buchanan. For the next decade, Cobb will work tirelessly with the border Whig contingent to avoid Southern secession – before finally giving up in frustration.

Time: 1848

The Abolitionists And The Xenophobes

During this period of political turmoil and restructuring, two other factions hover outside the gravitational pull of the Democratic and Whig parties in 1848.

One group, the Abolitionists, are devoted to freeing the slaves and assimilating them into American society -- although they too are now divided on how quickly and how best to make this happen.

The Garrison backers continue to reject political means in favor of grass roots activism, while the Liberty Party wing, now headed by Gerrit Smith and Salmon Chase, seek public office and new legislation.

The other floating group, the xenophobic Native American Party, is predicated on protecting the interests of white Protestants born in the United States.

To accomplish this end, they hope to stem the growing tide of immigrants coming into America in the 1840's, while extending the naturalization timeline for recent arrivals. They also intend to place severe restrictions on all Roman Catholics already in the country, arguing that their loyalty is to the Pope and not to the Constitution.

Advocates within both camps hope to build a credible political party, but have had only narrow successes so far.

Their path to influence will demand that they attach themselves to a more mainstream movement in the end.

Chapter 142 - Salmon Chase's New "Free Soil Party" Portends America's "Third Political System"

Time: 1846 – 1848

Chase Spots A New Path To Defeating The Democrats And Ending Slavery

Emerging from all this political turmoil comes the figure of Salmon Portland Chase, the Cincinnati lawyer and abolitionist who helps found the Liberty Party in 1840 and now sees the opportunity to simultaneously defeat the Democrats, launch his own political career and end slavery.

Chase recognizes that while abolition will require political action, the vast majority of Americans regard blacks as both inferior and menacing, have little interest in their freedom, and are adverse to the prospect of assimilating them into white society.

The weak voting record for the Liberty Party (only 2% in 1844) also proves to him that abolition is not a stand-alone issue capable of garnering widespread popular support – especially if the outcome is perceived to disrupt the Union.

Those who hope to end slavery must therefore attach themselves to a "larger idea," one having broad national appeal.

He spots this opportunity in 1846, when a majority in the House vote in favor of the Wilmot Proviso.

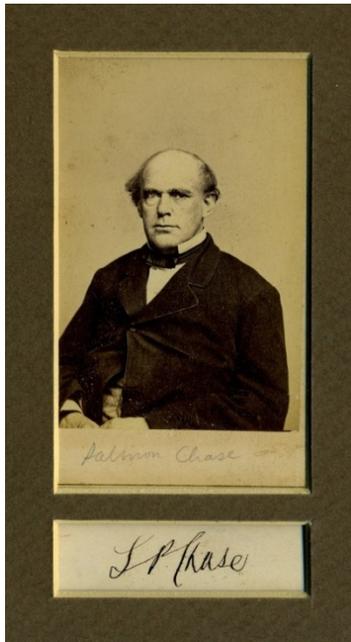
For Chase, the Proviso signals widespread public support for a new Manifest Destiny vision of America to the west – one that offers a chance to start over and eliminate all prior barriers to "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness" for white citizens.

Better yet for Chase the abolitionist, the key barrier in Wilmot's sights is plantation slavery.

The House vote signals that plantation slavery must be banned in the Mexican Cession territories for free white men to realize the American Dream.

Such a ban will help the western settlers – sure to begin as farmers – succeed economically. It will eliminate the chance for wealthy plantation owners to outbid them for the best parcels of land, and, because of slave labor, to undercut the prices they can charge for their crops.

Moreover the Wilmot backers argue that the absence of all black slaves and their masters will have a profound positive effect on the quality of the white society that develops in the west.



Salmon P. Chase (1808-1873)

For one thing, white settlers will be relieved of the perpetual fear associated with slave uprisings.

They will also avoid the decadent two-tiered social structure Northerners have come to associate with the South --with “one class of citizens accustomed to rule and the other to obey.”

Herein lies the “larger idea” that Chase has been after in his political quest. Ironically it offers a way to build broad opposition to slavery *not* by focusing on the suffering it causes the Africans, but rather on its negative impact on the hopes and prospects of the white population!

To convert these insights into action, however, will require a series of clever moves to bring all of the dissidents – from the Barnburners to the Conscience Whigs, the Abolitionist wings and the Wilmot supporters – together in one new national party.

Chase begins this task soon after the Wilmot vote by seeking consensus among those in the anti-slavery movement, men like Charles Sumner, Joshua Giddings, Preston King and Charles Francis Adams. From there he begins to reach out to the Van Buren Loyalists and those touting “free soil for free white labor.”

Time: August 9, 1848

A Free Soil Party Platform Is Passed

Chase’s efforts bear fruit on August 9-10, 1848, when upwards of 20,000 supporters from 17 states pour into the city of Buffalo to give birth to The Free Soil Party.

The tenor of the August 9-10 convention is reminiscent of the revivalist meetings that swept America in the 1830’s. It is held in the open air Tent In The Park, and features a series of charismatic speakers who attempt to resurrect the spirit of 1776 and enlist their audience in the crusade against the spread of plantation slavery.

The proceedings are widely reported, thanks to one Oliver Dyer, a 24 year old expert in shorthand, who provides a “phonographic record” of the events to newspapers across the country.

By nine o'clock the concourse was immense. Every available seat and foothold on the ground was occupied. The Ohio delegation came into the tent with banners flying and were received with great cheering...and exhortations and expressions of determination to 'put the thing through, no giving up, no compromises, free soil and nothing else.'

Mr. Polk of Connecticut offers this sentiment: 'let men of the deepest principle, manifest the most profound condescension, and exercise the deepest humility today, and posterity will honor them for the deed.'

Chase is assigned the task of preparing a platform centered on Wilmot's ban of slavery in the west – without offering “justifications” that could prove divisive. The result is a sixteen point platform which sets the Free Soil Party in stark contrast to the wishes of the Slave Power.

1. *We do plant ourselves upon the national platform of freedom in opposition to the sectional platform of slavery.*
2. *That slavery...depends upon state law which cannot be repealed or modified by the federal government.*
3. *That the provisos of Jefferson...clearly show that it was the settled policy of the nation not to extend, nationalize or encourage, but to limit, localize and discourage slavery...and to this policy the government ought to return.*
4. *That our fathers...denied to the federal government a constitutional power to deprive any person of life, liberty or property, without due legal process.*
5. *That Congress has no more power to make a slave than to make a king; no more power to establish slavery than to establish a monarchy.*
6. *That it is the duty of the federal government to relieve itself of all responsibility for the existence or continuance of slavery.*
7. *That the only safe means of preventing the extension of slavery...is to prohibit its extension in all Territories by an act of Congress.*
8. *That our calm but final answer to the slave power is no more slave states or slave territories. let the soil of our domain be kept free for the hardy pioneers of our land and the oppressed and banished of other lands seeking homes of comfort in the new world.*
9. *That the committee of eight bill in the Senate (proposing extension of the 36'30" MO line) was no compromise but an absolute surrender of non-slaveholders...by several senators... who voted in open violation of the will of their constituents. There must be no more compromises with slavery; if made they must be repealed.*
10. *That we demand freedom and established institutions for our brethren in Oregon now exposed to hardships by the reckless hostility of the slave power to the establishment of free government for free territories.*
- 11-15. *That we support...cheap postage, a retrenchment of federal patronage, river and harbor improvements as needed, the free grant to actual settlers of reasonable portions of public lands, the earliest practical payment of the national debt, a tariff of duties to defray the expenses of the federal government and pay annual installments against the debt and the interest thereon.*

16. *That we inscribe on our banner “Free Soil, Free Speech, Free Labor, And Free Men,” and under it we will fight on and fight forever until a triumphant victory shall reward our exertions.*

The platform avoids the controversial themes associated with the abolitionists – moral condemnation of slave holders; immediate emancipation of all slaves even in the South; assimilation of the ex-slaves into white society.

It focuses not on freeing the slaves from their misery, but on freeing white men from the diminishing effects of living with slavery in their midst.

As Walt Whitman, convention delegate and editor of *The Brooklyn Eagle*, puts it:

The workingmen of the North, East and West, in defense of their rights, and their honor, declare that their calling shall not be sunk to the miserable level of Negro slaves.

The argument here is that the founders, including Jefferson, recognized that slavery threatens the dignity and supremacy of white America; they intended to limit, not expand it; and the time is now to carry out their wishes.

These sentiments fall short of what Chase and other abolitionists ideally hoped to achieve.

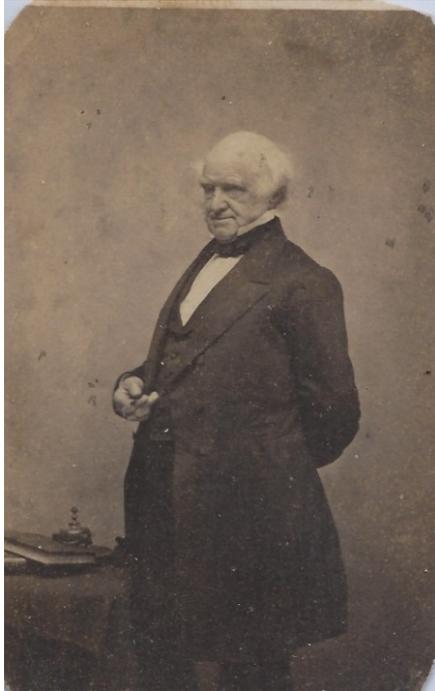
Upon reading the platform, Lloyd Garrison first calls it another example of “white-manism”-- but then, upon further reflection, says that it signals “the beginning of the end” for the slave power, and vows to drive the movement “to a higher ground.”

Chase, the astute politician, sees it the same way. It is a first step, giving average Americans a middle ground they seek between the Slave Power’s insistence on spreading slavery and the abolitionist’s demand for immediate emancipation.

The “Free Soil” formula is simple: pen the slaves up in the old South; let those who support the institution deal with the problems; and wait for the institution to wither away.

Time: August 10, 1848

The Free Soil Party Nominates Martin Van Buren



Martin Van Buren (1782-1862)

When the time comes for the convention to select a nominee both wings of the new party offer candidates.

The abolitionists rally around Senator John Hale of New Hampshire, who has earlier been chosen by The Liberty Party as its 1848 nominee. Along with Joshua Giddings of Ohio, Hale has led the drive in Congress against the Slave Power. He opposes the Texas Annexation and the Mexican War, and even stands along in opposing resolutions honoring Generals Taylor and Scott.

The final nod, however, goes to the Van Buren Loyalists and to those backing Wilmot on behalf of white settlers, not black slaves.

Their candidate is none other than Martin Van Buren himself, ready at sixty-six to reclaim his rightful place in the White House.

Free Soil Nomination Results

Candidates	Votes
Van Buren	244
Hale	183
Giddings	23
Charles F. Adams	13
Others	4
Total	467

The choice for Vice-President, by a unanimous vote, is Charles F. Adams, son of President JQ Adams and a noted Conscience Whig.

When the convention closes, the delegates exit Buffalo with great optimism.

They have a platform that offers western settlers a chance to prosper without the barriers of plantation slavery, and one that serves the end goals of the abolitionists. Their marching banner – “Free Soil, Free Speech, Free Labor and Free Men” – rings true to their intent, and comes across as tempered, non-radical, and likely to resonate broadly in the North and West.

And they have a well-known nationally respected figure in Martin Van Buren at the top of their ticket.

This may or may not be enough to contend with the Democrats and the Whigs, but at least it represents a solid start in that direction.

While the Free Soilers will not prevail in 1848, it will open the door to the “Third Party System” in America vis its 1856 offspring, the Republicans.

Chapter 143 - Zachary Taylor's Term

Time: Fall 1848

Six Parties Enter The 1848 Race

By mid-August 1848, a total of six different political conventions have been held to select five candidates to succeed Polk.

Conventions Held For The 1848 Race

Dates	Party	Nominee
Sept. 10-11, 1847	Native American	Zachary Taylor
October 20	Liberty Party (1st)	John Hale
May 22, 1848	Democrats	Lewis Cass
June 2	Liberty Party (alt.)	Gerritt Smith
June 7	Whigs	Zachary Taylor
Aug 9-10	Free Soil	Martin Van Buren

Each gathering is marked by internal bickering and residual uncertainty about both the nominees and the platforms that emerge.

