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## Party Politics During the Compromise Crisis: The Virginia Congressional Elections of 1849 and 1851

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PARTY POLITICS DURING THE COMPROMISE CRISIS:  
THE VIRGINIA CONGRESSIONAL ELECTIONS OF 1849 AND 1851

by

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B.A. May 1976, Old Dominion University

A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of  
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MASTER OF ARTS

HISTORY

OLD DOMINION UNIVERSITY  
August 1989

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ABSTRACT

PARTY POLITICS DURING THE COMPROMISE CRISIS:  
THE VIRGINIA CONGRESSIONAL ELECTIONS OF 1849 AND 1851

Jodi Lee Bennett Koste  
Old Dominion University, 1989  
Director: Dr. Peter C. Stewart

The Second American Party System developed in Virginia from the factions contesting the presidency between 1824 and 1840. Following its formation, Virginia voters adopted party allegiances and regularly supported their party in the various local, state and national elections. These voting patterns began to change with the elections of the compromise crisis, the period between the presidential elections of 1848 and 1852, when the "politics of slavery" dominated every contest. Defense of the peculiar institution became paramount and party lines were disrupted as a result. Virginia's Whig congressional candidates, unable to present themselves as safe on the slavery question, were no longer serious competitors for the Democrats. By 1853, the demise of the Second American Party System was well underway in Virginia. Source materials for the study include contemporary manuscripts, newspapers and government documents. Election statistics and census data were used to examine the decline of the Second American Party System and the impact of the issue of slavery on Virginia politics.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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Andrea was a great source of encouragement as she cheered the completion of each chapter. Her younger sister, Allison, broke the drudgery of writing with her cute baby antics. Last, but certainly not least, my husband Pete gave generously of his time and computer expertise. Without his patience, encouragement and love, this thesis could not have been written.

## PREFACE

Since the 1970s, a group known as the "new political historians" has dominated Jacksonian political scholarship. This group attempted through quantification and the use of other social science methodologies to supplement or correct traditional historical work. Lee Benson created a conceptual framework for these historians with the publication of his pioneer work, The Concept of Jacksonian Democracy: New York as a Test Case. The "new political historians" went on to describe American political history as a series of successive party systems separated by periods of realignment. They dismissed traditional interpretations of the growth and development of American parties that resulted from economic, social and geographical cleavages in favor of an ethnocultural interpretation where party formation and voting behavior grew out of ethnic and religious conflicts in American society.<sup>1</sup> This interpretation, however, has not been universally accepted as it does little to explain the politics of the homogenous,

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<sup>1</sup>Allan G. Bogue, "The New Political History in the 1970s," in The Past Before Us: Contemporary Historical Writing in the United States, ed. Michael G. Kammen (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1980), 237.

antebellum South.<sup>2</sup> Two more recent works, William J. Cooper's The South and the Politics of Slavery and Michael F. Holt's The Political Crisis of the 1850s took issue with the ethnoculturists in their explanation of southern political behavior.

Cooper theorized that southern politicians were consumed with slavery and that it was the central theme in southern political debate. Democrats and Whigs tried to outwit each other as the champion of slavery and the South. This political one-upmanship Cooper called "the politics of slavery" which he defines as the interaction of the "institution of slavery, southern parties and politicians, the southern political structure, and the values of southern white society."<sup>3</sup> This "politics of slavery" dominated southern politics from Andrew Jackson's administration until secession. Southerners believed their respective parties were the chief defense of their institutions and way of life. Initially, southern politicians dominated national party politics and as a result took for granted their prerogative to set party policy on the issue of slavery. The northern wing's refusal to adhere to this arrangement in

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<sup>2</sup>Thomas E. Jeffrey, "National Issues, Local Interests, and the Transformation of Antebellum North Carolina Politics," The Journal of Southern History 50 (February 1984): 43.

<sup>3</sup>William J. Cooper, The South and the Politics of Slavery, 1828-1856 (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1978), xi.

the aftermath of the Wilmot Proviso precipitated the destruction of the Second American Party System.

Holt contends that a "fundamental reshaping of the nature of party competition" occurred during the 1850s. The system that controlled the nature of politics and contained the sectional conflict for the better part of twenty years collapsed and in its wake appeared two parties of sectional origins, the Northern Republicans and Southern Democrats. The Second American Party System died from consensus. The failure of the parties to provide competition on all levels and in all regions of the country and the lack of distinctive tenets caused the voters to lose faith in the system. The voters' perception of the unresponsiveness of the system led many to fear that republicanism itself was in jeopardy. This fear, coupled with the increasing sectional difficulties arising from the extension of slavery, convinced many Americans that there was a true political crisis in the 1850s.<sup>4</sup>

Neither Cooper nor Holt made an in depth analysis of state politics in their works. Holt did, however, acknowledge the importance of state studies in comprehending antebellum politics. In addition, neither work, particularly Cooper's, made extensive use of election returns or other statistical data. The purpose of this

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<sup>4</sup>Michael F. Holt, The Political Crisis of the 1850s (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1978), 1-16.



study, therefore, is to investigate the antebellum politics of Virginia through a review of contemporary manuscripts, newspapers, government documents and other sources as well as through an analysis of election statistics and census data to examine the decline of the Second American Party System and the impact of the "politics of slavery."

Virginia provides an "interesting" case study for the scholars of middle period political history. The evidence suggests that by 1848 the voting patterns of Virginians were shifting from those established during the early 1840s, particularly during national elections. Democratic presidential candidate James K. Polk carried 70 Virginia counties with an overall margin of 6,000 votes in 1844. Four years later, in 1848, Whig presidential candidate Zachary Taylor carried a record 69 counties although he lost the state by a slim margin of 1,474 votes.<sup>5</sup> While the Whigs did well in the presidential election, the April 1849 Virginia Congressional election just five months later was a disaster for the party. The Whigs carried only 46 counties and managed to elect only one Whig representative after previously holding six seats in the Thirtieth Congress. The Whig fortunes were little better two years later in the

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<sup>5</sup>W. Dean Burnham, Presidential Ballots 1836-1892 (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1955; reprint, New York: Arno, 1976), 242; Svend Petersen, A Statistical History of the American Presidential Elections (New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing Co., 1963), 160.

Virginia Congressional election for the Thirty-second Congress. The Whigs won two seats but failed to provide opposition in six of Virginia's fifteen congressional districts. Does this signal the demise of the Second American Party System in Virginia? Furthermore, did the "politics of slavery," as defined by Cooper, manifest itself in any changes or breaks in the established voting patterns of Virginians during the compromise crisis?

This study will attempt to answer these questions through an overview of party politics in Virginia during the Compromise period, the time between the re-introduction of the Wilmot Proviso during the second session of the Twenty-ninth Congress in January of 1847 and the election of Franklin Pierce in the fall of 1852. Specifically, this study analyzes the Virginia Congressional elections of 1849 and 1851. While this study assesses other elections, including the 1848 presidential election and the 1851 gubernatorial election, it is not a complete analysis of all state contests in the period between 1847 and 1852. Through a close analysis of county voting patterns, this study looks at the impact of the "politics of slavery" on the Virginia polity. The congressional elections of 1849 and 1851 are analyzed by a systematic data analysis proposed by Lee Benson to establish trends in voting behavior and to

determine change.<sup>6</sup> Through this type of analysis we may have a better understanding of the role of the "politics of slavery" and the importance of the Second American Party System in Virginia.

Before an examination of middle period Virginia politics can begin, however, it is necessary to review the development of the Second American Party System. It is also useful to chronicle the events of 1846 and 1847 that would have such a profound effect on the political framework of the antebellum South.

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<sup>6</sup>Lee Benson, Towards the Scientific Study of History (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1972), 3-80.

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

On a sultry evening in the late summer of 1846, two days before the scheduled close of the first session of the Twenty-ninth Congress, a slovenly dressed 32 year old country lawyer from Bradford County in northern Pennsylvania, David Wilmot, rose from his seat in the United States House of Representatives to offer an amendment to President James K. Polk's "two million dollar" appropriations bill. Polk's eleventh hour attempt to secure funds with which his Mexican emissaries could negotiate for western territory was quickly amended by Wilmot. In language borrowed from the Northwest Ordinance of 1787, the Pennsylvanian recommended that slavery be prohibited in all territory acquired as a result of the proposed negotiations. Wilmot, an erstwhile administration supporter as demonstrated by his vote on the Walker Tariff, Oregon Bill, and Rivers and Harbors Bill, had grown increasingly disenchanted with Polk and his programs in the waning days of the first session. Wilmot's proviso represented a

political maneuver by northern Democrats to go on record against a southern dominated administration.<sup>1</sup>

For years a majority of the representatives had shied away from an open congressional debate on slavery. Many congressmen thought Wilmot was merely venting his frustration over the administration's recent pro-southern moves. In fact, few vehement protests were forthcoming from southern representatives. Two short hours after its introduction, the "two million dollar" appropriations bill amended by the Wilmot Proviso passed the House by a vote of 85 to 80 with the two sides dividing almost exclusively along sectional lines. Southern Democrats joined Whigs in an effort to defeat the administration's bill but were foiled by a northern coalition of Democrats who desired to go on record for freedom in the territories and Whigs who sought to halt the territorial expansion efforts of the Polk administration.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Charles B. Going, David Wilmot Free-Soiler (Gloucester, Mass.: D. Appleton Co., 1924), 35-36, 94-105; Allan Nevins, Ordeal of the Union, vol. 1, Fruits of Manifest Destiny 1847-1852 (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1947), 9; and Richard R. Stenberg, "The Motivation of the Wilmot Proviso," Mississippi Valley Historical Review 18 (March 1932): 535-41.

<sup>2</sup>David M. Potter, The Impending Crisis, 1848-1861 (New York: Harper and Row, 1976), 18-22; Chaplain W. Morrison, Democratic Politics and Sectionalism: The Wilmot Proviso Controversy (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1967), 18-20.



The House of Representatives adjourned on 10 August 1846 before the Senate could take a vote on the appropriation bill and the Wilmot Proviso. Despite its defeat, the issue would in the next year crystallize public opinion effectively in the North and South on the extension of slavery. The introduction of the Proviso ushered in a five year period of sectional strife characterized by acrimonious debate in Congress, protracted press wars and an eventual rupture of the national parties. The progressive weakening of party ties in the aftermath of the Proviso and the continued strengthening of sectional allegiances led to the destruction of the Second American Party System.<sup>3</sup>

The Second American Party System, as defined by Richard McCormick, was the political framework that developed out of the successive presidential elections between 1824 and 1840. Unlike its predecessor, the First American Party System (1795-1824) that evolved from factions that existed in the United States Congress, the second system's origins can be traced to the changing political environment of the first half of the nineteenth century and the selection of presidential candidates with regional identifications. In spite of the regional consciousness which gave birth to this

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<sup>3</sup>Don E. Fehrenbacher, The South and the Three Sectional Crises (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1980), 25; John McCardell, The Idea of a Southern Nation (New York: W. W. Norton and Co., 1978), 292; and Holt, Political Crisis, 66.

political framework, the Second American Party System was characterized by "its national comprehensiveness and balance."<sup>4</sup>

The constitutional and legal changes of the first half of the nineteenth century were numerous but varied from state to state. Most notable of these reforms was the adoption by most states of adult, white, manhood suffrage prior to 1850. This enlarged electorate soon became involved in the political process and politics was no longer the exclusive avocation of the gentry. The change in the method of selecting presidential electors created the need for an organized party structure. With increased participation by the newly enfranchised came the demise of the old caucus system and the birth of the party convention system. The transportation and communication revolutions of this period created new avenues by which party members could organize, communicate and campaign. The sum effect was a popular tone to politics, a decline in the "politics of deference," and a renewed interest in elections stimulated by inter-party competition. With these changes, the modern party system emerged.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>Richard P. McCormick, The Second American Party System: Party Formation in the Jacksonian Era (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1966), 6.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., 28-30.

The first phase of this system encompassed the period from 1824 to 1832. During these formative years, candidates with regional identifications and state political groups such as the Albany Regency or Richmond Junto dominated politics. In Congress, voting reflected state interests as the delegations presented united fronts on the issues. Gradually, politics passed from a structure revolving around state interests to national parties. The presidential election of 1836 and the Panic of 1837 marked this transition. These events created an environment that enabled political leaders to forge "the coalitional structure of the second party system."<sup>6</sup> After 1839 presidential nominations were increasingly contested within party conventions while attracting more uniform national support. Voters began to go to the polls with a sense of party identification. A uniformity in party vote and voter turnout emerged. A modern national party system developed in which Whigs and Democrats took distinguishable positions that transcended state boundaries.<sup>7</sup>

One of the more crucial developments in the formation of the Second American Party System was the creation of the two

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<sup>6</sup>William G. Shade, "Political Pluralism and Party Development: The Creation of a Modern Party System: 1815-1852," in The Evolution of American Electoral Systems, Contributions in American History no. 95, eds. Paul Kleppner and others (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1982), 101.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid.

party South. The South had no long tradition of two party politics. While rivalries and factions existed on a local and state basis in the South during the first quarter of the nineteenth century, the emergence of party factionalism did not appear until the early 1830s. Significant factionalism in the South arose in the year 1834 when party members began to look for a successor to President Andrew Jackson. The selection of Martin Van Buren, a northerner, as the Democratic standard bearer in 1836 drove many southerners to the opposition. From these sectional origins emerged a two party South which maintained balanced national elections from 1836 until the early 1850s.<sup>8</sup>

Historians have advanced a number of economic and social factors as significant in the formation of the two party South during the 1830s. One historian, Burton W. Folsom, II, concluded that the split in the southern Democrats occurred as a result of Jackson's failure to placate certain southern party members including Hugh Lawson White and John Bell and not as a result of Van Buren's candidacy. Jackson's cabinet reorganization prompted a rift among the southern leadership and created a nucleus for an opposition party. The Panic of 1837 and its widespread ill effects in the South led to the defection of other Democrats. Folsom concluded that personal rivalries, a social reform impetus

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<sup>8</sup>McCormick, 177-78, 340.

and the economic crisis of the late 1830s produced a two party South.<sup>9</sup>

Over 70 years ago, Arthur Cole, in his seminal study of the Whig party in the South, concluded that the origins of the two party South could be traced to the rise of anti-Jackson sentiment during the President's two administrations. A majority of the members of this opposition were planters and proponents of states rights. This opposition party solidified in the late 1830s when former Democrats who left their party over the Independent Treasury Bill joined the fold. By 1844, however, the southern Whigs had adopted the prevailing philosophy of the northern wing of the party--Henry Clay's American System of central banking, high tariffs and internal improvements at government expense, thus creating the national Whig party.<sup>10</sup>

Forty years later, historian Charles G. Sellers, in his study of southern Whigs, stressed the importance of the banking and financial issues of the 1830s in the formation of the Whig party. The nucleus of the party was a small group of National Republicans. The party's support of a

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<sup>9</sup>Burton W. Folsom II, "Party Formation and Development in Jacksonian America: The Old South," Journal of American Studies 7 (December 1973): 217-229.

