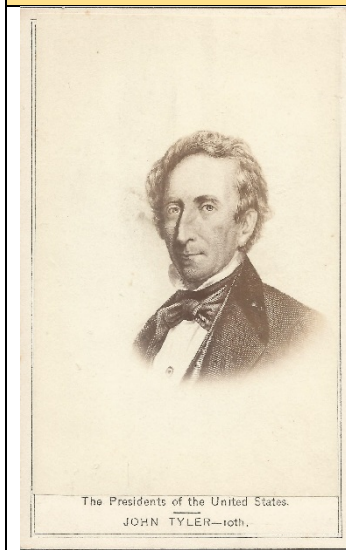


Chapter 308 – Ex-President John Tyler’s National Peace Conference Open In Washington



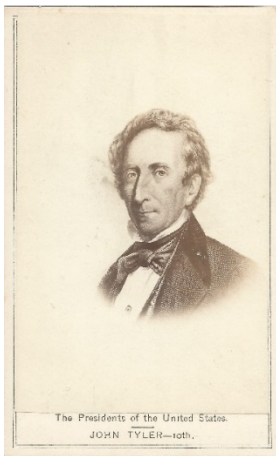
Dates:
February 4, 1860

Sections:

- The “Old Gentlemen’s Convention” Hopes To Focus On Saving The Upper South States

Date: February 4, 1861

The “Old Gentlemen’s Convention” Hopes To Focus On Saving The Upper South States



February 4, 1861 marks not only the opening session for the new Confederate States of America, but also for ex-President John Tyler’s Peace Conference in the capital, which Buchanan approved two weeks ago.

All told, the event draws 131 men to the prestigious Willard Hotel, some four blocks east of the White House. The assembly is nothing if not prestigious, with a list of “former” elites including: 50 congressmen, 14 senators, 19 governors, 12 supreme court justices, 6 cabinet members and, of course, one former U.S. President, John Tyler. Fourteen Free states are represented along with seven Slave states.

Critics of the affair immediately christen it the “Old Gentlemen’s Convention,” with 74 attendees being fifty years or older, and 19 into their seventies.

John Tyler (1790-1862)

Interest in the event traces to the promise of hearing, via Tyler himself, what the state of Virginia is thinking in regard to possible secession – with the assumption being that its decision will dictate the outcomes across all eight of the Upper South slave states still in the Union: Delaware, Maryland, North Carolina, Kentucky, Tennessee, Missouri, Arkansas and Virginia itself.

Republicans initially plan to boycott the conference, but then decide they must appear in order to counter any possible stampede toward secession that might materialize. Thus the Northern attendees include party members such as Salmon Chase, William Fessenden, David Wilmot, Stephen Logan and others.

Ironically, as Tyler offers his opening remarks in DC, a granddaughter of his participates in the CSA proceedings in Montgomery. But Tyler claims that his purpose is not to bury the Union but to save it:

The country is in danger (and) one must take the place assigned him in the great work of reconciliation and adjustment....You have before you, gentlemen, a task...to snatch from ruin a great and glorious Confederation, to preserve the Government, and to renew and invigorate the Constitution.

Predictably a 21 man sub-committee (one per state present) is formed under the leadership of Kentucky's James Guthrie and the search begins again for a fresh solution.