At the two extremes are the growing number of fire-eater Southerners and the awkward combination of Wilmot-men and Abolitionists. In between are the Unionists, forever seeking compromise.

Dissenting Views Across The Political Spectrum In 1848

Divisions Within The Democrats	Seeking	Key Proponents
* Southern Fire-Eaters	Iron clad guarantees on the expansion of slavery	Calhoun, Yancey, Davis, Hunter, Mason, Atchison
* Van Buren Loyalists	Revenge against the South for stealing the 1844 nomination	John Van Buren, Dix, Wright, Niles, Butler
* Wilmot Democrats	A flat-out ban slavery in all new western territories	Wilmot wing and King wing
Divisions Within The Whigs		
* Conscience Whigs	An alternative to the Southern slave-holder, Taylor	Sumner, Wilson, Charles Francis Adams
Issues Transcending Both Parties		

* Devoted Unionists	Political compromises designed to save the Union	Crittenden, Bell, Clayton, Johnson, Toombs, Cobb, Stephens
* Abolitionists	Immediate emancipation and assimilation of all slaves	Chase, Smith, Garrison, Conscience Whigs
* Anti-Immigrationists	A ban on immigration and passage of anti-Catholic codes	Levin, Dearborn

Time: Fall 1848

The Campaigns Try To Deal With The Slavery Issue

Going into the race, both major party candidates recognize that slavery in the west is an explosive issue best tip-toed around during the campaign.

The Whigs, however, have an easier time dodging it than do the Democrats.

Thus Zachary Taylor is able to run simply as “Old Rough and Ready,” the heroic military general who, at age sixty-one, has defeated a much larger Mexican army by bravery and grit – to finally realize America’s Manifest Destiny.

The fact that he is a plantation owner and lifelong slave holder is already well known, and will probably gain him more Southern votes than are lost to the small band of fervent Abolitionists.

On the other hand, Cass is forced to contend more directly with the slavery issue. This is due to the schism within the Democrats over the Wilmot Proviso, and the presence of a Free Soil Party boasting many Barnburners and the former loyalist icon, Martin Van Buren.

Cass however believes his “pop sov” compromise – “let the voters decide” -- will succeed with both his internal political factions and the American people at large. If only he can convince Southerners that the settler’s votes will favor slavery and Northerners that they will oppose it!

This is no small task, and it is frustrated in the North by Van Buren and the Free Soil Party campaign.

The ex-President wants his political revenge, and he goes on the offensive arguing that slavery violates “the principles of the Revolution,” and that Congress does indeed have the right to prohibit its spread, if it so chooses. This stance infuriates the Southern Democrats. John Calhoun denounces Matty as an “unscrupulous and vindictive demagogue,” while Polk calls him “the most fallen man.”

In the end, the “Little Magician’s” residual popularity will deny Cass the presidency, achieve revenge against the “Polk men,” and make the Free Soilers into America’s first credible third party.

Time: November 7, 1848

A Second Whig Wins The White House



Zachary Taylor (1784-1850)

For the first time all Americans cast their ballots for president on the same day, in this case Tuesday, November 7, 1848.

Whig General Zachary Taylor wins the election, garnering 47% of the popular vote and a fairly comfortable 163-127 margin in the Electoral College. He dominates in the North and more than holds his own in the Border States and the South, where many assume erroneously that his slave-owning status signals his support for future expansion.

As expected the Democrats suffer from their internal divisions. Cass sweeps the six Midwestern states (Ohio to Wisconsin and Iowa) and also wins in Virginia, South Carolina, Alabama, Mississippi, Missouri, Arkansas and Texas. But the Free Soilers, behind Van Buren, carve out 10% of the popular vote, signaling their power as a third-party option.

The public once again repudiates the abolitionists and Gerritt Smith’s Liberty Party, in what turns out to be its final political campaign.

Results Of the 1848 Presidential Election

	Party	Pop Vote	Elect Tot	South	Border	North	West
Taylor	Whig	1,361,393	163	43	23	97	0
Cass	Democrat	1,223,460	127	48	7	15	57
Van Buren	Free Soil	291,501	0				
G. Smith	Liberty	2,545	0				
Other		285	0				
		2,879,184	290	91	30	112	57

At the local level, Taylor records a crucial win of 36 electoral votes in New York over favorite son, Martin Van Buren -- who nevertheless manages to outpoll and derail Senator Cass in the state.

Election Results In New York State (1848)

	Party	Pop Vote	%
Taylor	Whig	218,583	48%
Van Buren	Free Soil	120,497	26
Cass	Democrat	114,319	25
Smith	Liberty	2,545	1
Total		455,944	100%

A total of four states shift from the Democrats to Taylor and the Whigs in 1848, the two most crucial being New York and Pennsylvania.

Party Power By State

South	1844	1848	Pick-Ups
Virginia	Democrat	Democrat	
North Carolina	Whig	Whig	
South Carolina	Democrat	Democrat	
Georgia	Democrat	Whig	Whig
Alabama	Democrat	Democrat	
Mississippi	Democrat	Democrat	
Louisiana	Democrat	Whig	Whig
Tennessee	Whig	Whig	
Arkansas	Democrat	Democrat	
Texas	---	Democrat	Democrat
Border			
Delaware	Whig	Whig	
Maryland	Whig	Whig	
Kentucky	Whig	Whig	
Missouri	Democrat	Democrat	
North			
New Hampshire	Democrat	Democrat	
Vermont	Whig	Whig	
Massachusetts	Whig	Whig	
Rhode Island	Whig	Whig	
Connecticut	Whig	Whig	
New York	Democrat	Whig	Whig
New Jersey	Whig	Whig	
Pennsylvania	Democrat	Whig	Whig
Ohio	Whig	Democrat	Democrat
Maine	Democrat	Democrat	
Indiana	Democrat	Democrat	
Illinois	Democrat	Democrat	
Iowa	Democrat	Democrat	

Michigan	Democrat	Democrat	
Wisconsin	---	Democrat	Democrat

Despite all of the Party turmoil preceding the election, the composition of both the House and the Senate is only marginally changed from 1846. The Democrats maintain a solid 35-25 lead over the Whigs in the upper chamber – although two transformative “Free Soil” senators are elected, Salmon P. Chase of Ohio, and John Hale of New Hampshire.

Senate Election Trends

House	1844	1846	1848	Change
Democrats	31	36	35	-1
Whigs	25	21	25	+4
Others		1		-1
Free Soil			2	+2
Vacant	0			

In the House, the Democrats pick up one seat to maintain a narrow majority.

House Election Trends

House	1844	1846	1848	Change
Democrats	143	112	113	+1
Whigs	78	116	108	- 8
Free Soil			9	+9
Others	6	6	1	-5

This victory in Congress shows that although the Wilmot controversy has shaken the Democrat’s solidarity, it has not yet caused an irreparable schism.

It does, however, signal that the path back to the White House will require a quid pro quo between Northern Democrats who aspire to the office -- like Stephen Douglas, Franklin Pierce and James Buchanan – and Southern Democrats who hope to extend slavery to the west.

Thus the idea of a “doughface” presidential candidate for future Democrat nominees is advanced – a man of the North, but one willing to reach accommodations with Southern wishes on slavery.

On the other side, political strategists like Thurlow Weed and Salmon Chase have been able to deny the Democrats their successor to Polk, no small accomplishment. But Zachary Taylor’s credentials as a Whig, in the mold of Henry Clay, are thin at best – and internal divisions over slavery are already intensifying.

If the Whigs are to dislodge the Democrats on a more permanent basis, it appears that some linkage to the Free Soil Movement will be required, possibly around opposition to expanding slavery.

But for now, it's time for "Old Rough & Ready" to take his turn at the presidency.

Time: 1884-1850

President Zachary Taylor: Personal Profile

Zachary Taylor is the fourth American president whose fame rests heavily on his military achievements. Like Washington and Harrison, he is born on a Virginia plantation to a prominent family, with roots in his case tracing back to the Plymouth Colony. His father is Lt. Colonel Richard Taylor, who fights at Trenton and Monmouth and is with George Washington at Valley Forge.

In 1790 his family picks up and moves to the frontier in Kentucky, two years before its admission as a state. Taylor is six at that time and is raised, like Andrew Jackson, in a log cabin, while his father works his 8,000 acres worth of land, with the help of 23 slaves. His formal education is hit or miss, and he favors a rough physical life in the outdoors rather than intellectual pursuits in the classroom.

Comparisons Between Taylor And The Three Previous Military Presidents

Presidents	Family Heritage	Education/Career	Landmark Battle
Washington	Virginia plantation	Tutors/planter/military/politics	Yorktown (1781)
Jackson	Childhood poverty in SC	Self-educated/lawyer/planter/militia	New Orleans (1815)
Harrison	Virginia plantation	Tutors/medical school/militia/politics	Tippecanoe (1811)
Taylor	Virginia plantation	Self-educated/military/politics	Buena Vista (1847)

In 1808 his second cousin, James Madison, then Secretary of State, arranges a military omission for him as 1st Lieutenant in the army's Seventh Infantry Regiment. He is posted to New Orleans, earns a promotion to Captain in two years, and marries his wife "Peggy," who prays daily for his safety throughout her life. He is then off to the Indiana Territory in 1811, defending Ft. Knox and Ft. Harrison against Tecumseh and the Shawnees during the War of 1812. His successes here draw praise from General William Henry Harrison, the nation's military and political leader in the Northwest territories.

When the war ends, Taylor resigns briefly to farm a 324 acre plantation just east of Louisville, Kentucky that his father has given him as a wedding present. He is now a slave owner, and will add many more "servants," as he calls them, in the years to come.

His farming hiatus proves brief, and in 1816 he is back in the army, with the rank of Major. He spends two years at Fort Howard in the upper reaches of the Michigan (later Wisconsin) Territory at Green Bay, before being promoted to Lt. Colonel and assigned to duty in Louisiana.

From 1822 to 1824, he commands Fort Robertson in Baton Rouge, and while there acquires a second plantation, 300 acres along with more slaves, in Feliciana Parish. It will become his off duty home for the rest of his life.

After a stint as a recruiting officer, he is called to Washington, DC in 1826, before heading back west for tours at Fort Snelling and Fort Crawford, in what will become the Minnesota Territory. He is a full Colonel when he joins the fighting in the brief Blackhawk War of 1832.

Based on his own up and down experiences in the army, Taylor refuses in 1835 to approve the marriage of his daughter Sarah to a twenty-six year old 1st Lieutenant named Jefferson Davis. While the two lovers elope anyway, she dies three months after the marriage, leaving both Davis and Taylor in despair.

Taylor's military career takes another leap forward during the Second Seminole War in southern Florida. On Christmas day 1837 he wins the Battle of Lake Okeechobee, earning his nickname, "Old Rough & Ready," along with a promotion to Brigadier General in charge of all U.S. troops in Florida.

As his fame grows, so does his wealth. In 1840 he purchases his third plantation, *Cyprus Grove*, in Rodney, Mississippi, along with 81 more slaves, for \$95,000. He also begins to dabble around the edges of politics, in communication with Harrison, his old superior, about to be elected President.

After leaving Florida, he is stationed in Arkansas, with command over most American forces west of the Mississippi River. This places him along the frontier facing Texas, as tension builds with Mexico over the March 1845 annexation. On January 12, 1846 Polk orders him to advance west to the Rio Grande, and three months later the war with Mexico is under way.

The hard-charging Taylor now moves into the Mexican interior winning battle after battle despite being often outmanned by upwards of two to one margins. His crushing win at Monterrey on September 24, 1846 is followed by a strategically brilliant victory over Santa Anna at Buena Vista on February 23, 1847.

Buena Vista marks the end of Taylor's days as a combat officer and the beginning of his persona as a hero on the national stage and a potential candidate for the presidency. It is not a position he chases after – in fact, early on he is quick to dismiss the idea out of hand. But two Whigs in particular – the strategist, Thurlow Weed, and Senator John J. Crittenden – finally win him over.