<sup>10</sup>Arthur C. Cole, The Whig Party in the South (Washington, D.C.: American Historical Association, 1913). U. B. Phillips concluded as did Cole that the southern Whigs were essentially members of the planter slaveholding class. See Ulrich B. Phillips, The Southern Whigs, 1834-1854 (New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1912).

strong banking system brought it the continual support of the South's urban and commercial sections. This included most southern cities and their surrounding counties.

Sellers concluded that southern Whigs were cotton planters, merchants, craftsmen, businessmen and bankers who united out of a common economic concern.<sup>11</sup>

The Democratic and Whig parties gradually defined their party tenets as the Second American Party System evolved. The Democrats, concerned that the rapidly growing capitalistic and commercial economy was replacing a simple agrarian society, chose to let this sense of "desolation and psychological malaise" shape their party philosophy. As a result, Democratic dogma centered on hard money, anti-monopoly, anti-corporation and anti-bank policies. Their Whig counterparts, a coalition of states rights proponents and National Republicans, embraced a wide spectra of social and economic thought. Whig tenets focused on an aggressive federal government promoting national prosperity through a

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<sup>11</sup>Charles G. Sellers, Jr., "Who Were the Southern Whigs?" American Historical Review 59 (January 1954): 335-46. Christopher Waldrep in his study of Kentucky Whigs, concurred with Sellers on party make-up. The largest slave owners and leading merchants were most often Whigs because they valued "such Whig principles as a sound banking system and a stable currency." Christopher R. Waldrep, "Who Were Kentucky's Whig Voters? A Note on Voting in Eddyville Precinct in August 1850," Register of the Kentucky Historical Society 79 (Autumn 1981): 326-32.

national bank, internal improvements, high tariffs and the distribution of revenues from the sale of public land.<sup>12</sup>

Despite their identification of the characteristics and philosophies of middle period Whigs and Democrats, many historians have stressed the overriding influence of regional and geographic factors in determining political behavior. In the last 20 years, several historians have tested this thesis through the analysis of congressional roll call votes, state legislative votes and General Assembly composition.

In his analysis of selected House of Representatives roll call votes from the period 1836 to 1860, Thomas B. Alexander concluded that the voting patterns of representatives exhibited remarkable continuity and consistency. Despite strong sectional proclivities, congressmen from both sections were able to coalesce with their fellow party members on economic questions. The Democratic party's position on economic matters conformed most closely with that philosophy embraced by a majority of southerners and as a result of this strong southern support in economic matters, northern Democrats stood with their southern counterparts, in the interest of party harmony, on

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<sup>12</sup>Michael F. Holt, "The Democratic Party, 1828-1860," in History of United States Political Parties ed. Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr. (New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 1973) 1:487-571 and Glyndon G. Van Deusen, "The Whig Party," in Ibid., 1:333-93.

slave related issues. The Whigs, unable to follow Democratic strategy, became polarized into northern and southern factions whenever slavery issues dominated a congressional session. Alexander concluded that by 1860 sectionalism prevailed over party allegiance. The forces that created party cohesion in the previous quarter of a century could not withstand the onslaught of sectional issues in the late 1850s.<sup>13</sup>

Another historian, David J. Russo, in his study of party loyalty in Congress between 1830 and 1840, concluded that parties formed in the 1830s were by 1840 in a position to demand a great deal of their congressional adherents, especially that they vote with the party that elected them. Most party issues were national in scope. Items of local concern rarely became party issues because the rank and file could not poll a consensus and the national parties would not risk disrupting party unity by taking a stand on local issues. The most significant party issue of the decade, the banking policy, determined party allegiance more than any other. As a result of the banking question, the American

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<sup>13</sup>Thomas B. Alexander, Sectional Stress and Party Strength: A Computed Analysis of Roll-Call Voting Patterns in the United States House of Representatives (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 1967).



political system "attained a clarity, simplicity and unity it had never displayed before."<sup>14</sup>

In an analysis of roll call votes from six state general assemblies, historians Herbert Erskowitz and William G. Shade concluded that like their counterparts in Congress, Whig and Democratic state assemblymen took differing and distinct positions on the issues of the day. In contrast to McCormick who asserted that the nature of the Second American Party System was the united interest to elect presidents and divide the spoils of office among the victorious party faithful, Erskowitz and Shade contended that the parties shared a liberal republican ideology but differed over the role of government in pursuit of this ideal. The Whig party pursued policies which supported banks, paper money and corporations. They also believed that government should take a vigorous role in promoting social and educational reform. The Democrats, on the other hand, believed that a limited government would be the best safeguard for individual liberty. As a result, Democrats generally opposed banks, paper money and corporations. Democrats viewed government involvement in this area as creating a privileged class at the expense of the general public. By the same token, government intervention in the

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<sup>14</sup>David J. Russo, "The Major Political Issues of the Jacksonian Period and the Development of Party Loyalty in Congress, 1830-1840," Transactions of the American Philosophical Society 62 (May 1972): 48.

area of humanitarian reform was regarded as "meddlesome interferences with individual liberty and personal property."<sup>15</sup> Despite the deviations in voting party norms during the 1830s, a significant correlation between party allegiance and voting behavior did exist in the state legislatures. With a few modifications, the issues and values that created parties on a national level were also responsible for creating the same political system on the state level.<sup>16</sup>

The "Shrine of Party" had a binding effect on American political life concluded historian Joel Silbey in his analysis of congressional roll call votes from 1841 through 1852. Party loyalty played a significant role in determining voting behavior even as late as 1852 despite such sectionally divisive issues as the annexation of Texas and the disposition of the Mexican Cession. By 1840, two well established political parties existed with a relatively secure following on the presidential level and to a lesser extent on the congressional level. For the most part, political leaders of the two sections forged alliances to obtain mutually beneficial legislation. The South's alliance with the West to pursue territorial expansion

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<sup>15</sup>Herbert Ershkowitz and William G. Shade, "Consensus or Conflict? Political Behavior in the State Legislature during the Age of Jackson," Journal of American History 58 (December 1971): 517.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., 591-621.

provides one example. With the introduction of the Wilmot Proviso in 1846, different sectional groups of congressmen began to vote together on different issues but with no discernible regularity. Southern nationalists attempted to organize along sectional lines but were thwarted in their attempt by Whigs and Democrats who refused to work with their traditional enemies. Most southerners believed the best protection for their interests would be found in the national two party system and were reluctant to break with their party. Nevertheless, distinctive northern and southern sectional groups appeared in the voting of the Thirty-first Congress. Despite the sectional overtones, this Congress was able to dispose of the slavery expansion issue for the first time since 1846 by passing legislation known as the Compromise of 1850. Party loyalty waned in the late 1840s but still was a significant factor in determining congressional voting behavior into the 1850s according to Silbey.<sup>17</sup>

The Second American Party System of balanced national parties embracing differing philosophies could survive only as long as the parties avoided open conflict over such sectionally divisive issues as the extension of slavery.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>17</sup>Joel Silbey, The Shrine of Party: Congressional Voting Behavior, 1841-1852 (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1967), 105, 146.

<sup>18</sup>McCormick, 15.

Party loyalty and hope of party victory kept the system vibrant and provided party leaders with the stimulus to keep sectional issues out of the national limelight.

Sectionalism flourished only in the absence of strong two party competition and in the absence of contrasting stands on the national issues of the day.<sup>19</sup> The tenuous bond sustaining the political framework of the Jacksonian Era was severely strained in August of 1846 when David Wilmot introduced his famous proviso.

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<sup>19</sup>Holt, Political Crisis 6-7.

## CHAPTER 2

### THE POLITICAL ENVIRONMENT AND THE SECOND AMERICAN PARTY SYSTEM IN VIRGINIA

In Virginia, the Second American Party System developed from the factions contesting the presidency between 1824 and 1840. From the remnants of the Virginia Republican Party, shattered during the 1824 campaign, emerged the nucleus of what became the Democratic Party. For the next 15 years, Virginia parties remained in a relative state of flux until a mature two party system surfaced in 1840 following the election of William Henry Harrison. Following Harrison's election, the greater party organization, the new campaign techniques and the broadened participation of the electorate resulted in increased discipline and greater stability in Virginia's political parties.<sup>1</sup>

During the 1840s, the "politics of slavery" began to play a larger role in presidential campaigns in Virginia as other traditional issues dividing Whigs and Democrats began to fade. In 1840, both native son William Henry Harrison

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<sup>1</sup>McCormick, 178-99; Lynwood Miller Dent, Jr., "The Virginia Democratic Party, 1824-1847" (Ph.D. diss., Louisiana State University, 1974), 2-35.

and Virginian John Tyler were perceived as safe on the slavery question.<sup>2</sup> The Whig ticket succeeded in luring some Democrats to Harrison in the Old Dominion. Harrison carried 61 out of a possible 123 counties, an increase of 17 from the Whig figures of 1836, and trimmed Van Buren's margin of victory to less than 1400 votes.<sup>3</sup> Van Buren's landslide victories in the counties of the Shenandoah Valley and the western part of the state helped him overcome the Whig majorities in the eastern section of the state.<sup>4</sup>

The slavery question, as embodied in the issue of the annexation of Texas, was even more acute in 1844. The Virginia Democrats broke with Van Buren when he came out in opposition to the annexation of Texas. The New York-Virginia alliance, sustained through the banking and tariff crises, "disintegrated under the political impact of slavery."<sup>5</sup> The Whigs desperately tried to make a political issue of Democratic disharmony but failed. Southern Whigs found themselves in a precarious position. Their acceptance of Clay and his economic platform was overshadowed by Texas and slavery.<sup>6</sup> The Democrats rode triumphantly to victory

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<sup>2</sup>Cooper, Politics of Slavery, 125-32.

<sup>3</sup>Peterson, 60; Burnham, 242.

<sup>4</sup>Cole, 62.

<sup>5</sup>Cooper, Politics of Slavery, 200-201.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., 209-23.

armed with their platform of manifest destiny calling for the reoccupation of Oregon and the reannexation of Texas. Polk captured 73 of Virginia's 138 counties including 16 former Whig counties, and carried 53 percent of the vote.<sup>7</sup> The Democrats carried the extreme northwest, the southwest, the Valley, the southern Piedmont and the Southside.

The Whigs suffered many local setbacks following Clay's defeat. In Virginia's 6th district, John Minor Botts, a Clay partisan, lost to a Calhoun Democrat, James A. Seddon, in the April 1845 election. The Whigs captured only one of Virginia's 15 House seats. John S. Pendleton of Culpeper became the "lone star" of whiggery in the Virginia congressional delegation.<sup>8</sup> The Whigs' setbacks were only temporary, however. In less than a year and a half, the Wilmot Proviso would divide the Democrats as Texas had splintered the Whigs and led to a final Whig resurgence.

The press played a significant role in the Virginia political process. Over 90 percent of the Commonwealth's newspapers were affiliated with a political party. The editors of these newspapers treated their readership to a steady diet of party rhetoric to stimulate interest in party

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<sup>7</sup>Popular vote--Polk 50,683, Clay 44,790. Burnham, 242; Dent, 352.

<sup>8</sup>Robert C. Glass and Carter Glass, Virginia Democracy: a history of the achievements of the party and its leaders in the mother of commonwealths, the Old Dominion, 3 vols. (Springfield, Ill.: Democratic Historical Association, Inc., 1937), 1:88; Richmond Enquirer, 6 May 1845.

affairs and influence candidacies.<sup>9</sup> The most powerful political presses were the Democratic Richmond Enquirer and the Richmond Whig. The Enquirer's editors, Thomas Ritchie until 1845 and then his sons, exerted considerable influence over party affairs during the 1840s. During this period, John Hampden Pleasants, Richard H. Toler, Wyatt M. Elliott and Alexander Moseley edited the Richmond Whig.<sup>10</sup>

Democratic newspapers outnumbered the Whig organs two to one east of the Alleghenies. The Tidewater and fall line towns were the strongholds for the Whig presses.<sup>11</sup>

The Second American Party System continued in Virginia during the late 1840s while the Commonwealth contended with its own political and geographical divisions. Virginia's 61,352 square miles or 40,960,000 acres were divided naturally by the features of its terrain.<sup>12</sup> The surface area was made up of two inclined planes separated by "The Valley," a depressed area between the Blue Ridge and

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<sup>9</sup>David R. Goldfield "The Triumph of Politics over Society: Virginia, 1851-1861" (Ph.D. diss., University of Maryland, 1970), 96-106.

<sup>10</sup>These editors fought with one another beyond the columns of their newspapers. In 1846, Pleasants died from wounds he received in a duel with Thomas Ritchie, Jr. Lester J. Cappon, Virginia Newspapers, 1821-1935 (New York: D. Appleton-Century Co., 1936), 171, 192-93.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., 4,7.

<sup>12</sup>Henry Howe, Historical Collections of Virginia (Charleston, S.C.: W. R. Babcock, 1849), 128; Richard Edwards, ed., Statistical Gazetteer of the State of Virginia (Richmond: Published for the Proprietor, 1855), 65.



Allegheny Mountains. The eastern plane included the Tidewater, the area running east of the fall line towns of Alexandria, Fredericksburg, Richmond and Petersburg to the Atlantic Ocean and the Piedmont, the area west of the fall line towns to the foot of the Blue Ridge Mountains. The Allegheny Highlands, Cumberland Plateau and Ohio River Valley formed the western plane of the state.<sup>13</sup>

Virginia Whigs received their greatest support from the Tidewater including the eastern shore, Princess Anne, Nansemond and Norfolk Counties. Traditionally, they carried the middle peninsula and peninsula counties bordering the York and James Rivers. The commercial areas such as Norfolk, Richmond, Petersburg, Wheeling and Alexandria were predominately Whig. When the Whig dominated General Assemblies of the 1830s appropriated funds for internal improvement projects in the Kanawha River Valley, they gained new constituents in these western counties. This area consistently supported the Whigs in the ensuing decade along with the northern third of the Piedmont, including the

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<sup>13</sup>Charles Henry Ambler, Sectionalism in Virginia 1776-1861 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1910; reprint, New York: Russell and Russell, Inc., 1964), 1-3.

counties of Rockbridge, Augusta, Hardy, Berkeley, Jefferson, Loudoun, Fairfax and Fauquier.<sup>14</sup>

Democratic strength was based in the declining agricultural areas of the Tidewater, the wealthy Piedmont tobacco counties of Halifax, Mecklenburg, Lunenburg, Nottoway and Brunswick and the Valley farmlands. The lower Valley counties which were inhabited by a large German, non-slaveholding population voted regularly for the Democrats. The Virginia Democratic party generally received the support of all the Valley counties except six. The small independent farmers of the southwest in Lee, Scott, Washington and Wythe Counties generally supported the Democratic candidates. The Democrats also regularly had the support of the counties in the far northwest.<sup>15</sup>

Virginia was endowed with many natural advantages; but by 1850 the Commonwealth no longer maintained its national political dominance or economic prosperity which had been its hallmarks during the early national period. Declining agricultural prices in the second quarter of the nineteenth century and a steady westward migration drained Virginia of people. Statistically, Virginia continued to outrank many

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<sup>14</sup>Henry H. Simms, The Rise of the Whigs in Virginia, 1824-1840 (Richmond: William Byrd Press, 1929), 163-65; James Roger Sharp, The Jacksonians versus the Banks: Politics in the States after the Panic of 1837 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1970), 255; Dent, 370-71.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid.

of the southern states in agricultural output; however, the minimal growth between the decennial census of 1840 and 1850 indicated a stagnating Virginia economy.<sup>16</sup> The 1850 census also revealed that the growth in Virginia's population had not been significant enough to sustain its existing House delegation of fifteen. The reapportionment of the United States House of Representatives following the compilation of the seventh census cost Virginia two seats.

Virginia's aggregate population in 1850 was 1,421,661, the fourth most populous state in the union and the most populous state south of the Mason-Dixon line. Virginia's population increased 14.6 percent between 1840 and 1850, a significant rise compared with the 2.3 percent population increase in the previous decade but behind the national growth rate of 35.8 percent. Thirty-three percent of the population was held in involuntary servitude in 1850. The 472,528 slaves residing in the Commonwealth gave Virginia the highest slave population of any state in the union. The majority of the slave population lived east of the mountains, with the greater percentage found in the

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<sup>16</sup>David R. Goldfield, Urban Growth in the Age of Sectionalism: Virginia 1847-1861 (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1977), 1-4; Goldfield, "Triumph of Politics," 1-15; Sharp, 247-54.

Piedmont. Over 54,000 free blacks resided in Virginia in 1850, the largest number in any state.<sup>17</sup>

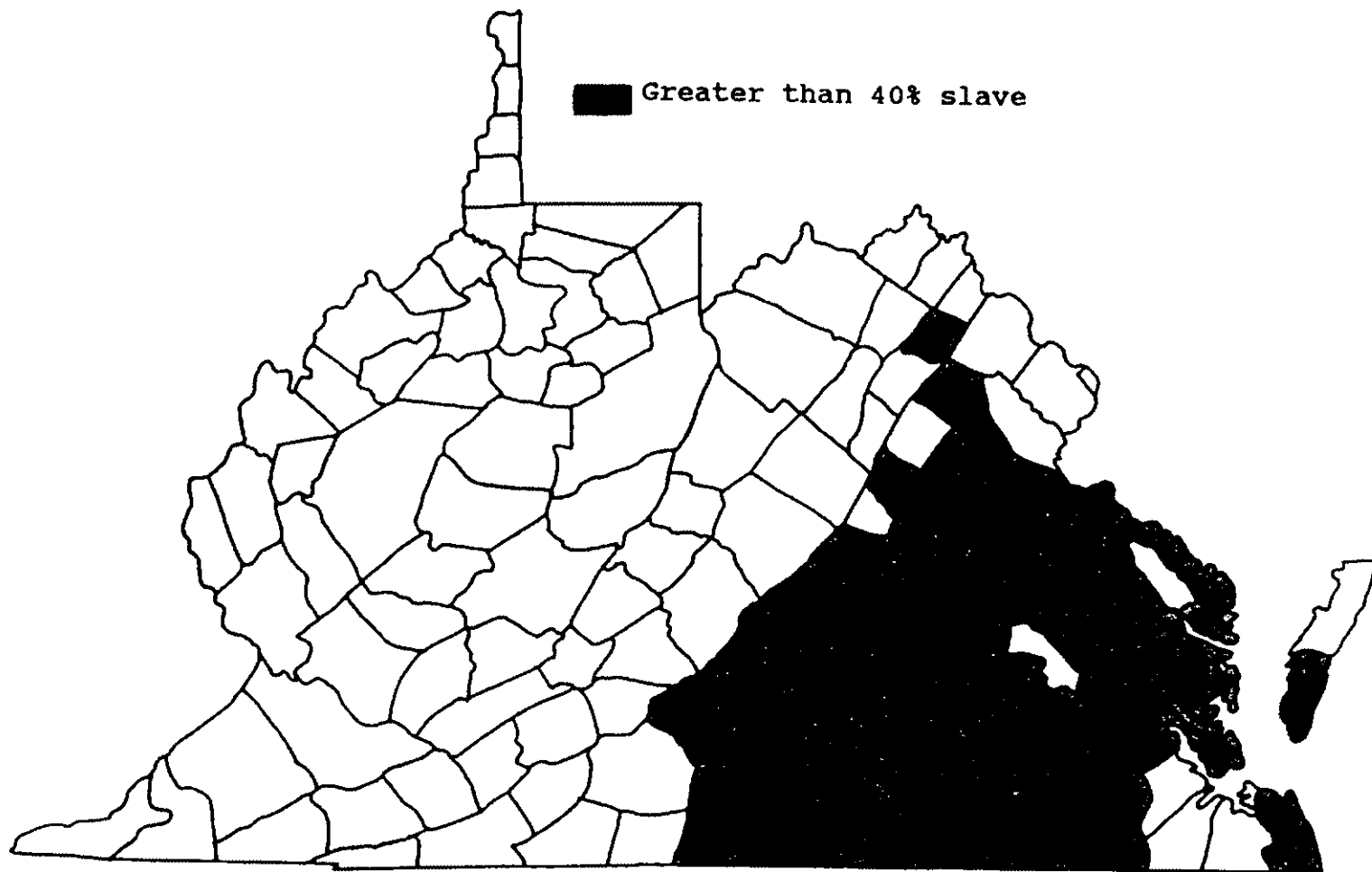
Virginia's chief agricultural products included tobacco, wheat, Indian corn and hay. Virginia led the South in the number of manufacturing, mining and mechanic arts establishments including 27 cotton manufacturers, 121 woolen manufacturers, 29 manufacturers of pig iron, 54 manufacturers of iron casting, 38 manufacturers of wrought iron, 60 distilleries and breweries, 15 fisheries, 40 salt works and 341 tanneries.<sup>18</sup> Virginia's great rivers and access to the ocean provided the state with many channels for commerce, but regionalism and intrastate rivalries stifled the development of lucrative trade in major commercial areas. In 1850, Virginia's transportation system, still in the formative stages, was more highly developed in the eastern region of the state. Most of the existing railroads and canals had an eastern terminus at the Atlantic ports and ran west with north/south connections.

In 1850, the state constitution ratified in 1830 still governed Virginia. The executive power was vested in the governor who was elected for a three year term by the

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<sup>17</sup>J. D. B. DeBow, Statistical View of the United States...being a Compendium of the Seventh Census... (Washington, D.C.: A. O. P. Nicholson Public Printer, 1854), 40-41, 82-83; hereafter cited as DeBow, Seventh Census. See Map 1.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., 178-83.



Map 1. Counties with slave populations greater than forty percent.

General Assembly. The General Assembly which met annually was composed of 36 senators elected for a 4 year term and 150 delegates elected for a 1 year term. The judiciary consisted of the Supreme Court of Appeals and the Superior Court. The judges serving on the benches of these courts were elected by a joint ballot of the General Assembly and served during good behavior or until dismissed by the General Assembly.<sup>19</sup> The governor controlled the appointment of the justices to the county courts.

The county court dominated local government in Virginia. The court, which controlled the basic executive, legislative and judicial functions of local government, was essentially a closed club of "gentlemen justices" from the privileged class. The court's broad appointive powers often led to nepotism. Oligarchical control of the county court was maintained for generations. By mid-century, many Virginians had grown weary of this closed form of government.<sup>20</sup>

Many Virginians also found fault with the state's restrictive voting qualifications. Suffrage was extended to all white males, 21 or older, who were residents of the commonwealth and held a freehold of \$25 or more, a joint

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<sup>19</sup>Howe, 131.

<sup>20</sup>Goldfield, "Triumph of Politics," 69; Albert Ogden Porter, County Government in Virginia: A Legislative History 1607-1904 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1947), 225.

freehold of \$25, a life estate, a leasehold with an annual rent or value of \$200 or a head of household paying annual taxes to the state.<sup>21</sup> These strict voting requirements were in themselves a significant reform from those set forth in the state's original Constitution of 1776. Nevertheless, it is estimated that the constitutional requirements still in effect in 1850 left between one half to one third of the adult white male population disenfranchised.<sup>22</sup>

Many of the disenfranchised Virginians resided west of the mountains. This group was highly critical of the Constitution because it left western Virginia underrepresented in the General Assembly. As a result, western Virginians were unable to secure the necessary legislation vital to the promotion of economic growth and prosperity in their area. The framers of the 1830 Virginia Constitution had tried to alleviate this problem by dividing the state into four sections to provide for an equitable division of state appropriations for internal improvements instead of changing the method of apportionment. The arrangement did little to resolve the problem. A majority of the appropriations and a large percentage of the money was appropriated for areas east of the mountains. Western

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<sup>21</sup>Howe, 131.

<sup>22</sup>Cooper, Politics of Slavery, 24.

Virginians remained dissatisfied and called for constitutional reform.

Those Virginians duly enfranchised by the Constitution could exercise their right to vote annually. Elections were held on the fourth Thursday of April at the county courthouse or other location designated by the General Assembly as a polling place. The polls could remain open for as long as three days if in the opinion of the sheriff the weather conditions had prohibited travel to the polling place. Sheriffs exercised this prerogative often to the benefit of their own political party.<sup>23</sup> The Democratic sheriff in a predominantly Whig county could close the polls after one day in order to keep the voter turnout small or a Democratic sheriff in a Democratic county could keep the polls open for the entire three day period to allow for the maximum turnout by his party. An extended polling period also provided individuals owning property in different political jurisdictions the opportunity to cast a vote in more than one county. Richmond voters were often able to vote in Hanover, Henrico or Chesterfield counties while City of Norfolk voters would often exercise the right in Norfolk and Princess Anne counties.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>23</sup>Richmond Enquirer, 8, 11, 22, 25 May 1849.

<sup>24</sup>Julian A. C. Chandler, The History of Suffrage in Virginia, Johns Hopkins University Studies in Historical and Political Science Series 19 nos. 6-7 (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1901), 42-44.



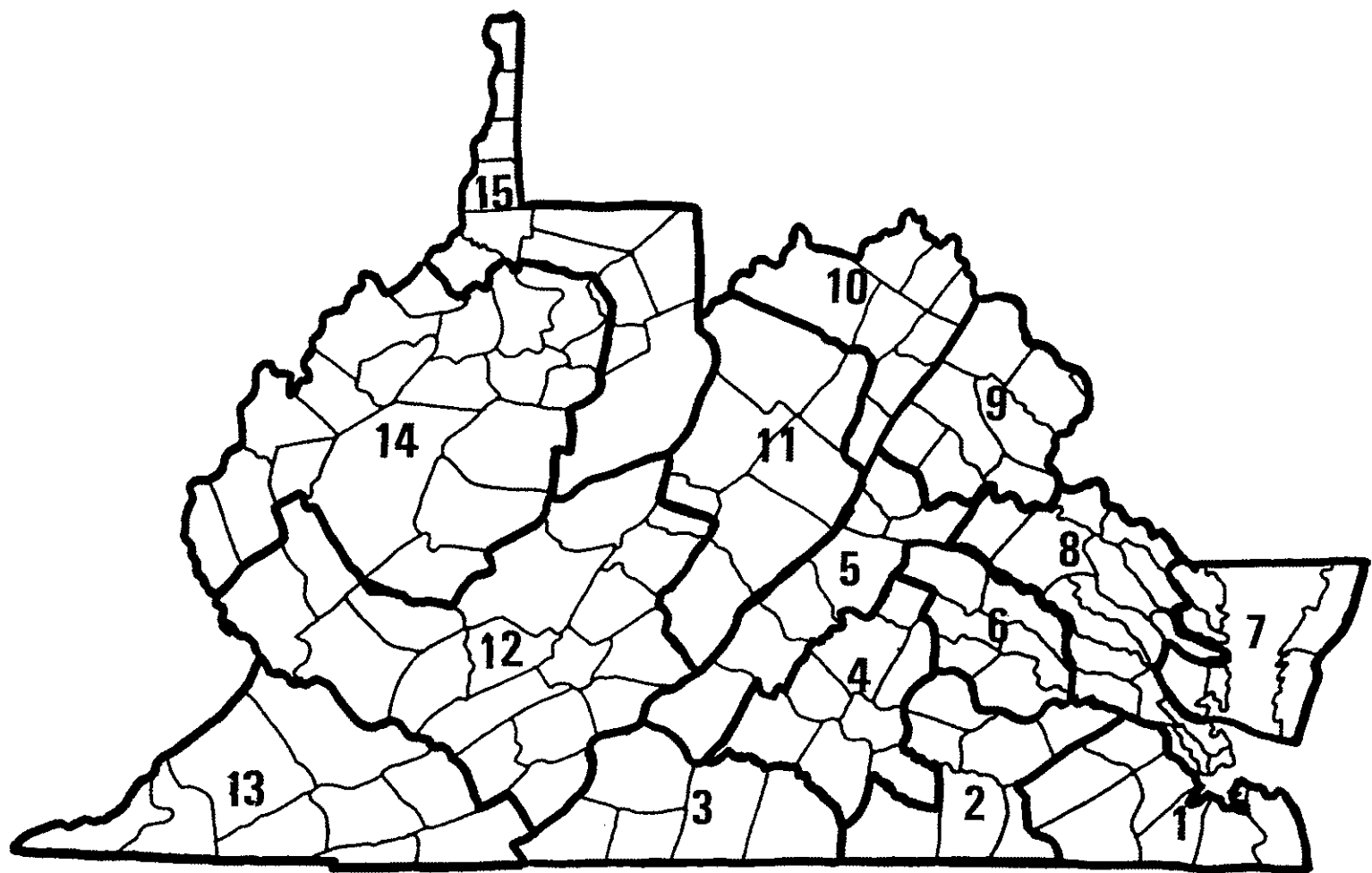
The sheriff and eight election commissioners, appointed by the county court, controlled election day activities. The commissioners passed on the voting qualifications of each voter. To complete this task, the commissioners consulted with the county clerk or his deputy who was required to be at the polling place with the county land book to verify payment of taxes by those seeking to vote. Mid-nineteenth century Virginians voted viva voce. A clerk appointed by the county sheriff recorded the name of each voter under the name of the candidate of his choice. The sheriff and election commissioners then tabulated and recorded the vote at the close of each day and at the end of the election period. In a congressional election the sheriffs from the various counties of the congressional district met to complete the district returns and certify the victory of the winning candidate.<sup>25</sup>