Reservations aside, the Whigs nominate Taylor on the fourth ballot, and proceed to mail him a letter seeking his acceptance. When nearly a month passes without a response, the General, busy with both his command of the western armies and his plantation, finally comes upon the “lost notification” and signals his agreement.

At sixty-four years old, Taylor and his reluctant wife, prepare to leave home for what will be his final, and an abbreviated, tour of duty.

Time: January – February 1849

Taylor’s Cabinet Picks Tend To Oppose Further Expansion Of Slavery

As the various congressional factions spar over slavery in the District of Columbia, President Taylor assembles a cabinet comprising seven Whigs, all formerly lawyers.

His choice for Secretary of State is a sitting U.S. Senator from Delaware, John Clayton, a man he has never met before in person. But Clayton has long been considered presidential timber and enjoys support within the party during the 1847 nominating process. He opposes both the Texas Annexation and the Mexican War, but vigorously supports the troops once the fighting begins.

Neither of the military posts is filled with experienced service men, signaling Taylor’s intent to focus on his duty as commander-in-chief.

The War Secretary, George W. Crawford, serves only briefly in the Georgia militia before being chosen as the state’s Attorney General and Governor. His early record in politics includes a prolonged duel in which he kills a local congressman on a third exchange of gunfire. The Navy post goes to House member William “Ballard” Preston, a planter and slave owner who support abolition during his time in the Virginia state legislature.

For the Treasury, Taylor is said to favor Horace Binney, defender of the Second U.S. Bank against Jackson, but instead ends up with another Pennsylvanian, William Meredith. He is the son of a famous Philadelphia banker, and an unfailing proponent of protective tariffs to support American jobs.

Congressman Jacob Collamer of Vermont becomes a Postmaster General who, to his benefit, refuses to follow the tradition of immediately sacking all party-opposite employees within his realm.

The Attorney General position goes to the renowned Maryland trial lawyer, ex-slave owner, and sitting U.S. Senator, Reverdy Johnson. He becomes a strong supporter of Taylor and a particularly influential member of the cabinet.

Given the sudden and vast expansion westward, congress approves a new Department of the Interior, its mission being to manage the lands, natural resources, and Indian affairs in the new territories. The first to fill this slot is Thomas Ewing of Ohio, formerly a U.S. Senator and then, momentarily, Treasury Secretary under Harrison.

While four of his seven picks come from “slave” states, all members share Taylor’s opposition to expanding the institution into the west.

Zachary Taylor’s Cabinet

Position	Name	Home State
Secretary of State	John Clayton	Delaware
Secretary of Treasury	William Meredith	Pennsylvania
Secretary of War	George Crawford	Georgia
Attorney General	Reverdy Johnson	Maryland
Secretary of Navy	William Preston	Virginia
Postmaster General	Jacob Collamer	Vermont
Secretary of Interior	Thomas Ewing	Ohio

Time: March 5, 1849

The Inaugural Speech Calls For “Enlarged Patriotism” To Assuage Sectional Conflicts



The Vision Of A Unified Nation

A crowd of some 20,000 gather at the East Portico to hear the new President deliver his inaugural address, an abbreviated and largely perfunctory effort of only 1090 words.

Taylor begins by expressing gratitude for his election and acknowledging the “fearful responsibilities” he will face.

The confidence and respect shown by my countrymen in calling me to be the Chief Magistrate...have inspired me with feelings of the most profound gratitude; but when I reflect that the acceptance of the office..involves the weightiest obligations (and) by fearful responsibilities.

He anticipates “able cooperation” from a divided congress (a Whig House and a Democrat Senate) and the judiciary, so that he can execute his duties “diligently, impartially, and for the best interests of the country.”

Happily, however...I shall not be without able cooperation (from) the legislative and judicial branches of the Government ...whose talents, integrity, and purity of character will furnish ample guaranties for the faithful and honorable performance. With such aids and an honest purpose to do whatever is right, I hope to execute diligently, impartially, and for the best interests of the country the manifold duties devolved upon me.

In enumerating his duties, Taylor promises to operate within the strict guidelines laid out for the Executive in the Constitution. His first priority will be to act as the military commander-in-chief. He will oversee all treaties, appoint ambassadors, update congress on emerging issues, and insure that all laws are faithfully executed.

To command the Army and Navy of the United States; with the advice and consent of the Senate, to make treaties and to appoint ambassadors and other officers; to give to Congress information of the state of the Union and recommend such measures as he shall judge to be necessary; and to take care that the laws shall be faithfully executed....

At this point his mind is clearly on the tensions surrounding slavery in the new territories – as he returns to the notion of serving “the whole country,” and not “any particular section or local interest.” His determination will be to maintain the “national existence” (i.e. the Union) by scrupulously following the Constitution.

Chosen by the body of the people under the assurance that my Administration would be devoted to the welfare of the whole country, and not to the support of any particular section or merely local interest, I this day renew the declarations I have heretofore made and proclaim my fixed determination to maintain to the extent of my ability the Government in its original purity and to adopt as the basis of my public policy those great republican doctrines which constitute the strength of our national existence.

He cycles back to an old favorite from his days at war, the need for a strong Regular Army as opposed to trying to fight effectively with amateur militiamen.

In reference to the Army and Navy, lately employed with so much distinction on active service, care shall be taken to insure the highest condition of efficiency, and in furtherance of that object the military and naval schools, sustained by the liberality of Congress, shall receive the special attention of the Executive.

Despite this focus on the army, Taylor says he will follow Washington’s dictate to avoid involving America in foreign conflicts, and will exhaust all diplomatic efforts to settle disputes before any resort to warfare.

As American freemen we can not but sympathize in all efforts to extend the blessings of civil and political liberty, but at the same time we are warned by the admonitions of

history and the voice of our own beloved Washington to abstain from entangling alliances with foreign nations.... It is to be hoped that no international question can now arise which a government confident in its own strength and resolved to protect its own just rights may not settle by wise negotiation; and it eminently becomes a government like our own, founded on the morality and intelligence of its citizens and upheld by their affections, to exhaust every resort of honorable diplomacy before appealing to arms.

He acknowledges his responsibility to appoint honest and capable government officials.

The appointing power vested in the President imposes delicate and onerous duties. So far as it is possible to be informed, I shall make honesty, capacity, and fidelity indispensable prerequisites to the bestowal of office, and the absence of either of these qualities shall be deemed sufficient cause for removal.

Finally he pledges to “protect the interests” of all three sectors of the economy (“agriculture, commerce, and manufactures”), to “extinguish the public debt,” to achieve “economy in all public expenditures,” and to rely on Congress to properly regulate...domestic policy.”

Consistent with his predecessors, Taylor invokes “Divine Providence” to sustain the “high state of prosperity” the nation has long experienced, while also calling on “enlarged patriotism” to “assuage the bitterness...marking differences of opinion” and strengthen the Republic.

In conclusion I congratulate you, my fellow-citizens, upon the high state of prosperity to which the goodness of Divine Providence has conducted our common country. Let us invoke a continuance of the same protecting care which has led us from small beginnings to the eminence we this day occupy, and let us seek to deserve that continuance by prudence and moderation in our councils, by well-directed attempts to assuage the bitterness which too often marks unavoidable differences of opinion, by the promulgation and practice of just and liberal principles, and by an enlarged patriotism, which shall acknowledge no limits but those of our own widespread Republic.

Time: March 5, 1849 – July 9, 1850

Overview Of Taylor’s Term

Zachary Taylor’s time in office will be brief – only sixteen months – but it will further set the stage for the national debate around slavery that dominates the next decade.

The South’s assumption that Taylor’s ownership of three plantations will translate into support for extending slavery into the new Mexican Cession territories is soon proven false. Like Andrew Jackson before him, the General’s highest calling lies with preserving the Union, and he is convinced that a flat-out prohibition on more slavery will put an end to further sectional hostilities. On this score he will be proven dead wrong.

When Taylor signals his wish to immediately admit California to the Union as a Free State, Southerners in Congress, including his own Whig associates, rise up to oppose him. Their apparent sense of betrayal is so intense that the aging patriarch of the party, Henry Clay, decides to step directly into the fray in search of a solution on slavery similar to his 1820 Missouri Compromise.

Along with the powerful Democrat, Stephen Douglas, Clay crafts what becomes known as the 1850 Omnibus Bill, which includes off-sets to the South for the admission of a Free California. Central here are promises to allow voters in the New Mexico and Utah Territories to choose their status (i.e. the Democrat’s “popular sovereignty” principle) and new rules requiring Northerners to enforce the Fugitive Slave Law.

Congressional debate over the Omnibus Bill in March 1850 produces memorable exchanges between aging lions such as John Calhoun and Daniel Webster and next generation leaders such as William Seward, who, like Taylor himself, opposes passage. Seward’s “Higher Law” address goes so far as to argue the primacy of God’s law over that in the U.S. Constitution, a fearful consideration for all slave-owners.

In response, Southern Fire-Eaters hold a convention in Nashville in June seeking a call for secession, but they are turned back by more moderate Unionist forces. Still further wrangling over the Omnibus Bill resumes.

In the middle of all this, Taylor is struck down by a severe case of gastroenteritis and dies after a six day battle to try to recover. He is the second President to succumb in office and the last ever elected under the Whig banner. His successor is a mere shadow of the decisive Taylor, his Vice President, Millard Fillmore.

President Taylor’s Term: Key Events

1848	
Nov 7	Taylor is elected President
Dec 5	Polk confirms discovery of gold in California
Dec 21	Abolitionist Giddings offers bill to ban slavery in DC
Dec 22	Calhoun convenes Southern conference. Sets up Committee of 15
Year	Multiple attempts by Polk to buy Cuba
	German revolution fails & many immigrate to U.S.
1849	
January	Amelia Bloomer publishes <i>The Lily</i> focused on women’s movement
	Moderate Southerners defend Taylor, reject Calhoun’s pleas
June 15	President Polk dies suddenly in Nashville
July 27	Memorial service in DC for ex-President Polk
Feb 7	Supreme Court denies Mass/NY attempt to tax incoming aliens
Feb 12	Temporary government set up in San Francisco

Mar 5	Taylor inaugurated
Aug 11	Taylor forbids any filibustering actions in Cuba
August	Taylor: “the North need have no apprehension of the further expansion of slavery”
Sept 13	Convention delegates sign a California Constitution declaring it a “Free State”
Nov 13	California Constitution ratified by voters: bans slavery & hopes for all-white population
Dec 4	Taylor calls for California statehood & says he will fight secession
Dec 22	A troubled Howell Cobb elected House Speaker after 3 week battle and 63 ballots
Year	The Pacific Railroad Co. is chartered, looking westward
	Regular shipping voyages from NY to Liverpool take 33 days
1850	
Feb 5-6	Clay proposes initial 1850 Compromise (Ca a free state; NM tbd; fugitive slave act)
Feb 20	Thad Stevens joins the attack on slavery in the House
Feb 27	Unionist Robert Toombs pleads with North to honor Southern rights
Feb	Hawthorne’s <i>Scarlet Letter</i> is published
Mar 4	Calhoun’s final speech warns of two nations split over slavery & southern secession
Mar 7	Webster speech calling on North to accept slavery to preserve the Union
Mar 11	Seward counters with “there is a higher law” speech opposing the Compromise
April 17	Senator Foote draws pistol on Senator Benton on floor during California debate
April 19	Clayton-Bulwer Treaty guarantees US & UK neutrality in Central America
May 8	Senate committee reports “Omnibus Bill” – one on territories, other on DC
May	Narciso Lopez filibustering expedition lands in Cuba & is later ousted
Jun 3-12	Nashville Convention rejects secession & calls for 36’30” line to coast
July 9	Taylor dies suddenly & Fillmore becomes president

The economy begins to tick up toward the end of Taylor’s term in office, as the California gold rush gets underway.