The Democratic dominated Virginia General Assembly of 1843 divided the state into congressional districts based on the 1840 census.<sup>26</sup> Federal election provisions mandated contiguous single member districts. A fixed ratio of one

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<sup>25</sup>Porter, 171-73.

<sup>26</sup>See Map 2 for 1840 Districts. For comparison of 1830s and 1840s district assignments see Stanley B. Parsons, William W. Beach, and Dan Hermann, United States Congressional Districts 1788-1841, (Westport Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1978) and Stanley B. Parsons, William W. Beach and Michael J. Dublin, United States Congressional Districts and Data 1843-1883 (New York: Greenwood Press, 1986).



Map 2. Virginia Congressional Districts 1843-1852.

representative for every 70,680 inhabitants was used to determine the number of representatives each state could have in Congress.<sup>27</sup> The Virginia legislature was required to reduce its existing 21 congressional districts to 15. The new configuration resulted in fewer districts in the Tidewater, a former Whig stronghold. The General Assembly's action drew criticism from disgruntled Whigs, who during the ensuing decade charged the assembly with gerrymandering.<sup>28</sup>

In 1850, Virginia's failure to capitalize on its abundant natural resources and agricultural potential, develop manufacturing interests and exploit natural channels and harbors produced great dissatisfaction among its people.<sup>29</sup> Many had grown tired of its leadership's irresponsibility and preoccupation with federal issues. Virginians were frustrated by their governmental framework, divided by a poor east/west transportation system and discouraged by the state's sluggish economy. These problems, coupled with the growing concern over slavery in the territories, heightened not only the state's regionalism but also its southern sectionalism. Eastern Virginians

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<sup>27</sup>Robert A. Diamond, ed. Congressional Quarterly's Guide to U.S. Elections (Washington, D.C.: Library of Congress, 1975), 256; hereafter cited as Guide to U.S. Elections.

<sup>28</sup>Richmond Whig, 10 May 1849; Charleston Virginia Free Press, 10 May 1849.

<sup>29</sup>Alexandria Gazette and Virginia Advertiser, 22 July 1851.

questioned the value of the Union while their western counterparts pondered the virtues of the Commonwealth. Virginia Whigs and Democrats each found their party suffering from state regionalism as eastern and western factions arose in their ranks. Under these conditions, Virginians wondered if the existing political framework could withstand the crisis of mid-century.

## CHAPTER 3

### VIRGINIA POLITICS 1847-1848

A disgruntled James K. Polk recorded in his diary on 4 January 1847, "the slavery question is assuming a fearful & a most important aspect. The movement of Mr. King today, if persevered in, will be attended with terrible consequences to the country, and cannot fail to destroy the Democratic Party."<sup>1</sup> King's reintroduction of the Wilmot Proviso made it clear that the Barnburner Democrats intended to break with the administration. The Democrats were further split a month later when John C. Calhoun introduced a series of resolutions stating his doctrine of congressional non-interference with slavery in the territories.<sup>2</sup> These Democratic factions threatened Polk's stable majority in Congress and jeopardized the successful prosecution of his programs. More importantly, the

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<sup>1</sup>Quaife, Milo Milton ed., The Diary of James K. Polk, 4 vols. Chicago Historical Society's Collections vol. VII (Chicago: A. C. McClurg and Co., 1910), 2:305; Avery Craven, The Coming of the Civil War (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957), 220.

<sup>2</sup>Potter, 66.

Calhounites and Van Burenites had brought the slavery question into the forefront of national politics. Even moderates found it difficult to be silent on the slavery issue.<sup>3</sup>

In Virginia, the Democrats had also been contending with factionalism since Calhoun's abortive attempt at the presidency in 1844 and Thomas Ritchie's departure from Richmond for Washington to assume the editorship of the Washington Union. The Chivalry, the Calhoun wing of the Virginia Democratic Party, scored a victory in early 1847 when they succeeded in electing Democrats James M. Mason and Robert M. T. Hunter to the United States Senate. Not long after the election of the two senators, the Virginia General Assembly found itself embroiled in the Proviso controversy. Lewis E. Harvie, another of Calhoun's Virginia lieutenants, introduced into the House of Delegates a series of resolutions condemning the Proviso and asserting:

that the government of the United States has no control directly or indirectly, mediately or immediately, over the institution of slavery; and that in taking any such control it transcends the limits of its legitimate functions by destroying the internal organization of the sovereignties who created it.<sup>4</sup>

The resolutions were carried unanimously and became the model for other southern states.

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<sup>3</sup>Morrison, 46.

<sup>4</sup>Virginia, Journal of the House of Delegates Session 1846-1847, 145.

Meanwhile, back in Congress, the actions of Calhoun and his followers were to have ramifications for Virginia's Democrats. Calhoun strove to keep the slavery issue at the forefront when other national leaders tried to suppress it. Through his agitation, Calhoun hoped to erode old party loyalties and form a southern bloc. Into this political environment, Calhoun introduced his anti-proviso resolutions. Although the resolutions were never discussed on the floor or voted on, they did form the basis of a platform in defense of southern rights. A part of Calhoun's strategy was continual conflict with the Polk administration over the prosecution of the Mexican War. Calhoun united with a number of Whig senators to temporarily block the passage of Polk's war legislation. Calhoun's actions enraged Ritchie who used the occasion to blast the Senate's action. An indignant Calhoun retaliated by having Senator David Yulee of Florida introduce a resolution expelling Ritchie from the Senate floor. The same coalition of Calhounites and Whigs passed the resolution. Ritchie's expulsion severed the final ties between Calhoun and the administration. While Calhoun's coalition secured two victories, it did not to evolve into the sectional party the South Carolinian desired. Most southern Democrats chose to side against Calhoun on both the war issue and Ritchie's expulsion.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>Morrison, 35-43.

Calhoun's activities embarrassed his Virginia supporters. Just as they were about to force their stand on the territorial issue on the party regulars, they were placed on the defensive by Calhoun's actions. At the state convention in February of 1847, the regular Democrats proposed a resolution praising the Polk administration and the conduct of the war while condemning Calhoun's expulsion of Ritchie. Several incensed Calhounites walked out of the convention following the adoption of these resolutions as the party's platform. Others remained to get an informal assurance that the state's delegates would support no presidential candidate in favor of the Wilmot Proviso. A number of other Calhounites, including Shelton Leake of Charlottesville and Henry Bedinger of Charlestown, took the occasion of the state convention to break with Calhoun.<sup>6</sup>

The Whigs capitalized on the split in the Virginia Democrats. They attempted to make a campaign issue of the Democrats' failure to include a stand on the issue of slavery in the territories in their party platform. The Democrats retaliated by claiming that the Whigs' stand against the war and annexation of western territory represented their capitulation to the northern anti-slavery wing of the party. The Whigs countered by promoting the candidacy of Zachary Taylor for President in 1848 to prove

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<sup>6</sup>Ibid., 47-49; Dent, 411-12.



their soundness on southern issues. The news of Taylor's victory at Buena Vista in February 1847 arrived in time to be used as propaganda for the congressional canvass.<sup>7</sup> The stage was set for the 22 April 1847 election, the first of several important congressional elections to be held in the South.

Democrats held 14 of Virginia's 15 House seats going into the Spring 1847 canvass. Unlike 1845 when six Democrats ran unopposed, the 1847 contest featured 14 contested races. Only Democrat William G. Brown from the fifteenth district in the extreme northwest corner of the state had no opponent. Six of the 14 contests were decided by margins of less than 125 votes.<sup>8</sup> The Third, Fifth, Sixth, Twelfth and Thirteenth District races require closer examination.

In Virginia's Third District, Democratic incumbent William M. Tredway lost to his Whig challenger, Thomas S. Flourney. Flourney, a Prince Edward County native, later moved to Halifax County where he found considerable success as a criminal lawyer.<sup>9</sup> Tredway carried only two

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<sup>7</sup>Brian G. Walton, "The Elections for the Thirtieth Congress and the Presidential Candidacy of Zachary Taylor," Journal of Southern History 34 (May 1969): 196.

<sup>8</sup>See Table 1.

<sup>9</sup>Appleton's Cyclopaedia of American Biography, 1899 ed., s.v. "Thomas Flourney," hereafter cited as Appleton's; Senate, Biographical Directory of the American Congress 1774-1971. 92th Cong., 1st sess., 1971, S. Doc. 92-8, 952-53, hereafter cited as BDAC.

TABLE 1

## MARGIN OF VICTORY - 1847 VA. CONGRESSIONAL ELECTIONS

First District  
 Atkinson (D) 2238  
 Watts (W) 2166  
 margin 72

Second District  
 Dromgoole (D) 1641  
 Bolling (W) 1625  
 margin 16

Third District  
 Flournoy (W) 2286  
 Tredway (D) 2285  
 margin 1

Fourth District  
 Boccock (D) 2386  
 Irving (W) 2366  
 margin 20

Fifth District  
 Goggin (W) 2980  
 S. Leake (D) 2870  
 margin 110

Sixth District  
 Botts (W) 2959  
 W. Leake (D) 2468  
 margin 491

Seventh District  
 Bayly (D) 1107  
 Jones (W) 866  
 margin 241

Eighth District  
 Beale (D) 2116  
 Newton (W) 1963  
 margin 153

Ninth District  
 Pendleton (W) 2861  
 Hunter (D) 2045  
 margin 802

Tenth District  
 Bedinger (D) 3053  
 Kennedy (W) 2746  
 margin 307

Eleventh District  
 McDowell (D) 2995  
 Gray (W) 2138  
 margin 857

Twelfth District  
 Preston (W) 3671  
 Chapman (D) 3443  
 margin 228

Thirteenth District  
 Fulton (W) 2084  
 McMullen (D) 2078  
 Goodson (D) 1230  
 margin 6

Fourteenth District  
 Thompson (D) 3961  
 McComas (W) 3510  
 margin 451

Fifteenth District  
 Brown unopposed

Source: Compiled from  
Whig Almanac 1848, 44-45.

counties from the five county Third District. He failed to carry his home county, Pittsylvania, nor did he receive the overwhelming Democratic majority in Halifax that his fellow Democratic James K. Polk had received in the 1844 Presidential race. Flournoy's personal popularity and Democratic disaffection contributed to his election in a marginally Democratic district.<sup>10</sup>

William L. Goggin, a veteran of Virginia politics, had previously represented Virginia in the Twenty-sixth, Twenty-seventh and Twenty-eighth Congresses before his election to the Fifth District seat in 1847. Goggin was a native of Bedford County and studied law at Tucker's Law School in Winchester before engaging in agricultural pursuits.<sup>11</sup> Goggin unseated Democratic incumbent Shelton F. Leake. Leake, an Albemarle County native who practiced law in Charlottesville, had been closely allied with the Calhoun wing of the Virginia Democratic Party before publicly breaking with the South Carolinian at the state Democratic Convention.<sup>12</sup> The Fifth District was quite evenly balanced

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<sup>10</sup>Ibid.; Guide to United States Elections, 570-96.

<sup>11</sup>Goggin (1807-1870) listed his real estate holdings at \$14,842, his slave holdings as 18 and his occupation as farmer in 1850. U. S. Census Office, Seventh Census, 1850, Manuscript returns for Virginia, Schedule No. 1, Free Inhabitants, Bedford County, 19 October 1850, 272, Schedule No. 2, Slave Inhabitants, Bedford County, 19 October 1850, 239, hereafter cited as Seventh Census; BDAC, 1010.

<sup>12</sup>Dent, 411-12.

but Leake's failure to carry traditionally Democratic Orange and Amherst Counties gave Goggin 50.94 percent of the district's vote and the election.<sup>13</sup>

Another incumbent failing re-election was Twelfth District Congressman Augustus A. Chapman of Union in Monroe County. He failed to beat his opponent in the normally Democratic counties of Logan, Mercer, Monroe and Pulaski. The victor, William Ballard Preston, hailed from Smithfield in Montgomery County. His father, James Patton Preston, had served the Commonwealth as governor from 1816 to 1819. The younger Preston served several terms in the General Assembly before being elected as an anti-slavery, unionist Whig to the Twelfth District seat.

In the Thirteenth District, five term incumbent Congressman George W. Hopkins dropped out of the race on 3 March 1847 when President Polk appointed him Charge d' Affairs to Portugal. This left little time for Thirteenth District Democrats to select a successor for Hopkins' seat. They were unable to resolve internal differences and settle on one nominee for office. Both Samuel E. Goodson and Fayette McMullen ran as the party's nominees. McMullen was born in Bedford County but moved with his family to Scott County shortly thereafter. McMullen, unlike many of his colleagues, was a State driver

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<sup>13</sup>Guide to United States Elections, 579-96; Whig Almanac 1848, 44-45.

and teamster. Although he attended school, McMullen had no formal university education, a fact which many of his political foes were quick to point out.<sup>14</sup> McMullen and Goodson ran against Andrew S. Fulton from Wytheville. Fulton, born in Augusta County, attended Hampden-Sydney College and was admitted to the bar before he relocated to Wytheville in 1828. His brother, John Hall Fulton, had served as a Whig representative from southwest Virginia in the Twenty-third Congress.<sup>15</sup> McMullen, the Democratic front-runner, carried Carroll, Grayson, Scott and Lee Counties but lost to Goodson in Washington and Tazewell Counties. The split in the Democratic vote cost McMullen victories in Smyth and Russell Counties. Fulton beat both of his opponents only in his home county of Wythe. Nevertheless, Fulton won the election by a mere six votes and became the first Whig to represent Democratic southwest Virginia since 1833.<sup>16</sup>

The focal point of the 1847 congressional election was the Sixth District contest. The district, encompassing the

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<sup>14</sup>In 1850 McMullen (1805-1880) listed his occupation as farmer and held real estate holdings worth \$3,000 and owned 3 slaves. Seventh Census, Schedule No. 1, Scott County, 27 September 1850; Schedule No. 2, Scott County, 29 August 1850. Ezra J. Warner and W. Buck Yearns, Biographical Register of the Confederate Congress (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1975), 161; BDAC, 1391.

<sup>15</sup>BDAC, 977.

<sup>16</sup>Whig Almanac 1848, 44.

city of Richmond and the surrounding counties of Chesterfield, Goochland, Hanover, Henrico, Louisa and Powhatan, generally voted Whig in Presidential elections but had been served by both Democratic and Whig representatives in Congress. The incumbent congressman was James A. Seddon, a native of Falmouth in Stafford County. He settled in Richmond and began the practice of law. In 1845, he married Sarah Bruce, the daughter of James Bruce, a wealthy Halifax County planter. A humorless individual who suffered a life of poor health, Seddon possessed a keen mind and considerable ability in his chosen profession. His success in this area brought him state-wide attention and pulled him into the political arena. He was an ardent follower of Calhoun and labored hard on the latter's behalf.<sup>17</sup> As a states rights champion and defender of slavery, Seddon had spoken out on several occasions during the Twenty-ninth Congress against the Wilmot Proviso.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>17</sup>Dictionary of American Biography, 20 vols. (New York: Scribner's Sons, 1928-1958), s.v. "Seddon, James A.", hereafter cited as DAB; BDAC, 1674; Lyon Gardiner Tyler, Encyclopedia of Virginia Biography, 5 vols. (New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Co., 1915), 3:44-45, hereafter cited as EVB.

<sup>18</sup>Gerard Francis John O'Brien, "James A. Seddon, Statesman of the Old South" (Ph.D. diss., University of Maryland, 1963), 83-86. Seddon (1815-1880) was a wealthy man, owning \$79,000 worth of real estate and six slaves. Seventh Census, Schedule No. 1, Henrico County, 20 December 1850; Schedule No. 2, Henrico County, 20 December 1850.

Seddon's opponent in 1847, John Minor Botts, was one of the more colorful individuals of this era. He was born in Dumfries, Prince William County. His father, Benjamin A. Botts, was a well known Virginia lawyer who served as one of Aaron Burr's attorneys during the Vice-President's trial for treason. Both of Botts' parents perished in the Richmond Theatre fire of 1811. Botts received his education from tutors, and at the age of 18, with only six weeks of private study, he passed the bar. Botts practiced law for several years before purchasing a farm in Henrico County.<sup>19</sup> In 1833, he was elected to the House of Delegates as a states rights Whig, opposing both the Bank and a protective tariff. He served until 1839 when he was elected Eleventh District (Richmond) congressman. He supported John Tyler's candidacy for the United States Senate in 1839 against William Cabell Rives who was privately backed by Henry Clay.<sup>20</sup> The Botts-Tyler relationship was short-lived. Upon his election to Congress, Botts became Clay's close friend and adopted the latter's nationalistic policies. When Tyler vetoed the Bank Bill, Botts became an unrelenting persecutor of the Virginian including presenting formal impeachment charges against the beleaguered President. No doubt this act cost him support in the 1843 congressional election. He lost,

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<sup>19</sup>DAB, s.v. "Botts, John Minor;" BDAC, 614.

<sup>20</sup>EVB, v.2:100-101.

although not without formally contesting the seat, to Chesterfield Democrat John W. Jones.<sup>21</sup> His past politics and frequent independence gained him enemies even among his fellow Whigs. The Richmond Whig often referred to him uncharitably as "the terrible Botts" or "the immortal."<sup>22</sup> Botts' "bulldog appearance and aggressive bombastic manner" cost him many political supporters.<sup>23</sup>

The Richmond district Democrats held their convention in March of 1847. Seddon was nominated by the convention, but before it adjourned, S. Bassett French proposed a resolution which stated "that the convention in nominating Mr. Seddon disclaimed all purpose of approving the course of Mr. Calhoun during the last session of Congress."<sup>24</sup> Seddon, the stalwart Calhounite, took the passage of the resolution as a personal slur and promptly refused the nomination. The convention representatives from Louisa, Hanover and

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<sup>21</sup>Several returns for both Botts and Jones were disallowed. In the end, the House of Representatives awarded the seat to Jones. Simon M. Painter, "Political Career of John Minor Botts" (M.A. thesis, Washington and Lee University, 1934), 12-20;

<sup>22</sup>Richmond Whig, 9 January 1849, 6 April 1849.

<sup>23</sup>O'Brien, p. 58; Botts (1802-1869) did not list his real estate holdings in the 1850 Census. He owned 21 slaves. Seventh Census, Schedule No. 2, Henrico County, 2 August 1850.

<sup>24</sup>R. H. Coleman to T. C. Reynolds, 16 April 1847, R. H. Coleman Papers, Special Collections Department, Alderman Library, University of Virginia, Charlottesville.



Goochland nominated Walter D. Leake of Goochland to replace Seddon.

The split between the Chivalry and the Ritchie party regulars almost assured Botts the election in the predominantly Whig Sixth District. In addition, Zachary Taylor's timely victory at Buena Vista helped attract Whigs to the polls.<sup>25</sup> Two years before, Seddon's personality and support from both camps of the Democrats were responsible for his election by a majority of 234 votes over Botts. In 1847, however, Botts polled 619 more votes than he had in 1845 while Leake failed to reach Seddon's total by 217 votes. Botts' overwhelming margins in Richmond and in Henrico County helped him overcome the loss of the Democratic counties of Chesterfield, Goochland, Louisa and Powhatan and send him back to the House of Representatives as the Sixth District congressman.<sup>26</sup>

The April election netted six additional seats for the Whigs, including five taken from Democrats and the re-election of Whig John S. Pendleton of the Ninth District. The Whigs also secured through the election of several senators and delegates a tie on a joint General Assembly ballot.<sup>27</sup> The campaign was not centered on traditional Whig

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<sup>25</sup>Richmond Whig, 6 March 1849.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid., 1 May 1849.

<sup>27</sup>Ambler, Sectionalism, 236.

and Democratic issues as had been expected. A number of Whigs, including Pendleton, believed that the tariff would be the dominant issue. The economic disaster predicted by the Whigs following the passage of the Walker Tariff and the Independent Treasury was not forthcoming. The Proviso issue proved to be pervasive and, coupled with the economic prosperity of 1847, pushed aside economic issues as the central theme of political campaigns.<sup>28</sup>

The impact of Zachary Taylor's candidacy on the Virginia congressional elections of 1847 cannot be fully measured.<sup>29</sup> Democrats had stayed away from the polls, generally, and voter turnout was down from the 1844 presidential contest. Disgruntled Calhounites stayed at home in hopes of a Whig victory. Several of the Chivalry leaders saw this as the only way to force Democratic regulars to "perceive its need of our assistance."<sup>30</sup> The election of 1847 was neither the sweeping victory the Whigs had hoped for nor a devastating defeat for the Ritchie

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<sup>28</sup>Michael F. Holt, "Winding Roads to Recovery: The Whig Party from 1844-1848," in Essays in American Antebellum Politics, 1840-1860, eds. Stephen Maizlish and John J. Kushma (College Station Texas: Texas A & M University Press, 1982), 150-53.

<sup>29</sup>Walton, 194.

<sup>30</sup>R. K. Cralle to John C. Calhoun, 18 April 1847 in Annual Report of the American Historical Association, vol. 2, Correspondence of John C. Calhoun edited by J. Franklin Jameson (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1900), 1112; hereafter cited as Jameson.

Democrats. It did, however, create an air of uncertainty for the upcoming presidential election.<sup>31</sup>

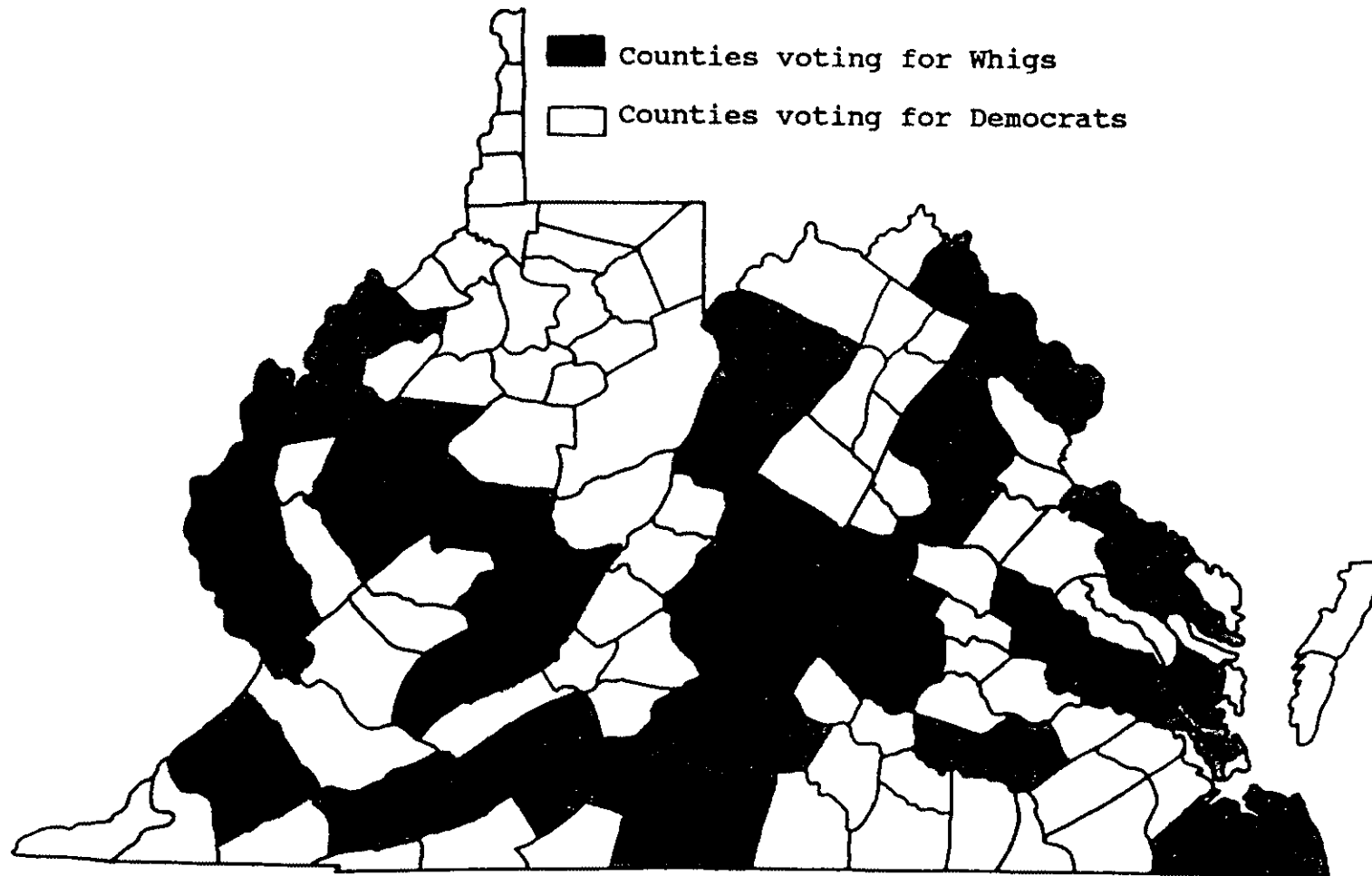
The Democrats nominated Lewis Cass, an old Jacksonian from Michigan, as their presidential candidate in 1848. Virginia's Democrats had supported a number of potential candidates but united behind Cass during the balloting at the Democratic national convention. The Whigs selected Zachary Taylor as their standard bearer. Taylor's candidacy had appealed to some Virginia Whigs since 1847. The party's organ, the Richmond Whig, also supported Taylor's candidacy.<sup>32</sup> The nomination of Taylor, a slaveholding Southerner, obviated the need for an anti-proviso platform and pleased a number of Virginia's Whigs. For others, such as John Minor Botts, Taylor's nonpartisanship made him less than desirable for a party standard bearer. The Virginia Whigs convened in 1848 and expressed a preference for Taylor.<sup>33</sup> The Free Soil Party, a coalition of New York Barnburners who had formally broken with their national party in June, New England abolitionists, free soil Whigs

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<sup>31</sup>Ambler, Sectionalism, 237; See Map 3.