Key Economic Overview

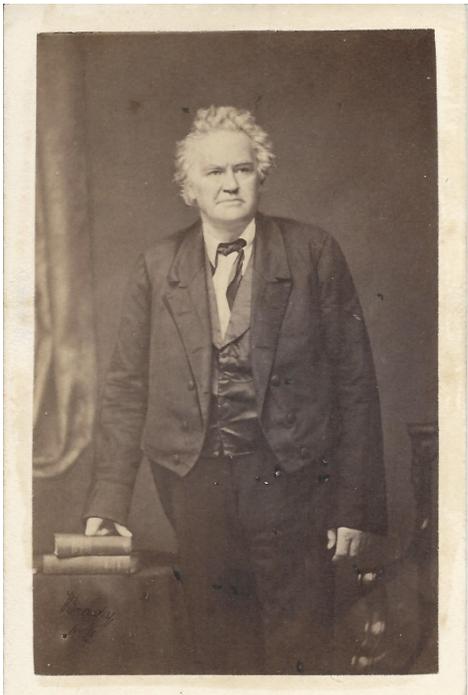
	1848	1849	1850
Total GDP (\$000)	\$2,427	2419	2581
% Change	1%	NC	7%
Per Capita GDP	\$111	108	111

Chapter 144 - A Proposed Ban On Slavery In DC Intensifies Sectional Anger In The House

Time: December 18- 21, 1848

Joshua Giddings Bill To Ban Slave Trading In The District Of Columbia Passes In The House

Even before Taylor is inaugurated, the slavery issue flares up again in Congress.



Joshua Giddings (1795-1864)

This time the instigator is not David Wilmot, but rather Joshua Giddings of Ohio, who, for a full decade, has stood alongside his mentor, John Quincy Adams, as lone crusaders on behalf of abolition.

Giddings grows up on a modest farm in Ashtabula, Ohio, in the northeast corner of the state known as the Western Reserve. This land, formerly owned by Connecticut, is dominated by New England emigrants, and Giddings soon absorbs their Puritan values. He is a strapping youth, 6'2" tall, athletic and brimming with self-confidence. He serves at age 16 in the War of 1812, then returns to work the farm and continue his self-education. He is a natural scholar and soon apprentices himself to Elisha Whittlesey of nearby Canfield to prepare for the bar, which he passes in 1821. His joint practice with fellow Ohioan, Benjamin Wade, leads to fame and fortune, prior to the crash of 1837, which nearly wipes away his wealth.

At that point, friends push him into politics and, in 1838; he is elected to the House, to succeed his teacher and friend, Whittlesey.

Soon both Giddings and Wade are drawn into their shared opposition to slavery, first through lectures delivered by Theodor Dwight Weld, the disciple of Reverend Charles Finney, and later through Giddings daughter, Lura Maria, a dedicated Garrisonian. Together the two law partners form an Anti-Slavery Society chapter, before Giddings heads off to Washington.

Once there, he keeps a diary, with 1838-39 entries bearing witness to the slave trade in DC, and to the frustrations he faces in trying to end it.

- *This day a coffle of about sixty slaves, male and female, passed through the streets of Washington, chained together on their way south. A being in the shape of a man was on horseback, with a large whip in his hand, with which he occasionally chastised*

those who, through fatigue or insolence, were tardy in their movements. This was done in daylight, in public view.

- *I say that Northern men will not consent to the continuance of our national councils where their ears are assailed while coming to the Capitol by the voice of the auctioneer publicly proclaiming the sale of humans, of intelligent beings...I am asked now to contribute from the funds of the people thus abused to the improvements of this city...I protest against this. I shall be opposed to all appropriations in this District not necessary for the convenience of government. I take my stand here.*
- *It is amusing and astonishing to see the views entertained by most of the members on the subject of abolition. At the South, that is designed to create a general rebellion among the slaves, and have them cut their master's throats. At the North they have no definite idea of the meaning ...and appear afraid to come out and declare their sentiments.*
- *I have come to the honest conclusion that our northern friends are in fact afraid of these southern bullies....I think we have no northern man who dares boldly and fearlessly to declare his abhorrence of slavery and the slave trade. This kind of fear I have never experienced, nor shall I submit to it now. For that purpose I have drawn up a resolution calling for information as to the slave trade in the District of Columbia...Friends advise me not to present it on two accounts: first it will enrage the southern members; second it will injure me at home. But I have determined to risk both; for I would rather lose my election at home than to suffer the insolence of these Southerners.*

By 1848, after a decade of frustration in the House, Giddings senses a tide beginning to shift his way.

On December 18, 1848, he tests this by offering a stature to abolish slavery in the District – arguing that DC is federal land and thus not subject to Maryland's state law sanctioning the institution. But this bill is defeated by a 106-79 margin,

A subsequent option, initiated by Abraham Lincoln, seeks DC abolition in exchange for compensation for freed slaves, plus a guarantee to seize and return all run-aways. It is tabled without a vote.

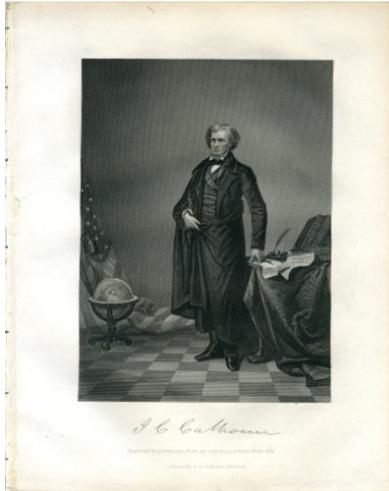
Giddings, however, has a fallback position. On December 21, he proposes another bill, this time to at least ban slave trading in the District.

Its passage by a margin of 98-88 sounds another alarm for Southerners. If the House is willing to pass restrictions on slavery on “federally controlled” land in DC, might it not apply the same principle to the new Mexican Cession “territories” out west? Might it even go so far as to prohibit slavery before the “territories” write their own constitutions and apply for statehood?

Senator John Calhoun of South Carolina seems to think so.

Time: December 22, 1848

Calhoun Tries To Unify Southern Support For Slavery



John C. Calhoun (1782-1850)

Unlike many Southerners, sixty-six year old Senator John Calhoun is not lulled into complacency by Zachary Taylor’s planter credentials. He fears for the General’s political naiveté, and suspects that he will soon fall under the influence of Northern Whigs, especially anti-slavery New Yorkers such as Governor William Seward and party boss Thurlow Weed.

Calhoun’s strategy is to go on the offensive to protect the South, before it is too late.

His immediate fear in December 1848 is that a Northern-dominated Congress will move quickly to outlaw slavery across the entire Mexican Cession before Southern planters can gain a toehold in the region.

To try to forestall this “free soil” fait d’accompli, Calhoun convinces 69 of the 121 southern members of Congress to convene on December 22, 1848, for the purpose of constructing a unified sectional platform on the slavery issues.

He tells this caucus that unless the South acts swiftly and with one voice, both California and New Mexico will become “free states.” This, in turn, will tip the current 15:15 balance in the Senate in favor of the North, and open a path to end the expansion of slavery and crush the South’s economic future.

The caucus agrees to set up a “Committee of Fifteen” to further discuss the issues and draft a statement, which Calhoun will write himself.

Time: January 15, 1849

Calhoun’s “Address To The Southern Delegates In Congress” Fails To Stir Rebellion

The Committee statement is presented by Calhoun to a collection of 90 Southern congressmen and senators at a meeting held in the Senate chamber on January 15, 1849.

But instead of unity, the result is chaos.

Leading Southern Whigs such as Robert Toombs and Alexander Stephens of Georgia oppose its “threatening” tone. Others are so offended by the acrimonious debate it triggers that they exit the hall. Those who remain finally agree to meet again to debate Calhoun’s proposal versus a toned-down option.

On January 22 they reconvene, and Calhoun’s version is adopted. But it is a hollow victory. In the end, only 48 of the 121 southern members go on to actually sign the petition, with a mere two Whigs among them.

Southern Politician’s Support For Calhoun’s Petition

	Sign On	Do Not Sign	Total
Democrats	46	27	73
Whigs	2	46	48
Total	48	73	121

Despite this tepid support, Calhoun goes ahead and publishes his “Address of the Southern Delegates in Congress to Their Constituents.” His goal is clearly to scare the region into action.

Thus he argues that the North’s true intent is to raise all blacks to equality with whites, to hand them the vote, and to thereby abolish slavery.

They intend to vest the free blacks and slaves with the right to vote on the question of emancipation in this District. But when once raised to an equality, they would become the fast political associates of the North, acting and voting with them on all questions, and by this political union between them, holding the white race at the South in complete subjection.

Like Cassandra foretelling the fall of Troy, Calhoun goes on to warn that failure to act will destroy the Southern way of life and turn the land into:

A permanent abode of disorder, anarchy, misery and wretchedness.

Only by banding together can this fate be avoided.

The first and indispensable step, without which nothing can be done, and with which everything may be, is to be united among yourselves, on this great and most vital question. Until then, the North will not believe that you are in earnest in opposition to their encroachments, and they will continue to follow, one after another, until the work of abolition is finished.

If political opposition fails, Calhoun invokes the specter of war:

Nothing (then) would remain for you but to stand up immovable in defense of rights involving your all – your property, prosperity, equality, liberty, and safety. As the assailed, you would stand justified by all laws, human and divine, in repelling a blow so

dangerous, without looking to consequences, and to resort to all means necessary for that purpose.

For the moment, however, this dire warning falls on deaf ears.

The Southern Whigs, having finally won the White House, have no interest in abandoning Taylor in favor of Calhoun. The Democrats simply assume that Taylor, the slaveholder, will protect their interests in the end.

Toombs regards the outcome as a triumph, and reports it to Taylor's main political confidante, the Whig Unionist, Senator John J. Crittenden of Kentucky:

We have completely foiled Calhoun in his miserable attempt to form a southern party.

Chapter 145 - Taylor's Support Of The Wilmot Proviso Shocks The South

Time: March to July 1849

Administrative Duties Occupy Taylor's First Few Months In office

After the inauguration, Taylor and his family move into a White House marred by a leaky roof and the same suspicious water supply -- sourced from the polluted Potomac River, a mere 2500 feet from the front door – that may have killed Harrison.

Once there, he is quickly surrounded by the usual band of “favor-seekers,” literally camped out on the ground floor near his office, and awaiting the traditional five minute audience with the new executive.

This siege is followed by various ceremonial duties, including two back-to-back funeral services.

On July 17, Taylor delivers a eulogy address in memory of Dolley Madison, who dies in the capitol city at eighty-two. In his remarks the President coins the term “first lady” in referring to her.

Only ten days later, a memorial is held in honor of ex-President Polk, who dies at age fifty-three in Nashville, less than four months after leaving office.

By mid-summer the General is restless and eager to leave his new post and venture beyond Washington.

He decides to tour the Northeast, and sets out on August 9, 1849 for Baltimore, on his way to Pennsylvania and New York.

In Harrisburg he learns that “expansionists” who encouraged the war with Mexico are plotting further moves into foreign lands. Some wish to drive south through lower Mexico and into Central America. Others have their eyes on Cuba, a long-time acquisition target.

To curtail a potential “filibustering” expedition against Cuba, Taylor orders Secretary of State Clayton to closely monitor the ports of New Orleans and New York.

Soon after issuing this order, the President is struck by ominous bouts of what appears to be cholera, with persistent diarrhea and vomiting that perceptibly slow him down.

Time: August 23, 1849

The President Says He Will Support The Wilmot Proviso

Still he rallies sufficiently to travel to Pittsburg, where he praises tariffs that protect jobs.

Heading further north into Mercer County, he meets with a group of free-soil advocates. In off-hand remarks he announces that he will support the Wilmot Proviso if it reaches his desk:

The people of the North need have no apprehension of the further extension of slavery....If the congress sees fit to pass (the Wilmot proviso) I will not veto it.

When this quote appears in the press it shocks the South!

Taylor does not intend to free what he calls the “servants” on his three plantations, nor to abolish slavery in the old South. But he is very aware of the growing volatility that surrounds the institution across the North, and the threat this poses to the Union. And, like General Jackson before him, the sanctity of the Union is first and foremost in his heart. By flat-out banning the spread of slavery, Taylor thinks he will end the divisive debate once and for all.

After heading back east across Pennsylvania, he again becomes violently ill, on August 24. He rests for several days then heads home to Washington after a final stop-over in Albany, New York

Once there he will face the mounting storm over his now public stance on slavery, and on statehood for California – two issues that dominate the remaining ten months of his presidency.