<sup>32</sup>R. H. Coleman to T. S. Reynolds, 16 April 1847, Coleman Papers; Harrison Mosley Ethridge, "Alexander Mosley, Editor of the Richmond Whig" (M.A. thesis, University of Richmond, 1967), 51.

<sup>33</sup>John B. Hill to James L. Kemper, 8 February 1848, James Lawson Kemper Papers, Special Collections Department, Alderman Library, University of Virginia, Charlottesville; Richmond Whig, 9 March 1849.



Map 3. The Congressional Election of 1847. Sixty-four political jurisdictions voted for Whig candidates including the cities of Norfolk, Petersburg, Richmond and Williamsburg.

and Liberty Party men, nominated former Democratic President Martin Van Buren to run against the two regular party nominees. Armed with the slogan "free soil, free speech, free labor and free men," the party actively campaigned and carried enough New York votes to deny Cass the electoral support of the normally Democratic Empire State.<sup>34</sup>

The Free Soil campaign was of little consequence in the South or Virginia. The ticket did poll nine votes, seven from strongly Democratic Shenandoah and two from the Whig stronghold of Loudoun County.<sup>35</sup> While the party per se was not a factor in Virginia, the free soil issue as embodied in the Wilmot Proviso dominated the campaign.<sup>36</sup> Each party spent considerable time and effort assuring the populace that only their party or candidate was safe on the "grave questions involved in the pending contest for the Presidency."<sup>37</sup> The Virginia Democrats, led by their party organ, the Richmond Enquirer, kept up an incessant attack on Taylor and "Abolitionist Fillmore," throughout the summer and fall of 1848.<sup>38</sup> Claiming that Whigs were sporting "Two

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<sup>34</sup>Potter, 79-82.

<sup>35</sup>Richmond Whig, 21 November 1849.

<sup>36</sup>William J. Cooper, Liberty and Slavery: Southern Politics to 1860 (New York: Knopf, 1983), 227.

<sup>37</sup>Francis Mallory and others to William Cabell Rives, 30 September 1848, William Cabell Rives Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

<sup>38</sup>Richmond Enquirer, 30 June, 28 September 1848.

Faces," a northern one of free soilism and a southern one of slavocracy, the Enquirer warned its readers not to be duped by a man who had neither pledged himself against the Proviso nor promised to veto the hated legislation should it pass Congress.<sup>39</sup>

Not all Democrats were convinced of the party's or Cass's soundness. Van Buren's defection had shaken Virginia Democrats' confidence in the integrity of northern party leaders.<sup>40</sup> Throughout the South, Democrats had to wrestle with the rift between regulars and ultra states rights men. Some dissidents remained neutral during the campaign, while others like William Lowndes Yancey urged Democrats not to vote for the party nominee because the "election of Taylor would be [the] lesser evil by far for the South."<sup>41</sup> In persuading R. M. T. Hunter to return to the fold, James Seddon wrote, "I have no difficulty in supporting General Cass on the record of the slavery question. I am inclined to think him very trusty if not exactly right on the

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<sup>39</sup>Cooper, Politics of Slavery, 260-63.

<sup>40</sup>R. K. Cralle to John C. Calhoun 23 July 1848 in Chauncey S. Boucher and Robert P. Brooks eds., Sixteenth Report of the Historical Manuscripts Commission Correspondence Addressed to John C. Calhoun 1837-1849, Annual Report of the American Historical Association for the Year 1929 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1930), 459-60; hereafter cited as Calhoun's Correspondence.

<sup>41</sup>Morrison, 162; Cooper, Politics of Slavery, 258; McCardell, 287-88.

territorial question."<sup>42</sup> Hunter and other Virginia Calhounites returned to the fold or chose to defect to the Whigs quietly.<sup>43</sup> In spite of the reconciliation, Virginian J. K. Cralle wrote to Calhoun of Cass's chances "that he will lose Virginia in despite of Ritchie and the Organization."<sup>44</sup>

Virginia's eastern Whigs made efforts to gain control of the Calhounites. Taylor was popular east of the Blue Ridge Mountains because he was a slaveholder. Democrats tried to gain strength in western counties where Cass had support through his wife's family's influence in northwestern Virginia.<sup>45</sup> The Virginia Whigs used campaign rhetoric similar to the Democrats. Enthusiastically, they proclaimed that only their party offered true safety to the South. Encouraged by their resurgence in the 1847 congressional campaign, the Whigs appeared pleased with their progress and were hopeful of their chances in

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<sup>42</sup>James A. Seddon to R. M. T. Hunter 16 June 1848 in Charles Henry Ambler, ed., Twelfth Report of the Historical Manuscripts Commission Correspondence of Robert M. T. Hunter, 1826-1876, Annual Report of the American Historical Association for the Year 1916 (Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1918; reprint, New York: Da Capo Press, 1971), 90-91; hereafter cited as Hunter's Correspondence.

<sup>43</sup>Cooper, Politics of Slavery, 258.

<sup>44</sup>J. K. Cralle to John C. Calhoun, 29 July 1848, Calhoun's Correspondence, 460.

<sup>45</sup>Ambler, Sectionalism, 237.

November.<sup>46</sup> They gleefully pointed to the Van Buren of 1848 as a party traitor who exemplified a northerner's propensity to turn against the South and chided Democrats for their trust in Cass. They made further political capital of Polk's signing the Oregon Territory bill which allowed for the organization of Oregon without slavery. Southern Whigs accused Polk of deserting the South and used the issue as yet another example of the Democratic party's failure to safeguard southern interests.<sup>47</sup>

In the midst of a heated presidential campaign in the South, Senator John M. Clayton, a Whig from Delaware, proposed that the territorial issues be referred to a committee consisting of eight Senators representing both parties and sections. The resulting Clayton Compromise, introduced in July of 1848, called for the organization of Oregon without slavery and the organization of New Mexico and California by a presidentially appointed governor, secretary and five judges who could not decide on the slavery issue in their respective territories. The slavery question would be left to the territorial courts, with an option to appeal the slavery question directly to the Supreme Court. The compromise passed the U. S. Senate with both of Virginia's Democratic senators voting affirmatively.

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<sup>46</sup>Robert H. Gallaher to William Cabell Rives, 7 August 1848, Rives Papers.

<sup>47</sup>Cooper, Politics of Slavery, 264.



Before the bill came to the House of Representatives, a number of Whig congressmen got together to discuss the issue. Some northern Whigs were fearful that the passage of the Clayton Compromise would help Van Buren's campaign in the North, while a number of southern Congressmen were convinced the defeat of the measure would strengthen Taylor's candidacy in their section as well. When the bill came to the floor of the House it was defeated by a coalition of southern and border state Whigs led by Alexander Stephens of Georgia and free soil Democrats by a vote of 112 to 97.<sup>48</sup> Stephens was supported by Congressman John S. Pendleton of Virginia's Ninth district. The Richmond Whig defended the action of Stephens and his compatriots stating: "We prefer Old Zach with his sugar and cotton plantations and four hundred negroes to all their compromises."<sup>49</sup>

Generally, Virginia Whigs were optimistic about Taylor's chances and believed that a Whig victory could be had in the Old Dominion in the fall of 1848.<sup>50</sup> On the eve of the election, the Richmond Whig proudly proclaimed to its readership, "you can carry this state, and by carrying it,

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<sup>48</sup>Morrison, 164-65; Cooper, Politics of Slavery, 264-65.

<sup>49</sup>Richmond Whig, 4 August 1848; Cooper, Politics of Slavery, 285.

<sup>50</sup>Robert H. Gallaher to William C. Rives, 7 August 1848, Rives Papers.

prostrate Locofocoism forever."<sup>51</sup> Although unsuccessful on both counts, the Whigs made significant gains. Taylor lost Virginia by only 1474 votes out of a total of 92,004 cast and carried 69 out of a total of 139 counties.<sup>52</sup>

Nationally, the Whigs were triumphant as Taylor carried 51 percent of the popular vote. He won five southern states and made inroads in the Democratic states of Alabama, Mississippi and Virginia.<sup>53</sup> These electoral results have prompted some historians to conclude that the Whigs had the better of the slavery argument in 1848 and that southern Democrats defected en masse.<sup>54</sup>

The Richmond Enquirer's post election analysis stated that "keeping the slavery agitation alive" allowed the election of Taylor. His position on slavery, more than any other single factor helped him.<sup>55</sup> The editors attributed their candidate's slim margin of victory to the furor over the slavery issue, Democratic overconfidence and party apathy.<sup>56</sup> The Virginia Whigs, although rejoicing over the triumph of their candidate nationally, believed the failure

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<sup>51</sup>Richmond Whig, 3 November 1848.

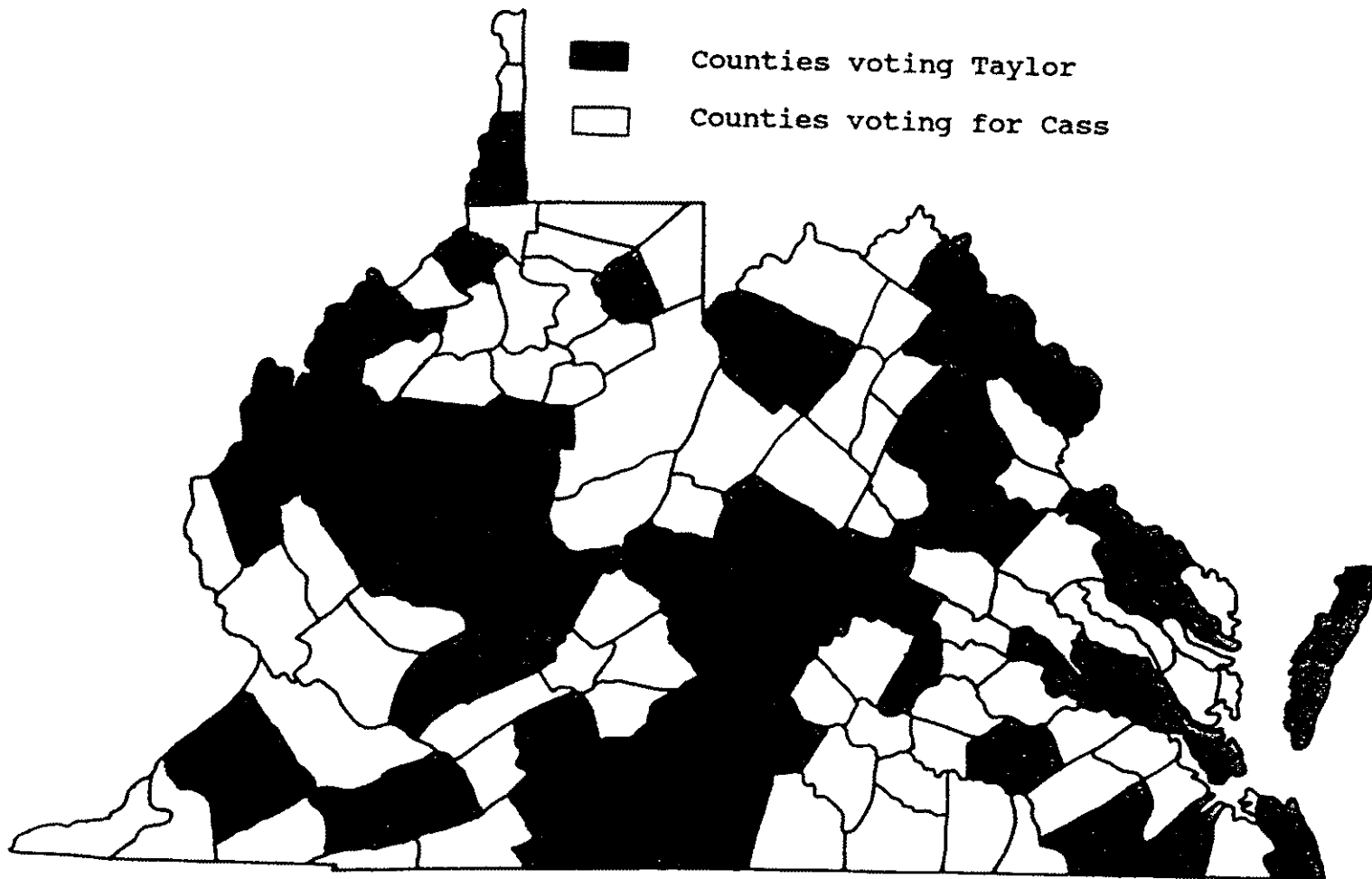
<sup>52</sup>Burnham, 818, 256. See Map 4.

<sup>53</sup>Cooper, Politics of Slavery, pp. 266-67.

<sup>54</sup>Ibid.; Morrison, 168-70; McCardell, 288.

<sup>55</sup>Richmond Enquirer, 14 November 1848, 1 May 1849.

<sup>56</sup>Ibid., 14, 21 November 1848.



Map 4. The Presidential Election of 1848. Sixty-nine political jurisdictions voted for the Whig candidate including the cities of Norfolk, Petersburg, Richmond and Williamsburg.

of Virginia's Clay Whigs to cast their ballots in the election cost Taylor the state's electoral votes.<sup>57</sup>

Clearly the most significant factor of the presidential election of 1848 in Virginia was the low voter turnout in contrast to the prevailing national trend during the second quarter of the nineteenth century.<sup>58</sup> In 1848, 3535 fewer voters went to the polls, a 3.7 percent fall off from 1844. Voter turnout increased at least ten percent from one presidential election to another from 1836 until 1856 with the exception of the Taylor-Cass contest. Whether this failure was due to disgruntled Calhounites or Clay men is difficult to determine. Taylor garnered 405 more votes than Clay in 1844. On the other hand, the Democratic margin of victory fell by 4419, a loss of almost 75 percent of the 1844 margin. Taylor failed to carry nine counties that had voted for Clay in 1844. Seven of these counties were east of the Blue Ridge in traditionally Whig regions and had slave populations in excess of 50 percent with the exception

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<sup>57</sup>Charles Perrow to William Cabell Rives, 14 November 1848, Rives Papers; Jeremiah Morton to Zachary Taylor, 27 January 1849, Morton-Halsey Papers, Special Collections Department, Alderman Library, University of Virginia, Charlottesville; Richmond Whig, 21, 24 November 1848; Cole, 133.