Chapter 146 - California Adopts A Free State Constitution To Join The Union And President Polk Say He Will Support it

Time: January 1848 – June 1849

The Gold Rush Propels The Need For A California State Government



From his first day in office, Taylor is acutely aware of the need to organize a sustainable government for California in light of the new settlers flooding in to search for gold.

Word of the initial “find” gradually spreads after the January 24, 1848 discovery of nuggets in the trace water below John Sutter’s sawmill. In August 1848 easterners hear the news in the *New York Herald*, but it is President Polk’s announcement to Congress on December 5, 1848 that fully fuels the “Forty-Niner” stampede.

While the port of San Francisco is first to experience the transition from sleepy Spanish mission to overnight boom town, the entire state is affected by the gold rush. California’s total Caucasian population jumps from roughly 8,000 in 1840 to 120,000 in 1850 and 380,000 by 1860.

“Lived The Miners, Forty-Niners...”

In the face of this influx, the duty of maintaining law and order continues to fall on a string of Military Governors on site since the Bear Flag rebellion and the end of the Mexican War in 1847. Their public safety challenges mount daily:

It is clear to every man that San Francisco is partially in the hands of criminals, and that crime has reached a crisis when life and property are in imminent danger. There is no alternative left us but to lay aside our business and direct our whole energies as a people to seek out the abodes of these villains and execute summary vengeance upon them.

President Polk tries several times to have California declared an official Territory during his final year in office, but Congress stalls for two reasons:

- Any move toward statehood will require a decision on whether or not to allow slavery there; and
- That decision will in turn upset the Union’s current 15 Free vs. 15 Slave state balance.

So Taylor is left with this thorny issue, and in true military fashion decides to take it on as quickly as possible.

On April 3, 1849, just a month after his inauguration, he sends sitting Georgia congressman Thomas Butler King to San Francisco to explore the shift from military to civilian rule. King follows the Panama route and arrives there on June 4, to learn that activities are already under way to form a government. Spearheading this effort is General Bennett Riley, the Military Governor who fought under General Scott in the overland drive to take Mexico City.

The day before King arrives, Riley issues a call to elect representatives for a Constitutional Convention to be held on September 1, 1849 – a move that Taylor supports wholeheartedly.

Time: 1787 forward

The 1787 Constitution Establishes Rules For Admitting New States To The Union

The steps for admitting new states to the Union are laid out in the Land Ordinance of 1784 and in the Admission to the Union Clause (Article IV, Section 3) of the 1787 Constitution.

1. All lands within a new Territory are placed in the “public domain” – i.e. they are owned by the government.
2. Congress surveys the land and decides how many new states will be created over time.
3. The path to statehood begins when a threshold number of citizens (originally 20,000 and later 60,000 and 93,000) settle in the defined boundaries.
4. A representative group of residents convene a Territorial Convention to write a proposed state constitution.
5. The State Constitution is submitted to the population at large for an up or down vote.
6. If approved, the proposed state sends its Constitution and plans to the U.S. Congress to seek admission.
7. The Congress debates the admission and either accepts or rejects it.
8. Once admitted, new states are granted “equal footing” with prior states when it comes to rights and laws.

This process is first applied to the “Northwest Territory” lands west of the Appalachian Mountains won from Britain in the Revolutionary War and it works smoothly over time, with seventeen new additions approved, the latest being Wisconsin, in May 1848.

But complexities arise here when the territory involved falls outside of the original Northwest boundaries, to the west of the Mississippi River.

The first case being the Louisiana Purchase territory of Missouri Territory which applies for statehood in 1819 and produces a furor over whether it will enter as a Slave or a Free State. This crisis is solved by the 1820 Missouri Compromise which creates a new boundary line at 36'30."

The problem with California is that it lies outside of the Louisiana Purchase space – and therefore requires congressional action to determine whether it will be classified as a Slave or Free State. Furthermore whatever “formula” applies to California will most likely be applied to all of the southwest land ceded from Mexico.

As with Missouri in 1819, California in 1849 once again tests the sectional tensions over slavery, exactly as Andrew Jackson anticipated all along.

When David Wilmot proposes his famous Proviso in 1846 to make the west slave-free, Congressman William Wick tries to pass his plan to extend the 36'30" line all way to the Pacific – but the House fails to go along. The desperate Democrats then turn to “pop sov” (“let the voters decide”) as their only option.

Time: October 13, 1849

California Writes Its Constitution Calling For “Free State” Status

California easily surpasses the population threshold of 20,000 required to write a state constitution and General Riley’s call to hold a convention is met by enthusiasm among the settlers.

On August 1, 1849, a total of 48 delegates are chosen by secret ballot to attend the assembly. Half have lived in the state for an extended time, with twelve residing there for ten or more years and another twelve for at least three years. Their backgrounds are quite diverse, including fourteen lawyers, twelve ranchers, nine merchants, and four military men.

This group gathers on September 1 at Colton Hall in Monterrey, and works steadily over 43 days to write the initial constitution, which they sign on October 13.

The final document borrows heavily from the 1787 U.S. Constitution – with several notable exceptions:

For one, California takes the lead in defining its own Territorial boundaries, rather than waiting on Congress to complete this task. Their proposed plat also defines a total of 29 counties.

It offers an expanded Bill of Rights, listing twenty-one in total rather than the usual ten.

Among the additions are calls for a statewide system of public K-12 schools together with a University, all paid in part by local funds. Both single and married women are accorded the right to own and control their own property. A debt limit is established at \$300,000.

The Constitution also makes one other declaration that will cause a firestorm in the U.S. Congress – it officially announces its intent to enter as a “Free State.”

Time: Fall 1849

A Proposal To Ban All Blacks Is Debated



The debates over “Free State” status that occur among the California delegates in Monterrey display the intensity of the anti-black racism prevalent across white America at the time.

They are covered in depth by *The Californian*, a one-sheet newspaper popular at the time. It links the proposed ban on slavery to the wish for an all-white population:

Mocking Image Of A Boy With A Pot On His Head

We entertain several reasons why slavery should not be introduced here:

- *Negroes have equal rights to life, liberty, health and happiness with the whites.*
- *It is wrong for slavery to exist anywhere.*
- *We left the slave states because we didn't want to bring up our families in miserable conditions.*

- *There is no excuse for its introduction into this country, by virtue of climate or physical condition.*
- *We desire only a white population in California.*

This is the spirit of David Wilmot’s Proviso writ large – with the “Free State” label now signaling “free of all black residents!”

This notion of an all-white society has surfaced across Northern states from Ohio through Indiana, Michigan, Illinois and Iowa. But it will not be written into a final constitution until 1859 when Oregon is accepted as the nation’s 33rd state.

Time: November 13 To December 4, 1849

Taylor’s Support For “Immediate Admission” Further Alarms The South



Visitors in western gold mine country

On November 13, 1849, one month after completing the final draft, the settlers ratify the California Constitution by a margin of 12,061 in favor vs. 811 opposed.

At the same time, they elect their first civilian governor, forty-two year old Peter Burnett, who migrates west from Missouri to Oregon in 1843. Burnett is drawn to San Francisco by the Sutter gold rush, sets up a law practice there, and wins his race over four other contenders, including John Sutter himself.

From this point on, the military gives way to civilian rule on a permanent basis.

The town of Pueblo de San Jose is chosen as the first state capitol, and elected congressmen begin meeting there on a regular basis to pass legislation.

All that's left now is for the U.S. Congress to approve the admission of California as a Free State.

On December 4, 1849, the day after the 31th Congress convenes for its opening session, Taylor's first and only annual message urges them to accept California's petition without delay:

The people of that Territory...recently met for the purpose of forming a Constitution...and it is believed they will shortly apply for the admission into the Union as a sovereign State. Should such be the case...I recommend their application to the favorable consideration of Congress.

This call by Taylor is another major setback for Southern politicians, Democrats and Whigs alike.

“Their President” – a slave-owning Southern man with three plantations – is coming out against expanding slavery in the west, and also upsetting the 15:15 state balance of power in the Senate in favor of a Free State majority!

He is also doing this without any apparent recognition of the gravity of these decisions on the Southern economy, and without staying neutral until a search for “compromises” can play out in Congress.

This sparks a sense of betrayal among Southerners, and a growing conviction that Taylor is now the pawn of the two anti-slavery New Yorkers -- Thurlow Weed and Governor Henry Seward-- who led his presidential campaign.

Chapter 147 - Moderate Southern Whigs Stage A Rebellion In The House

Time: December 1849

The South’s Political Power In Washington Is Steadily Declining

As John C. Calhoun has pointing out for years, the South is losing its grip on power in Washington.

In the U.S. House, the number of seats held by the “Slave States” has fallen below the 40% mark.

Membership In The House Of Representatives

Year	From Slave States	From Free State	Total	% Slave State
1800	65	77	142	46%
1810	81	105	186	44
1820	90	123	213	42
1830	100	142	242	41
1840	91	141	232	39
1850	90	143	233	38

And in the Senate, the simple admission of California would result in 16 Free States vs. 15 Slave State, thus ending the effective power to stop any legislation coming from the House.

Balance Of Free Vs. Slave States As Of 1849 When California Applies

South – Slave (11)	Border – Slave (4)	North – Free (9)	West – Free (6)
1788 South Carolina	1787 Delaware	1787 Pennsylvania	1803 Ohio
1788 Georgia	1788 Maryland	1787 New Jersey	1816 Indiana
1788 Virginia	1792 Kentucky	1788 Connecticut	1818 Illinois
1789 North Carolina	1821 Missouri-23	1788 Massachusetts	1837 Michigan-26
1796 Tennessee		1788 New Hampshire	1846 Iowa-29
1812 Louisiana		1788 New York	1848 Wisconsin-30
1817 Mississippi		1790 Rhode Island	
1819 Alabama		1791 Vermont	
1836 Arkansas-25		1821 Maine -24	
1845 Florida-27			
1845 Texas-28			

Were California admitted as a Free State, it would be the first time for the South to “go first” – reversing the prior pattern whereby any Senate imbalances initially favors the South. Thus Slave Missouri in 1820 precedes Free Maine in 1821; Slave Arkansas in 1836 leads Free Michigan in 1837; and the two Slave States of Florida and Texas join before Free Iowa and Wisconsin.

Even more troubling is the absence of any clear Slave State addition to offset Free State California.

At the Executive level, victories by Harrison (1840) and Taylor (1848) also show that the Democrats can no longer guarantee a President who is reliably pro-South and pro-slavery.

Beyond Washington, two other threats to Southern slavery are looming larger.

The first is the “Free Soil” movement, spawned by Wilmot, and standing in opposition to the presence of all blacks in the new territories.

Second is the American Anti-Slavery Society, now some 2,000 chapters and 150,000 members strong since its 1833 inception, and flooding the North and West with its traveling lecturers, pamphlets, newspapers, and petition drives.

Taken together, even the strongly pro-Union Southern Whigs are sufficiently alarmed to signal their resistance

Time: December 1849

Moderate Southern Whigs Block The Election Of A House Speaker To Flex Their Muscles



Robert Toombs (1810-1885)

Howell Cobb (1815-1868)

The leader of this new Southern resistance within the Whig Party is Robert Toombs of Georgia, who has long opposed Calhoun's inflammatory warnings, and, together with Alexander Stephens, has been a voice of moderation in the House.

Earlier in 1849, Toombs becomes aware of Taylor's comments about prohibiting slavery in the west, but chooses to downplay them as a momentary error soon to be corrected.

General Taylor is in a new position, His duties and responsibilities are vast and complicated, and besides he is among strangers whose aims and objects are not known to him. Therefore, that he should commit mistakes, even grave errors, must be expected. But I have an abiding confidence that he is honest and sincere, and will repair them when seen.

But Taylor's position on the admission of California pushes Toombs over the edge.

To dramatize his outrage, he decides to interfere in the election of the House Speaker. The incumbent is his fellow Whig, Robert Winthrop of Massachusetts, who stands a good chance of repeating given that the Democrats, now back in the majority, already face regional divisions.

Toombs begins by making his demands on slavery clear:

Congress ought not to put any restrictions upon any state institutions in the territories and ought not to abolish slavery in the District of Columbia.

In a fiery speech on December 1, 1848 he goes further, threatening Disunion if slavery is banned in the new territories "purchased by common blood."

I have as much attachment to the Union of these States, under the Constitution of our fathers, as any freeman ought to have. I am ready to concede and sacrifice for it whatever a just and honorable man ought to sacrifice....I do not then hesitate to avow before this House and the country, and in the presence of the living God, that if by your legislation you seek to drive us from the Territories purchased by the common blood and treasure of the people, and to abolish slavery in the District, thereby attempting to fix a national degradation upon half the States of this confederacy, I am for Disunion, and if my physical courage be equal to the maintenance of my convictions of right and duty I will devote all I am and all I have on earth to its consummation.

This speech signals an important sea change among the moderates.

Toombs in particular is noted for his genial manner and long-standing opposition to all inflammatory rhetoric. He has also opposed Polk's initial advance to the Rio Grande and, like Stephens and Crittenden, enjoys a reputation as a fierce supporter of the Union.

But on this issue, Toombs exhibits the unbending determination that will later make him a founder of the Confederacy, its first Secretary of State, and later a field general in its army.

Ballot after ballot, his coalition blocks resolution on the speakership, even for a host of compromise candidates – from Whig Edward Stanly to Democrats W.J. Brown and Linn Boyd.

Finally a frustrated bipartisan group proposes a change in the House rules whereby a Speaker could be elected with a plurality of the votes rather than a majority. On December 22, the 63rd ballot hands the Speakership to a Democrat, Howell Cobb, with a 46% plurality.

The choice is actually a victory for Toombs since Cobb is a close friend, a fellow Georgian, and a supporter of expanding slavery into the West.

Ballots For Speaker Of The House: December 1849

Candidates			#1	#30	#38	#47	#59	#60	#63
Howell Cobb	Georgia	Dem	103	5		1	2	95	102
Robert Winthrop	Mass	Whig	96	102	100	10	13	90	99
Linn Boyd	Ky	Dem		4	1	86	28	3	1
W.J. Brown	Indiana	Dem		2	109				
Emery Potter	Ohio	Dem		77		18	1	3	1
Edward Stanly	N.C.	Whig				66	75		
John McClernand	IL	Dem					50		
David Wilmot	PA	FS	8	6	6		7	9	8
All-Others			14	28	9	44	40	17	10
Total			221	224	225	225		217	221

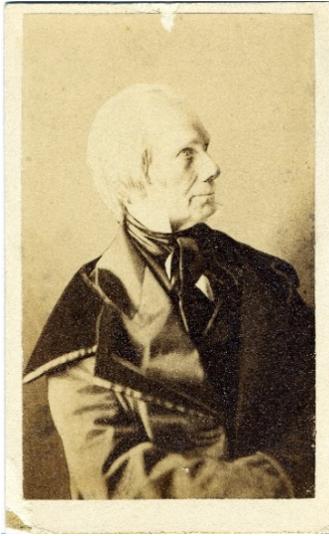
The voting in the House does not go unnoticed by Henry Clay – an ex-Speaker himself and still patriarch of the Whig Party he founded two decades ago.

It convinces him that Southern moderate Whigs like Toombs and Stephens are on the verge of joining their more radical Democratic colleagues like Calhoun and Yancey in fighting for the expansion of slavery.

Chapter 148 - Clay And Douglas Offer An “Omnibus Bill” To Assuage The South

Time: January To February 1850

Clay Steps In Again To Search For Another Compromise



Henry Clay (1777-1852)

Senator Henry Clay is 72 years old when the crisis over California materializes.

He has been in various DC posts 43 years, since joining the Senate from Kentucky in 1806. His family life has been filled with tragedy. All six of his daughters have died young of various diseases, and one of his five sons – Henry Clay, Jr. – has been killed in 1847 at the Battle of Buena Vista, while serving under Taylor. What cruel irony to be called upon to “fix” the consequences of the Mexican War he opposed in congress and that cost him his namesake.

Still Clay is nothing if not a patriot, and he jumps right in.

As a master of legislative horse-trading, he knows that tensions over California entering as a Free State would be greatly reduced if the South could be guaranteed a new Slave State to be carved out of the New Mexico or Utah Territories.

The problem of course is that such “guarantees” are no longer a political option.

Prior votes on the Wilmot Proviso have shown that a majority in the House oppose any extension of slavery in the new West, and President Taylor, the titular head of Clay’s own Whig Party, has said he would support this prohibition.

This leaves the “Great Conciliator” with only one way out – embracing the Democrat’s bandwagon on “popular sovereignty” as a path that could conceivably lead to the admission of more Slave States, to offset California.

While hardly the “federal guarantees” wanted by the South, Clay joins Stephen Douglas in crafting a bi-partisan bill they hope will gain Congressional passage.

Two sticking points surface immediately. The first lies in deciding how much time should pass before a new Territory can apply for admission; the second, whether or not slaves will be permitted to arrive in advance of the application.

The South is very clear about its wishes on both counts.

It favors a long period of “Territorial” status, and one where slave owners are able to enter and settle down, well before a “pop sov” vote is taken. The Southern assumption being that “dislodging” slavery once it exists would be much more difficult than banning it in the first place.

Time: February 5, 1850

The “1850 Omnibus Bill” Is Presented To Congress

Working together the two powerful senators arrive at what becomes the “Omnibus Bill,” promising the South that the future of slavery in the New Mexico and Utah Territories would be decided by “popular sovereignty” voting, and not by any blanket ban such as the Wilmot Proviso.

It also allows for settlers to immediately bring slaves into the Mexican Cession lands, while remaining intentionally vague as to the elapsed time between Territorial status and admission to statehood.

To further sweeten the pot for the South, it delivers on three more wishes that emerge in the early negotiations:

- Granting the slave state of Texas \$10 million to settle its boundary disputes with New Mexico.
- Explicitly recognizing that slave ownership (albeit not trading) will continue in DC.
- Announcing a new Fugitive Slave Law that will allow southern bounty hunters to enter northern states and forcibly remove all proven run-away slaves.

On February 5, 1850, Clay introduces his Omnibus Bill in the Senate.

What follows is a Congressional debate on slavery that rivals the 1820 Missouri Compromise in both importance and in soaring rhetoric.

It also marks the final curtain for the three long-term “giants” of the Senate – Calhoun, Webster and Clay – and the emergence of the new men who will dominate the floor for the next decade – Jeff Davis, Robert Toombs, Stephen Douglas, Henry Seward, and Charles Sumner.

Chapter 149 - Four Cross Party Factions Emerge On The Slavery Issue

Time: February 1850

Abolish Slavery

As Clay weighs in with his Omnibus Bill, four distinct cross-party factions have developed around the issue of “what to do about slavery in the west.”

The first faction remains relatively small, the Abolitionists, a handful of outspoken and much maligned congressional leaders who have followed in the footsteps of John Quincy Adams after his death in 1848. Recent additions include Thad Stevens in the House and Salmon Chase in the Senate.

“Abolish Slavery” Leaders In Congress In 1850

Tenure	House	State	Party
1838-59	Joshua Giddings	Ohio	Whig/Rep
1849-53	Thad Stevens	Pa	Whig
	Senate		
1847-53	John P. Hale	NH	Free Soil
1849-55	Salmon Chase	Ohio	Free Soil

Contain Slavery

The second faction is the “Contain Slavery” men of the North, whose leaders accept slavery in the old South, while standing in opposition to expanding it into the new western lands. They are very much in the ascendency by 1850, bolstered by the “Free Soil” movement and Whig Senator Henry Seward’s influence with President Taylor.

“Contain Slavery” Leaders In Congress In 1850

Tenure	House	State	Party
1845-51	David Wilmot	Pa	Democrat
1849-53	Preston King	NY	Free Soil
	Senate		
1848-61	Hannibal Hamlin	Maine	Democrat
1849-61	Henry Seward	NY	Whig/Rep

Expand Slavery

Then come the “Expand Slavery” Southerners – also referred to as State’s Righters or Fire-Eaters – arguing that slavery is guaranteed in the Constitution and threatening secession should Washington interfere with their institution. They are Democrats, serving predominantly in the Senate, and accustomed to having influence over whoever is President.

“Expand Slavery” Leaders In Congress In 1850

Tenure	Senate	State	Party
1844-55	David Atchison	Mo	Democrat
1845-50	John Calhoun	SC	Democrat
1846-57	Andrew Butler	SC	Democrat
1847-51	Jefferson Davis	Miss	Democrat
1847-61	Robert Hunter	Va	Democrat
1847-61	James Mason	Virginia	Democrat
1850-52	Robert B. Rhett	SC	Democrat

Compromise To Save The Union

Finally, there are the “Unionist” hoping to find a middle ground on slavery that gains enough support to hold the nation together. In the House they have been led so far by the Georgia Whigs, who are now in flux. In the Senate they include the giants, Clay and Webster, and the rising star, Douglas. Their voice into the White House is carried by the Kentucky Governor, John J. Crittenden, who was Taylor’s campaign manager in the 1848 election.

“Unionist” Leaders In Congress In 1850

Tenure	House	State	Party
1842-50	Robert Winthrop	Mass	Whig
1843-51	Howell Cobb	Georgia	Democrat/CU52
1843-51	Robert Toombs	Georgia	Whig/CU52
1843-59	Alexander Stephens	Georgia	Whig/CU52/D55
1849-53	Edward Stanly	NC	Whig
	Senate		
1821-51	Thomas Hart Benton	Missouri	Democrat
1845-50	Daniel Webster	NH	Whig
1847-61	Stephen Douglas	IL	Democrat
1847-59	John Bell	Tenn	D/Amer/Con U
1847-52	Henry Foote	Miss	Democrat
1849-52	Henry Clay	Kentucky	Whig

Note: “CU” = The Constitutional Union Party; Amer = Know Nothings Party

Chapter 150 - Heated Arguments Stymie The “Omnibus Bill”

Time: February 20, 1850

Abolitionist Thaddeus Stevens Opens The Attack On Clay’s Bill



Thaddeus Stevens (1792-1868)

The attack on Clay’s Bill by the Abolitionist forces is launched in the House on February 20, 1850 by Thaddeus Stevens of Pennsylvania.

The stern-faced Stevens arrives in Washington with a reputation as a crusader against institutions he regards as conveying unfair advantages to privileged classes over the common man. This leads to his first foray into politics in the 1830’s as a leading member of the short-lived Anti-Masonic Party.

From there, he turns his fire against the Southern planter class and the practice of slavery.

His commitment to abolition develops gradually. As a young “letter of the law” attorney in 1821, he prevails on behalf of a slave-owner

in recovering Charity Butler, a run-away, and her two young children. But the victory gnaws at his conscience, and shortly thereafter he buys the freedom of a slave he encounters in Maryland.

By 1835 he is speaking out in Gettysburg in favor of ending slavery and re-colonization. He attacks the 1836 “Gag rule” and urges congress to end both slave trading and ownership in DC. In an address at the May 1837 state constitutional convention he says:

Domestic slavery in this country is the most disgraceful institution that the world has ever witnessed under any form of government in any age.....(If I) were the owner of every Southern slave, (I would) cast off the shackles from their limbs and witness the rapture...in (their) first dance of freedom.

When his Anti-Masonic Party is dissolved in 1838, Stevens first joins Salmon Chase in the Liberty Party, before switching to the Whigs in 1844 and winning his congressional seat in 1848. In that same year he hires a freed black woman, Lydia Hamilton Smith, to be his housekeeper in the capitol and, according to some accounts, his mistress.

Stevens is famous throughout his career for biting oratory, and it is on full display when he rises on February 20 to oppose the 1850 Omnibus Bill. The target of his spleen in this case is one Richard Meade of Virginia, who has just supported the movement of slaves into the new western territories.

Stevens argues that such a move will produce the same economic and moral degradations in the west already evident across Virginia, where “breeding slaves” has become the standard way of life.

It is now fit to be only the breeder, not the employer of slaves...Instead of searching for the best breed of cattle and horses to feed on her hills and valleys...the sons of his great state must devote their time to selecting and grooming the most lusty sires and the most fruitful wenches, to supply the slave barracoons of the South.