<sup>58</sup>William N. Chambers and Philip C. Davis, "Party, Competition, and Mass Participation: The Case of the Democratizing Party System, 1842-1852" in The History of American Electoral Behavior, eds. Joel H. Silbey, Allan G. Bogue, and William H. Flanigan (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978), 174-97.

of Norfolk County. All seven counties would not vote for a Whig presidential candidate after 1844 and their vote in 1848 was representative of a progressive Democratic trend in presidential elections.<sup>59</sup> Of the two remaining counties, Randolph, just west of the Allegheny mountains, was experiencing a similar trend as the Tidewater counties while Wayne, in the southwest on the borders of Ohio and Kentucky, was a Whig county that failed to support the party candidate only in 1848. Some Clay men may have boycotted the election but it does not appear that their votes would have given Taylor a victory in the Old Dominion.

The Presidential election of 1848 broke the upward Democratic trend begun after the log cabin campaign of 1840.<sup>60</sup> The state wide Democratic margin increased from 53 percent in 1844 to almost 60 percent in 1856 with the exception of the 1848 campaign. The 1848 election is a counter-trend contest, a trend represented in 76 counties scattered throughout the state. The group can be divided into three subgroups for further analysis. This first group consists of 13 counties which voted for Taylor in 1848 but returned to the Democratic fold in 1852. Only four of them had a slave population over 40 percent; possibly these

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<sup>59</sup>See Table 2.

<sup>60</sup>State Democratic percentages in presidential elections were 50.81 in 1840, 53.09 in 1844, 50.79 in 1848, 55.72 in 1852 and 59.86 in 1856. See Burnham, 252.

TABLE 2

## COUNTIES VOTING FOR CLAY IN 1844 AND CASS IN 1848

<u>County</u>	<u>Margin for Clay 1844</u>	<u>Margin for Cass 1848</u>
Caroline	13	58
Gloucester	13	12
Hanover	76	13
Middlesex	13	9
Norfolk County	37	21
Nottoway	5	26
Powhatan	5	48
Randolph	8	12
Wayne	6	5

Percentages for Democratic Candidate

<u>County</u>	<u>1844</u>	<u>1848</u>	<u>1852</u>	<u>% of Slaves</u>
Caroline	49.3	53.7	58.4	57.8
Gloucester	48.6	51.0	53.2	52.8
Hanover	46.3	51.0	55.2	55.4
Middlesex	47.4	51.9	62.3	53.3
Norfolk County	48.5	50.8	57.1	32.6
Nottoway	49.3	55.0	60.3	71.7
Powhatan	49.4	56.7	66.6	64.6
Randolph	49.0	51.4	52.8	3.8
Wayne	49.2	51.2	47.8	4.0

Source: Compiled from Burnham, 816-65.

counties experienced Democratic cross over because they believed Taylor would safeguard slavery. The other nine counties in this grouping came from the southwest and west regions, where the slave population was considerably less.<sup>61</sup> Another grouping of 18 Whig counties sustained a one time Whig surge in 1848. These counties are evenly divided between the traditional strong Whig regions of the state with those in the east having significant slave holdings. The final grouping consisted of strong Democratic counties which dropped off the mark in 1848. This trend affected counties both east and west of the mountains; however, the eastern counties all had slave populations in excess of 40 percent.<sup>62</sup>

Thus, the 1848 election was a crossroads for Virginia politics.<sup>63</sup> Both parties had been "badly disrupted by personal and sectional conflicts."<sup>64</sup> The election itself intensified sectional strife. Party crossovers occurred perhaps in response to the slavery issue, or merely from

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<sup>61</sup>The four counties were Orange, Spotsylvania, Clarke and Amherst.

<sup>62</sup>See Appendix A.

<sup>63</sup>Norman A. Graebner, "1848 Southern Politics at the Crossroads," The Historian 25 (November 1962): 14-35.

<sup>64</sup>Wendell Holmes Stephenson and E. Merton Coulter, eds., A History of the South 10 vols. (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1953), vol. 6, The Growth of Southern Nationalism, 1848-1861 by Avery Craven, 47, hereafter cited as Craven, Growth.

Taylor's popularity as a military hero or for other reasons. Would the Whigs be able to maintain their coalition and bring Whig ascendancy to the state? Certainly some Whig leaders felt they could and interpreted Taylor's victory as a triumph for Whiggery.<sup>65</sup> Or, would the Democrats' position on the expansion of slavery prevail and thereby stifle tow party politics in the Old Dominion?

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<sup>65</sup>Letter of J. S. Pendleton, 8 November 1848 in Richmond Whig, 24 November 1848.



## CHAPTER 4

### "RALLY TO THE STANDARD OF OLD ZACK"

"The Whig party have only to exert a proper activity to be victorious every where in the approaching elections," wrote an optimistic editor of the Richmond Whig in the midst of the 1849 congressional canvass.<sup>1</sup> Since Zachary Taylor's national triumph in the fall of 1848, Virginia's Whigs had predicted victory for their party in the spring elections.<sup>2</sup> While the unabashed enthusiasm of the Whig's editor characterized the party rhetoric that appeared in the partisan press at election time, it also reflected the new found confidence of Virginia's Whigs. The 1847 congressional election had reversed the Whigs sagging political fortunes and won them six of Virginia's fifteen seats in the U. S. House of Representatives while carrying 64 out of 135 counties.<sup>3</sup> The Whigs bettered their 1847 mark by garnering a record 45,124 votes for Taylor in the 1848

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<sup>1</sup>Richmond Whig, 23 March 1849.

<sup>2</sup>William Cabell Rives to William Ballard Preston, 20 December 1848, Preston Family Papers, Virginia Historical Society, Richmond; J. T. Fey to William Cabell Rives, 7 April 1849, Rives Papers.

<sup>3</sup>Whig Almanac 1848, 44-45.

presidential election. As they approached the 1849 campaign, the Whigs were hopeful their momentum would sustain them and would make that elusive goal, a Whig majority in Virginia's congressional delegation, a reality.<sup>4</sup>

Nationally, the congressional elections of 1849 were significant because the results would determine if Taylor would have a Whig majority in the House of Representatives.<sup>5</sup> The 1849 congressional campaign had several similarities to the 1847 contest. First, some of the most significant contests would be held in the southern states; second, the influence of Zachary Taylor would be a factor in the elections; and finally, the issue of slavery in the territories would once again be pervasive.<sup>6</sup> But more than the 1847 campaign, the 1849 congressional elections would be marred by the activities of the final session of the Thirtieth Congress.

The second session of the Thirtieth Congress opened 4 December 1848 and the resurgence of the agitation over the question of slavery surfaced immediately. The recent presidential election had failed to resolve the problem of

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<sup>4</sup>John S. Pendleton to General Zachary Taylor, 12 November 1848, Rives Papers; Alexandria Gazette 21 April 1849.

<sup>5</sup>An editor of the Washington Union wrote, "the result of the election of 15 members from Virginia so strongly calculated to trim and decide the balance . . ." Washington Union, 20 April 1849.

<sup>6</sup>Cole, 145-47.

slavery in the territories. This divisive subject could no longer be ignored as westward expansion necessitated the organization of the territory in the Mexican Cession.<sup>7</sup> On the thirteenth of December, the House of Representatives reaffirmed its wish to apply the Wilmot Proviso to the Mexican Cession. Joshua R. Giddings quickly called for a referendum to decide the fate of slavery in the District of Columbia. Finally, before year's end, the House adopted Daniel Gott's resolution which called for the prohibition of the slave trade in the District. Sectional voting had decided the fate of these measures and stirred doubts in the minds of southern Whigs and Democrats about the future intentions of the their northern counterparts. Under these circumstances, John C. Calhoun found considerably more interest in his call for a southern party among his congressional colleagues than he had during his previous attempts to unite the South.

Shortly after the start of the congressional session, Calhoun and 13 other southern senators formed a committee to consider calling a meeting of southern congressmen or issuing a southern address. The result, an address to the people of the southern states listing northern transgressions against slavery and southern rights, was presented to the southern caucus of senators and

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<sup>7</sup>Potter, 82-86.

representatives who narrowly approved it. However, only 48 senators and representatives, 2 Whigs and 46 Democrats, out of a total of 121 members signed the address.<sup>8</sup>

Calhoun's attempt to unite the southern congressmen behind a Southern Rights Party had not succeeded.<sup>9</sup> Once again, southerners were not ready to break their traditional party allegiances. Although party unity had been strained by the debate over the various measures to organize the southwest and the anti-slavery resolutions brought forth on the floor of the House of Representatives, it did not cause the outright defection of all southern Democrats and Whigs. In particular, the southern Whigs were not ready to break from their party at a time of good fortune. They wished to reap the rewards of their hard fought victory. Confident of a winning hand in the 1849 elections, southern Whigs scoffed at the Southern Address and flatly refused to sign it. They believed Taylor, their fellow countryman, would carry them to victory again.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>8</sup>Signers from Virginia included Senators R. M. T. Hunter and James M. Mason, Democratic Representatives Archibald Atkinson, Richard Kidder Meade, Thomas S. Bocock, Thomas H. Bayly, Richard L. T. Beale, Henry Bedinger, Robert A. Thompson and William G. Brown. Democrat James McDowell of the Eleventh District and the six Whig Representatives did not sign the address. Richmond Enquirer, 30 January 1849; Virginia Free Press, 8 February 1849.

<sup>9</sup>Nevins, Fruits 1:221-24.

<sup>10</sup>Holt, Political Crisis, 69-70.

But Taylor would not be the magic charm in 1849. As early as December 1848, some southern Whigs realized that Taylor would not oppose the Wilmot Proviso.<sup>11</sup> While Taylor's inaugural address on 5 March 1849 revealed little about his plans for organizing the territories, his motives became clear in early April when he dispatched Thomas Butler King of Georgia to California to arrange for a statehood application thus bypassing the territorial stage. Taylor's patronage policy upset many old line Whigs who watched new Taylor men receive posts over party regulars. Taylor's practice of appointing anti-slavery men to federal posts in the North, while retaining some southern Democrats in positions in the south, further distanced southern Whigs from the new president. Some southern Whigs initially approved Taylor's course in maintaining the coalition. Jeremiah Morton of Virginia encouraged Taylor to "draw to your support moderate and ingenious men of all parties."<sup>12</sup> When it became apparent that southern Whigs would not play a major role in the new administration, they found themselves

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<sup>11</sup>Potter, 87. In January of 1849, an editor of the Richmond Enquirer wrote, "much of the prestige attached to Taylor's name has been neutralized. The heavy vote he received in the South is justly tracable [sic] to his Southern position and character as a slave holder, his supporters plausibly contending that from the very nature of the case he would be true to the south, and would lend his influence to defeat the Wilmot Proviso and other aggressions. Recent events have cast solid doubts over such a consummation." Richmond Enquirer, 30 January 1849.

<sup>12</sup>Jeremiah Morton to Zachary Taylor, 27 January 1849.

condemning Taylor's patronage policy.<sup>13</sup> For his part, the new president was eager to form a new political coalition, one free from the shackles that bound both the Democratic and Whig parties. Southern Whigs were becoming disillusioned with their handpicked man and found they would soon be held accountable for his actions when Virginians cast their ballots on the fourth Thursday in April.

While the Thirtieth Congress was grappling with the slavery issue, the Virginia General Assembly was debating its own course of action. During the previous sessions, the General Assembly had formally gone on record through a series of resolutions opposing the Wilmot Proviso and any other issue which would interfere with slavery in the territories. When outgoing Governor William Smith addressed the body in December of 1848, he recommended the Assembly adopt a set of anti-Proviso resolutions similar to those passed in 1847. Subsequently, John B. Floyd, of Washington County, offered a series of resolutions in opposition to the Proviso and calling for the governor to convene the General Assembly in extra session should it or any other similar measure be passed by Congress. Robert E. Scott, Whig Delegate from Fauquier County, presented more moderate resolutions on behalf of his party. These two sets of resolutions were debated for the better part of January with

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<sup>13</sup>Holt, Political Crisis, 73-75.

the Whigs supporting Scott's moderate resolutions and the Democrats endorsing Floyd's. The conflict was resolved when Eustace Conway, Democratic Delegate from Spotsylvania County, offered some compromise resolutions. Both parties acquiesced and the Conway Resolutions passed in the House of Delegates by a vote of 117 to 13 and in the Senate by a vote of 27 to 3. Whig assemblymen cast all of the opposing votes.<sup>14</sup> It was against this background of the Southern Address and the Conway Resolutions that the parties selected candidates for Virginia's 15 congressional seats.

In three districts, Virginia's Democrats were faced with the task of nominating new candidates to replace retiring congressmen.<sup>15</sup> The first district Democrats called on John Millson of Norfolk. His contemporaries regarded him as "an eloquent and able advocate and defender of the

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<sup>14</sup>Those voting in opposition included: Delegates Egbert R. Watson of Albemarle, Francis L. Smith of Alexandria, Hugh W. Sheffey and J. M. McCue of Augusta, Robert E. Scoot of Fauquier, Samuel Price of Greenbrier, F. B. Welton of Hardy, William C. Worthington and John A. Thomson of Jefferson, and Senators John Thompson, Jr. of Albemarle, Nelson and Amherst; William Kinney of Augusta and Rockbridge; and Asa Rogers of Loudoun and Fairfax. Richmond Enquirer, 23 January 1849; Henry T. Shanks, The Secession Movement in Virginia 1847-1861 (Richmond: Garrett and Massie, 1934,; reprint, New York: AMS Press, 1971), 24-26.