Instead of an Omnibus Bill which perpetuates the evils of slavery, Stevens demands an option that abolishes the practice once and for all. He closes his speech with a final dose of spleen for those “Northern doughfaces” who surrender their moral authority to curry favor from Southern politicians and voters.

Date: February 27, 1850

Robert Toombs Pleads For “Good Faith” From The North To Save The Union

Steven’s criticism is followed by that of another Whig, Robert Toombs, the dissident Georgian, who two months earlier foiled his party’s attempt to elect Winthrop as Speaker of the House.

His message captures the sense of betrayal felt by many Southern Unionists over the entire slavery debate. The 1787 Constitution sanctioned the practice, so how he asks can Northern men of honor turn their backs on the contract?

Toombs powerful February 27 critique begins by acknowledging that the North now enjoys a majority status in America that can be used to “destroy the political rights” of the South.

Mr. Chairman: There is a general discontent among the people of fifteen states of the Union against this government...It is based upon a well-founded apprehension of a fixed purpose on the part of the non-slaveholding states of the Union to destroy their political rights.

The course of events, the increase of population in the Northern portion of the republic and the addition of new states, are about to give the non-slaveholding states a majority in both branches of Congress, and they have a large and increasing majority of the population of the Union.

The only protection left for the minority South lies in “good faith” behaviors by the majority North.

These causes have brought us to the point where we are to test the sufficiency of written constitutions to protect the rights of a minority against a majority of the people. Upon the

determination of this question will depend the permanency of the government. Our security, under the Constitution, is based solely upon good faith.

The Constitution does not allow the government to mandate slavery in the new territories, and the South is not demanding that. All it asks is to exercise its right to take its slaves into the new territory.

We do not demand, as is constantly alleged on this floor and elsewhere, that you shall establish slavery in the territories. I have endeavored to show that you have no power to do so.

Slavery is a 'fixed fact' in your system.

We ask protection from all hostile impediments to the introduction and peaceful enjoyment of all our property in the territories. Whether these impediments arise from foreign laws or from any pretended domestic authority, we hold it to be your duty to remove them.

Toombs argues that the proposed Omnibus Bill simply strengthens the Northern majority, while offering none of the important protections the South wants and deserves – and hence it cannot be supported.

The bill now before us for the admission of California...settles nothing but the addition of another Non-slaveholding state to the Union, thus giving the predominating interest additional power to settle the territorial questions which it leaves unadjusted.

In this state of the question it cannot receive my support.

In the beginning the South signed on for both the Union and the Constitution; the former cannot be sustained without adherence to the latter.

We are now daily threatened with every form of extermination if we do not tamely acquiesce in whatever legislation the majority may choose to impose upon us.

Gentlemen may spare their threats...the sentiment of every true man of the South will be, we took the Union and the Constitution together and we will have both or we will have neither.

The cry of the Union is the masked battery from behind which the Constitution and the rights of the South are to be assailed

Toombs declares that he has never cast a sectional vote in Congress and never will.

I have never yet given a sectional vote in these halls. Whenever the state of public opinion in my own section...shall incapacitate me from supporting the true interests of the whole nation...I will surrender a trust which I can no longer hold with honor.

The first act of legislative hostility to slavery is the proper point for Southern resistance.

The South came to the Union with its slavery and seeks the protection owed it by the North.

You owe us protection (from interference). We had our institutions when you sought our alliance. We were content with them then, and we are content with them now. We have not sought to thrust them upon you. (So) why do you fear our equal competition with you in the territories?

All being asked for is equal treatment of all settlers, then a free election to decide the slavery question.

We ask only that our common government shall protect us both equally until the territories shall be ready to be admitted as states into the Union, then to leave their citizens free to adopt any domestic policy which in their judgment...may best promote their happiness. The demand is just, (but) I see no reasonable prospect that you will grant it.

The action of this House is demonstrating that we are in the midst of a legislative revolution, the object to trample under foot the Constitution...and to make the will of the majority the supreme law of the land.

The duty of Southerners is to stand by the Constitution until it is proven powerless to protect – at which time it must abandon the Union and stand by its arms.

In this emergency our duty is clear: it is to stand by the Constitution and the laws until demonstrated that the Constitution is powerless for our protection.

It will then not only be the right but the duty of the slaveholding states to seek new safeguards for their future security ...to prevent the application of the resources of the republic to the maintenance of the wrongful act.

I appeal in the language of a distinguished Georgian who yet lives to arouse the hearts of his countrymen to resist wrong: when arguments are exhausted, we will stand by our arms.

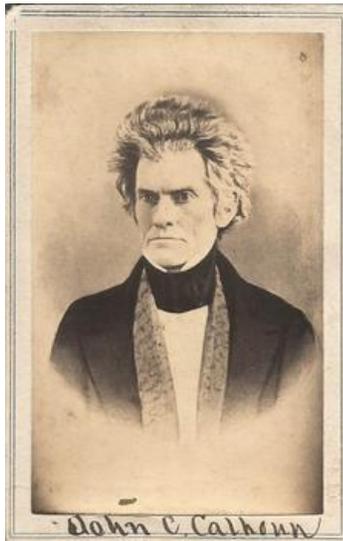
Toombs's speech captures the key arguments of the Southern dissidents who will go on to form the Constitutional Union Party:

- The institution of slavery was sanctioned in the 1787 contract between the original thirteen states;
- The minority South is now at the mercy of the majority North to abide by the established rules;
- This will require compromises from the North over slavery in order to preserve the sacred Union.

But within this context, Toombs signals his faction's willingness to accept the "popular sovereignty" option as a fair way to decide on slavery in the west.

Time: March 4, 1850

Calhoun's Farewell Speech Demands A Congressional Act Affirming The Expansion Of Slavery



John C. Calhoun (1782-1850)

For the Fire-Eaters of the South, Toombs' "solution" is both naïve and inadequate.

Their leading spokesman is John C. Calhoun of South Carolina, who is dying from tuberculosis when it is his turn to open debate on the Omnibus Bill in the Senate.

On March 4, 1850, only 27 days before he succumbs, Calhoun struggles into the chamber for the last time, in a final attempt to "ask for simple justice" for those in the South. He has served his nation over four decades since being elected to the House in 1811. His record includes eight years as Secretary of War under Monroe, seven years as Vice President under Adams and then Jackson, one year as Secretary of State under Tyler, and another seventeen years in congress representing South Carolina.

Despite all this, the one position he wants most, the presidency, has eluded him over questions about his party loyalties. At one moment he is tied to the Federalist Adams and then the Whig Clay. His credentials as a Democrat are tarnished when Jackson turns against him, and when he begins to call for Southern secession. In the end, all sides respect his towering intellect, but few trust his motives or appreciate his overbearing demeanor.

When recognized to speak on the Omnibus Bill, Calhoun is too weak to proceed, and asks his friend, James Mason of Virginia, to stand in for him.

The themes Mason announces are vintage Calhoun. As he sees it, Congress has been usurped by an anti-slavery fringe group that represents less than 5% of all people in the North, and is now forcing the South to choose between abolishing slavery and seceding from the Union.

The address begins ominously on the prospect of "disunion."

I have, Senators, believed from the first that the agitation of the subject of slavery would, if not prevented by some timely and effective measure, end in disunion.

The rest plays out Calhoun's well known theme that what began with regional "equilibrium" in 1787 has now shifted to Northern dominance and unfair treatment of the South. To prove his point, he says that the boundary prohibitions set on slavery will disqualify the South from access to three-quarters of the nation's public land.

The United States, since they declared their independence, have acquired 2,373,046 square miles of territory, from which the North will have excluded the South, if she should succeed in monopolizing the newly-acquired Territories, about three-fourths of the whole, leaving to the South but about one-fourth. Such is the first and great cause that has destroyed the equilibrium between the two sections in the government.

In addition he claims that the South has always been deprived of its fair share of incoming federal revenue which has been driven largely through cash generated by its cotton export industry.

The next is the system of revenue and disbursements which has been adopted by the government. It is well known that the government has derived its revenue mainly from duties on imports. The South, as the great exporting portion of the Union, has in reality paid vastly more than her due proportion of the revenue -- an immense amount of which in the long course of sixty years has been transferred from South to North. It is safe to say that it amounts to hundreds of millions of dollars -- adding greatly to the wealthy of the North, and increasing her population by attracting immigration from all quarters to that section.

Calhoun says that these violations of the South's "honor and safety" must end if the Union is to be saved – and that the path to "simple justice" lies in abiding by the promises made in the Constitution.

How can the Union be saved? By adopting such measures as will satisfy the States belonging to the Southern section that they can remain in the Union consistently with their honor and their safety. The South asks for justice, simple justice, and less she ought not to take. She has no compromise to offer but the Constitution, and no concession or surrender to make. She has already surrendered so much that she has little left to surrender.

Like Toombs, he says that the time has come to "cease the agitation of the slave question" and restore the original equality between the North and the South.

The North has only to will it to accomplish it—to do justice by conceding to the South an equal right in the acquired territory, and to do her duty by causing the stipulations relative to fugitive slaves to be faithfully fulfilled--to cease the agitation of the slave question, and to provide for the insertion of a provision in the Constitution, by an amendment, which will restore to the South, in substance, the power she possessed of protecting herself before the equilibrium between the sections was destroyed by the action of this government.

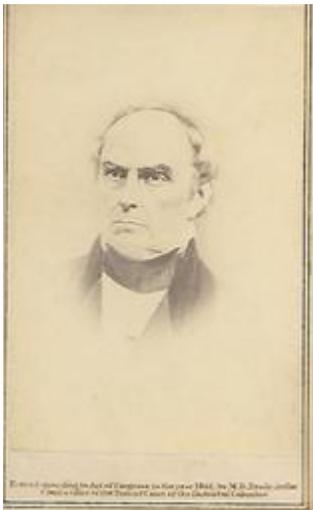
Finally he closes with words that move supporters and opponents alike -- his final reflection on a long life in public office.

Having faithfully done my duty to the best of my ability, both to the Union and my section, throughout this agitation, I shall have the consolation, let what will come, that I am free from all responsibility.

After this farewell speech, Calhoun returns to the Old Brick Boarding House in DC, where he dies on March 31 at age 68 years. His body is returned to Charleston where parades and speeches at The Citadel and City Hall dominate the city for two days until his final burial at St. Phillips Episcopal Church.

Time: March 7, 1850

Daniel Webster Backs Toombs Call For Northerners To Compromise



Daniel Webster (1782-1852)

The next critical juncture in the debate belongs to Massachusetts Senator Daniel Webster, and his support for the Omnibus Bill proves shocking to his many supporters.

“Black Dan” is renowned as a hard drinker and fast liver, with a dominant personality, withering visage and litigator’s voice, and an unerring capacity to forever strike the right emotional chords in making his case.

His brilliant career as a constitutional lawyer has included many such cases, including over 200 appearances before the Supreme Court and a string of landmark victories. Most are antithetical to the South, involving institutions which it distrusts – big corporations and big banks -- or backing federal jurisdiction over states’ rights.

- Dartmouth College v Woodward. Corporations do need not serve the public interest in order to enjoy the privileges granted in their charters.
- McCulloch v Maryland. States cannot impose taxes on federal entities, such as The U.S. Bank.
- Gibbons v Ogden. The federal government, not the states, has final power to regulate interstate commerce.
- Cohens v Virginia. Federal courts have the right to review all state decisions in criminal cases.

As a Federalist and then a Whig politician over four decades, Webster has also stood with the New England industrialists for a restrictive tariff and government spending on infrastructure, and against both the Texas annexation and the Mexican War.

When he rises to address the Senate on March 7, he seems an unlikely candidate to assuage Southern fears and to sell Clay's compromise. But, instead of confrontation, his brief is nothing but conciliatory toward the South.

His opening declaration immediately mesmerizes the audience.

I wish to speak today not as a Massachusetts man, nor as a Northern man, but as an American..... I speak for the preservation of the Union. Hear me for my cause.

He decides to simply ignore Calhoun's attacks on federal taxing and spending policies.

The honorable Senator from South Carolina (argues) that the North has prospered at the expense of the South in consequence of the manner of administering this government, in the collecting of its revenues, and so forth. These are disputed topics, and I have no inclination to enter into them.

Instead he goes right to the issue of slavery, arguing that "men of good conscience" exist on both sides. While some see it as morally wrong, it's not banned in the New Testament, and, in general, the Southern tradition is to treat those in bondage with "care and kindness."

The separation of that great religious community, the Methodist Episcopal Church...(shows that) upon the general nature and influence of slavery there exists a wide difference of opinion... Although not the subject of any injunction in the New Testament, (many feel) slavery is a wrong. The South, upon the other side, having been accustomed to this relation between two races all their lives (and) having been taught, in general, to treat the subjects of this bondage with care and kindness... do not see the unlawfulness of slavery.

From there he lashes out against the Abolitionists, who have "produced nothing good" over twenty years, and whose "agitation and impatience" have retarded "the slow moral improvement of mankind."

Then, Sir, there are the Abolition societies, (about) which I have very clear notions and opinions. I do not think them useful. I think their operations for the last twenty years have produced nothing good or valuable.

They created great agitation in the North against Southern slavery. Well, what was the result? Public opinion, which in Virginia had begun to be exhibited against slavery, and was opening out for the discussion, drew back and shut itself up in its castle.

They are apt to think that nothing is good but what is perfect, and that there are no compromises or modifications to be made in consideration of difference of opinion or in deference to other men's judgment.

There are impatient men; too impatient always to give heed to the admonition of St. Paul, that we are not to "do evil that good may come"; too impatient to wait for the slow progress of moral causes in the improvement of mankind...

Not only are these radicals misguided, but also those Northerners who shirk their “constitutional duty” to return escaped slaves to their rightful owners. Here is Webster the full throated “property lawyer” in action.

I will allude to (one) other complaints of the South, which has in my opinion just foundation; and that is, a disinclination among some individuals and among legislators in the North to perform fully their constitutional duties in regard to the return of persons bound to service who have escaped into the free States. In that respect, the South, in my judgment, is right, and the North is wrong.

I put it to all the sober and sound minds at the North as a question of morals and a question of conscience. What right have they, in their legislative capacity or any other capacity, to endeavor to get round this Constitution, or to embarrass the free exercise of the rights secured by the Constitution to the persons whose slaves escape from them? None at all; none at all.

As he winds down, Webster’s passion is elevated and, once again, he is every inch the Unionist, repeating his 1830 plea to embrace harmony and cast aside secession.

Mr. President, I hear with distress and anguish the word "secession." I see as plainly as I see the sun in heaven what that disruption itself must produce; I see that it must produce war, and such a war as I will not describe.

Peaceable secession! There can be no such thing as peaceable secession. Peaceable secession is an utter impossibility.

What is to remain American? What am I to be? An American no longer? Am I to become a sectional man, a local man, a separatist, with no country in common with the gentlemen who sit around me here, or who fill the other house of Congress? Heaven forbid! Where is the flag of the republic to remain? Where is the eagle still to tower? Or is she to cower, and shrink, and fall to the ground?

Can anybody suppose that this population can be severed, by a line that divides them from the territory of a foreign and alien government, down somewhere, the Lord knows where, upon the lower banks of the Mississippi? What would become of Missouri? Will she join the arrondissement of the slave States? Shall the man from the Yellow Stone and the Platte be connected, in the new republic, with the man who lives on the southern extremity of the Cape of Florida?

Sir, I am ashamed to pursue this line of remark. I dislike it, I have an utter disgust for it. I would rather hear of natural blasts and mildews, war, pestilence, and famine, than to hear gentlemen talk of secession. To break up this great government! To dismember this glorious country! To astonish Europe with an act of folly such as Europe for two

centuries has never beheld in any government or any people! No, Sir! no, Sir! There will be no secession! Gentlemen are not serious when they talk of secession...

And now, Mr. President, instead of speaking of secession, let us come out into the light of day. Never did there devolve on any generation of men higher trusts than now devolve upon us, for the preservation of this Constitution and the harmony and peace of all who are destined to live under it.

In the end, Webster's March 7 speech comes down on the side of Clay and Crittenden – the old men of his generation -- who have lived through the birth of the nation and can't quite grasp the multifaceted and intractable differences that now divide the North and the South.

Critics claim that he has sold out to the South in the hope of winning a Whig presidential nomination in 1852.

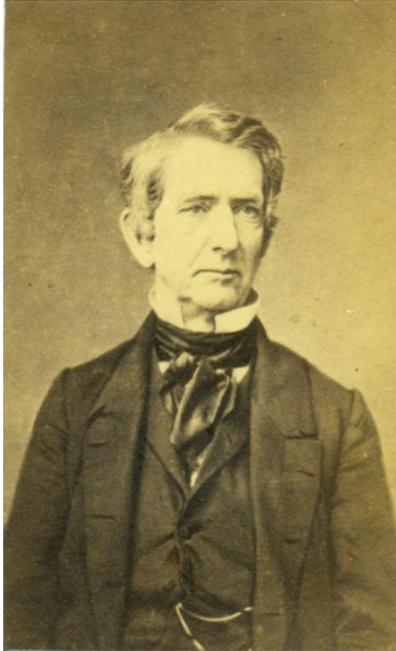
Lloyd Garrison lashes out, accusing Webster of “bending his supple knee anew to the Slave Power.” Other abolitionists follow, most notably the poet, John Greenleaf Whittier, who pens the following:

*Of all we loved and honored, nought save power remains.
A fallen angel's pride of thought, still strong in chains.
All else is gone from those great eyes, the sould has fled,
When faith is lost, when honor dies, the man is dead.*

While Webster breathes additional life into the Omnibus Bill, his support of the Fugitive Slave Act portion will cost him dearly, especially in Massachusetts, and, like Calhoun, he will forever be denied his nomination for the presidency.

Time: March 11, 1850

William Seward Cites “A Higher Law” Requiring An End To Slavery In America



William H. Seward (1801-1872)

With Webster’s support on the record, Clay is optimistic that his Omnibus Bill will be approved in the Senate.

His hopes, however, are shattered exactly four days later when another of his fellow Whigs, William Seward of New York, rises to make his maiden speech in Congress.

The diminutive Seward has led the proverbial “silver spoon in his mouth” life, from his birth into a wealthy NY family, through his first-in-class graduation from Union College and his marriage to Frances Miller, whose father brings him into a thriving law practice and sets the couple up on their lifelong estate in Auburn, NY.

He is first drawn into politics by Thurlow Weed, the newspaperman, joins the Anti-Masonic Party and wins a seat in the NY state senate in 1830. In 1838 he is elected Governor of NY and moves steadily upward to the U.S. Senate in 1848.

His aversion to slavery begins in his youth.

Seward’s father owns slaves, and he mixes with them on a daily basis as a youth. Bondage strikes him as unfair, and this belief is amplified dramatically in adulthood when he and Frances, vacationing in northern Virginia, encounter the realities of slave sales and corporal punishment. After this 1835 trip, Frances becomes an abolitionist, and Seward begins to speak publicly against slavery.

Still he is not yet a dedicated Abolitionist by 1850. Nor is he among the very small band of Assimilationists like Lloyd Garrison, William Birney, Lucretia Mott, John Brown and others who have lived among blacks and can see a day when they are fully integrated into the social fabric.

Instead, like Lincoln, Seward is simply convinced that slavery is morally evil, and is ready to block any actions to allow it to spread outside of the old South.

His opposition in this regard is especially important because he and his supporter Thurlow Weed both have the ear of President Zachary Taylor. The fact that all three want to see the Omnibus Bill defeated shows how fractured the Whigs are on the slavery issue, and how much Clay’s control within the party has eroded over time.

Seward's speech before the Senate on March 11, 1850, is a stinging indictment of his fellow Whigs, Clay and Webster, and of the proposed Compromise.

He begins by acknowledging Calhoun, and countering his arguments on behalf of "equilibrium" between the states (i.e. half should be free; half slave). The Constitution says no such things, according to Seward.

The honorable senator from South Carolina, argues that the Constitution was founded on the equilibrium (of states) and recognizes property in slaves.

The proposition of an established classification of states as slave states and free states, seems to me purely imaginary. This must be so, because, when the Constitution was adopted, twelve of the thirteen states were slave states, and so there was no equilibrium.

...

He then turns to the "slaves are property" assertion and, like several founders back in 1787, hoists the South on contradictions inherent in the 3/5th clause. If slaves were truly property, like cattle or horses, they should count as zero in the census. In arguing for a 3/5ths count, surely the South was seeing them as inhabitants of the country, albeit lesser in value than the whites.

I submit that the Constitution not merely does not affirm the "slave as property" principle, but, on the contrary, altogether excludes it.

The Constitution regards (slaves) as inhabitants, debased below the level of free inhabitants, but only by two-fifths. The remaining three-fifths leaves them still an inhabitant, a person, a living, breathing, moving, reasoning, immortal man.

Seward then makes an assertion which immortalizes his speech – the belief that man is accountable to "a higher law than the Constitution," the law of the Creator, which dictates against slavery.

But there is a higher law than the Constitution, which regulates our authority over the domain, and ... is bestowed upon us by the Creator of the universe. We are his stewards.

And now the simple, bold, and even awful question which presents itself to us is this... shall we establish human bondage, or permit it by our sufferance to be established? Sir, our forefathers would not have hesitated an hour. They found slavery existing here, and they left it only because they could not remove it. There is not only no free state which would now establish it, but there is no slave state, which, if it had had the free alternative as we now have, would have founded slavery.

I confess that the most alarming evidence of our degeneracy which has yet been given is found in the fact that we even debate such a question.

I cannot consent to introduce slavery into any part of this continent which is now exempt from what seems to me so great an evil. These are my reasons for declining to compromise the question relating to slavery as a condition of the admission of California.

In turn, he encourages America to join other Christian nations like Britain and France in gradually abandoning slavery.

Sir, there is no Christian nation, thus free to choose as we are, which would establish slavery. I speak on due consideration because Britain, France, and Mexico, have abolished slavery, and all other European states are preparing to abolish it as speedily as they can.

Seward argues that his position on slavery places him in the moderate camp, unlike others who are threatening sectional harmony – those who demand an overnight end to slavery and those who wish to make it permanent.

We hear on one side demands-- absurd, indeed, but yet unceasing--for an immediate and unconditional abolition of slavery--as if any power, except the people of the slave states, could abolish it, and as if they could be moved to abolish it by merely sounding the trumpet loudly and proclaiming emancipation.

On the other hand, our statesmen say that "slavery has always existed, and, for aught they know or can do, it always must exist. God permitted it, and he alone can indicate the way to remove it." As if the Supreme Creator... did not leave us in all human transactions, with due invocations of his Holy Spirit, to seek out his will and execute it for ourselves.

Here, then, is the point of my separation from both of these parties.

I feel assured that slavery must give way, and will give way... that emancipation is inevitable...

But I will adopt none but lawful, constitutional, and peaceful means, to secure even that end; and none such can I or will I forego.

No free state claims to extend its legislation into a slave state. None claims that Congress shall usurp power to abolish slavery in the slave states. None claims that any violent, unconstitutional, or unlawful measure shall be embraced.

But you reply that, nevertheless, you must have guaranties; and the first one is for the surrender of fugitives from labor. That guaranty you cannot have, as I have already shown, because you cannot roll back the tide of social progress. ...

Finally, and naively, Seward dismisses the warnings from Calhoun and Webster that the slavery issue could lead on to disunion.

There will be no disunion and no secession.

Let, then, those who distrust the Union make compromises to save it.

I shall not impeach their wisdom, as I certainly cannot their patriotism; but, indulging no such apprehensions myself, I shall vote for the admission of California directly, without conditions, without qualifications, and without compromise. ...

In the end, Seward offers the South nothing at all in exchange for admitting California as a free state.

Even the notion of a “popular sovereignty” vote in favor of slavery is dismissed in Seward’s “higher law” formulation.

Which leaves Wilmot’s flat-out ban on slavery in the west as Seward’s only answer.

In effect, this speech on March 11 signals the death knell for the bill that Clay has put forward.

It’s now up to the various sides to search for a new solution.