<sup>15</sup>Retiring Congressman Brown wrote, "My wish to retire is not owing to any unkind relations existing between me and any portion of my constituents but purely from a desire to repair, in my private fortune the dilapidations which time and neglect have produced." Richmond Enquirer, 19 December 1848. See also Richard Lee Tarberville Beale to Charles Lanman, 11 September 1858, Charles Lanman Papers, Virginia Historical Society, Richmond.

leading principles and doctrines of the Democratic party."<sup>16</sup> Millson's Whig opponent was Captain Samuel Watts of Portsmouth. A self-made man with little formal education, Watts was known as "an orator and enlightened politician."<sup>17</sup> In the Eighth District where incumbent Richard Beale declined to be a candidate, the Democrats selected Alexander R. Holladay, a lawyer from Spotsylvania.<sup>18</sup> His opponent was a young Whig lawyer from Fredericksburg, John M. Forbes.<sup>19</sup> Alexander Newman, postmaster of Wheeling, beat out two other Democrats for the right to seek retiring representative

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<sup>16</sup>Millson (1808-1873) was married to Mary Parker, sister of Richard Parker and daughter of Virginia Judge Richard E. Parker, Thomas Ritchie's brother-in-law. BDAC, 1416. William S. Forrest, Historical and Descriptive Sketches of Norfolk and Vicinity (Philadelphia: Lindsay and Blakiston, 1853), 244.

<sup>17</sup>Forrest, 220; Richmond Whig, 16 March 1849.

<sup>18</sup>Richmond Enquirer 1 December 1848; BDAC, 1132. Holladay (1811-1877) and his family lived with his mother-in-law, Patsy Quarles who owned real estate valued at \$14,000 and 31 slaves. Holladay owned five slaves himself. Seventh Census, Schedule No. 1, Spotsylvania County, 27 November 1850, 408; Schedule No. 2, Spotsylvania County, 27 November 1850, 645.

<sup>19</sup>Richmond Whig 20 February 1849; Forbes real estate holdings in 1850 were a meager \$50. Forbes owned seven slaves. Seventh Census, Schedule No. 1, Spotsylvania County, 8 August 1850; Schedule No. 2, Spotsylvania County, 19 July 1850.



Brown's Fifteenth District seat.<sup>20</sup> Newman's Whig opponent was Charles Wells Russell of Wheeling.<sup>21</sup>

Incumbent Democratic representatives Henry Bedinger of the Tenth District and Robert A. Thompson of the Fourteenth lost to other men in their district conventions.<sup>22</sup> Richard Parker beat out Bedinger in the Tenth District convention held in Winchester.<sup>23</sup> He faced Whig Charles James Faulkner of Martinsburg in the April election.<sup>24</sup> In the Fourteenth District, former Shenandoah Valley congressman James Madison Hite Beale received the nomination over several opponents.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>20</sup>Richmond Enquirer, 27 February 1849; BDAC, 1468.

<sup>21</sup>George W. Atkinson and Alvaro F. Gibbens, Prominent Men of West Virginia (Wheeling: W. L. Callin, 1890), 772; Warner, 211-12. Russell (1818-1867) held real estate valued at \$5,000. Seventh Census, Schedule No. 1, Ohio County, 8 October 1850, 127.

<sup>22</sup>Virginia Free Press, 22 February, 1 March 1849; Richmond Enquirer, 6, 16 February 1849.

<sup>23</sup>Virginia Free Press, 1 March 1849; Richmond Enquirer, 6 March 1849. Parker (1810-1893) was the son of Richard Elliott Parker, a judge of the Supreme Court of Appeals and a member of the Richmond Junto. BDAC, 1510; EVB, 2:123.

<sup>24</sup>EVB 2:107-8. Faulkner (1806-1884) owned \$71,920 worth of real estate and 17 slaves in 1850. Seventh Census, Schedule No. 1, Berkeley County, 29 July 1850, 353; Schedule No. 2, Berkeley County, 29 July 1850, 285.

<sup>25</sup>Richmond Enquirer, 6, 16 February 1849; BDAC, 567. Beale (1786-1866) held \$20,000 worth of real estate and was not listed among the slave holders for Mason County. Seventh Census, Schedule No. 1, Mason County, 17 August 1850, 387; Schedule No. 2, Mason County.

He battled William McComas, the Whig nominee from Giles County, for Thompson's seat.<sup>26</sup>

There were two one party races in 1849. The faction ridden southwestern Democrats in Virginia's Thirteenth District refused to hold a nominating convention to select one candidate. Democratic editors throughout the state watched in dismay as party faithfuls Fayette McMullen of Scott, John B. George of Tazewell and William H. Cook of Carroll campaigned for Andrew Fulton's seat.<sup>27</sup> The Richmond Enquirer reported "We cannot believe that the Democratic stronghold of the Southwest will allow itself again to be transferred, bound hand and foot, to the enemy, to gratify the whims or ambition of individuals."<sup>28</sup> Fortunately for the Democrats the Whigs declined to run a candidate in the 1849 contest.

The Whigs controlled affairs in the Ninth District. John S. Pendleton of Culpeper represented Virginia's bastion of whiggery, the Ninth District, during the Thirtieth

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<sup>26</sup>BDAC, 1363.

<sup>27</sup>Richmond Enquirer, 16 March 1849. George (1795-1854), a farmer, owned \$40,250 worth of real estate and 19 slaves. Seventh Census, Schedule No. 1, Tazewell County, 5 August 1850; Schedule No. 2, Tazewell County, 30 July 1850, 989.

<sup>28</sup>Richmond Enquirer, 27 February 1849; Petersburg Republican, 5 March 1849.

Congress.<sup>29</sup> He fell prey to internal party squabbles in 1849 when some Whigs proclaimed, "We do hereby order and decree that a District convention be held for the purpose of kicking John S. Pendleton out of Congress."<sup>30</sup> Others heartily disagreed, "It would be an act of ingratitude on the part of the Whigs of the district to vote against Mr. Pendleton at the first election after his distinguished services in behalf of General Taylor."<sup>31</sup> Unable to resolve their differences, the Whigs fielded two candidates in 1849, incumbent representative Pendleton and Jeremiah Morton, a lawyer turned farmer from Raccoon Ford.<sup>32</sup>

Once again, the election focused on the Sixth District. The protagonists, John Minor Botts and James Seddon, squared off as they had in 1845; however, Seddon had pushed for the candidacy of his political protege, John Caskie.<sup>33</sup> In 1849 Botts was the incumbent. His failure to

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<sup>29</sup>BDAC, 1446. Pendleton (1802-1868) had land holdings in 1850 that were valued at \$10,000 and he owned 17 slaves. Seventh Census, Schedule No. 1, Culpeper County, 23 August 1850, 230; Schedule No. 2, Culpeper County, 23 August 1850, 869.

<sup>30</sup>Alexandria Gazette, 6 January 1849.

<sup>31</sup>Loudoun Whig, 9 March 1849.

<sup>32</sup>EVB, 5:644; BDAC, 1446. Morton (1797-1878) amassed considerable land holdings valued at \$33,000 in 1850. He owned 21 slaves. Seventh Census, Schedule No. 1, Culpeper County, 26 September 1850, 247; Schedule No. 2, Culpeper County, 26 September 1850, 921.

<sup>33</sup>James A. Seddon to R. M. T. Hunter, 16 June 1848 in Hunter's Correspondence, 90-91.

support Taylor in the presidential election cost him the support of some Sixth District Whigs and the Richmond Whig newspaper. The Whig claimed its actions did not stem from personal enmity but from Botts' "abuse of the party, his vilification of the nominated candidate, his arrogance, his obstinacy, and his total unfitness for any useful purpose, which has rendered him odious to us and to Whigs every where."<sup>34</sup> The editors of the Whig called for a convention to select a nominee. The Botts faction fought this move. To them it was "both inexpedient and unnecessary to hold a convention inasmuch as [Botts] is willing to serve us again."<sup>35</sup> Finally, on the fifteenth of March, a cabal of Whigs from the City of Richmond and all the counties of the Sixth District with the exception of Louisa met and nominated Charles Carter Lee of Powhatan as the Taylor Whig candidate.<sup>36</sup> Whig delegates at the convention urged their party members "to cast aside all merely personal

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<sup>34</sup>Richmond Whig, 6 March 1849.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid., 2 March 1849.

<sup>36</sup>Charles Carter Lee (1798-1871), son of Henry and Anne Hill Carter Lee and eldest brother of Robert E. Lee, was educated at Harvard where he graduated second in his class in 1819. A lawyer by profession, Lee practiced in Washington, D.C. and Mississippi before settling in Powhatan County. In 1847, he married Lucy Penn Taylor, a distant cousin of President Zachary Taylor. Edmund Jennings Lee, Lee of Virginia (Philadelphia: Edmund Jennings Lee, 1895), 404. Lee had extensive real estate holdings valued at \$18,000 in 1850. Seventh Census, Schedule No. 1, Henrico County, 22 July 1850, 507.

predilections and by sustaining our nomination to unite with us in saving the District."<sup>37</sup> Botts countered with his own convention held in Richmond on the fifth of April. There he was duly nominated by a convention of Whigs. Unable to resolve their differences or silence their major party organ, Sixth District Whigs set themselves up for defeat on 26 April 1849.

Virginia's Seventh Congressional District suffered from its own peculiar type of sectionalism during the 1840s which affected the selection of candidates.<sup>38</sup> When the Whigs gathered for their convention, they were urged to select a candidate from the eastern shore of the Chesapeake Bay. In the three previous elections, talented Whigs from the other areas of the district were nominated and lost because "the voters cross party lines to elect someone from their side of the water."<sup>39</sup> In an effort to strengthen their forces, the Seventh District Whigs nominated Edward P. Pitts of Northampton. Pitts initially sought the assistance of his fellow Whigs to take on the powerful and popular Thomas Bayly in the canvass. While some western shore Whigs recognized the importance of running an eastern shore candidate, others continued to make an issue out of the

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<sup>37</sup>Richmond Whig, 16 March 1849.

<sup>38</sup>Ibid., 12 January 1849.

<sup>39</sup>Ibid.

candidate's residence. Pitts found this most discouraging and destructive. Refusing to be "the cause of such a state of things," he withdrew from the campaign in late February of 1849.<sup>40</sup> The unexpected resignation left the Seventh District Whigs in a state of confusion, but Dr. Francis Mallory of Elizabeth City County finally secured the nomination.<sup>41</sup>

Mallory was a member of the Virginia based cabal of states rights men who advised President Tyler while serving a term in Congress.<sup>42</sup> He apparently oscillated between the parties but remained consistently a states rights man. His changing allegiances prompted his Democratic opponent to say of his challenger, "He has so long roosted with the chickens and gobbled with the turkeys that neither of them were willing to own him."<sup>43</sup> Mallory faced Thomas Bayly, a former states rights Whig who won his seat in Congress as a

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<sup>40</sup>Edward P. Pitts to William B. Preston, 21 February 1849, Preston Family Papers; Richmond Whig, 16 March 1849.

<sup>41</sup>Richmond Whig, 20 March 1849. Mallory (1807-1860), the son of former lieutenant-governor, Charles King Mallory, practiced medicine in Norfolk briefly before returning to Elizabeth City County to engage in agricultural pursuits. BDAC, 1330-31. Mallory held \$25,000 worth of real estate and owned 26 slaves. Seventh Census, Schedule No. 1, Elizabeth City County, 3 September 1850, 56; Schedule no. 2, Elizabeth City County, 3 September 1850.

<sup>42</sup>Craig M. Simpson, A Good Southerner: The Life of Henry A. Wise of Virginia (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1985), 54.

<sup>43</sup>Richmond Enquirer, 10 April 1849.

Democrat in a special election held to fill the vacancy caused by the resignation of his cousin, Henry A. Wise. Although relatives, Bayly and Wise were often political foes. In fact, Wise challenged his temperamental cousin to a duel in 1834 which Bayly declined because Wise was under challenge to another party. Bayly's close friendship with Thomas Ritchie further strained his relationship with his ambitious cousin.<sup>44</sup> His switch in party allegiance earned him the tag "bitterest and most intolerant Locofoco" from his former party.<sup>45</sup>

Incumbent Representative Richard Kidder Meade of Petersburg in Virginia's Second District ran unopposed. In late February, it was rumored that Delegate John W. Syme might oppose the popular Meade; but the Whig was reluctant to leave his General Assembly seat to run in an election which was almost assuredly a lost cause.<sup>46</sup> James McDowell of the Eleventh District also ran unopposed in 1849.

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<sup>44</sup>Craig M. Simpson, "Henry A Wise in Antebellum Politics, 1850-1861" (Ph.D. diss., Stanford University, 1973), 53-54.

<sup>45</sup>Richmond Whig, 28 November 1848; DAB, s.v. "Thomas Henry Bayly." Bayly (1810-1856) owned \$70,000 worth of real estate and was the largest slave owner in Accomac County with 31 slaves. Seventh Census, Schedule No. 1, Accomac County 31 October 1850, 154; Schedule No. 2, Accomac County, 31 October 1850.

<sup>46</sup>Petersburg Republican, 19 February 1849; BDAC, 1396. Meade (1803-1862) owned nine slaves in 1850 and had real estate holdings worth \$12,000. Seventh Census, Schedule No. 1, Dinwiddie County, 8 October 1850, 425; Schedule No. 2, Dinwiddie County, 319.

In the Third District Whig Representative Thomas Flournoy faced Democrat Thomas Averett, a physician from Halifax. A hard money man, Averett was described as "a genuine Democrat . . . Anti-Bank, Anti-Protective, Anti-Distribution and against every thing that was designed to infringe upon the rights of the people."<sup>47</sup> The Fourth District race featured a rematch of incumbent Democrat Thomas S. Bocock of Buckingham County against Whig Henry Page Irving of Cumberland County.<sup>48</sup> To the Whigs' surprise, the Democrats in the Fifth District nominated a relatively unknown assemblyman from Amherst County, Paulus Powell, to face their party nominee, Representative William Goggin. The editors of the Richmond Whig, admonishing the party not to be lulled into a false sense of security, wrote:

We know that some of the strongest Locos declined being the candidate, because they were satisfied a defeat awaited them, and they advised the nomination of some one who would excite no apprehension among the Whigs, as the only means of Locofoco success.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>47</sup>Richmond Enquirer, 9 March 1849; BDAC, 533. Averett (1800-1855) held real estate valued at \$7,000 in 1850. He owned seven slaves. Seventh Census, Schedule No. 1, Halifax County, 19 December 1850, 132; Schedule No. 2, Halifax County, 19 December 1850, 995.

<sup>48</sup>Richmond Enquirer, 9 March 1849; Lynchburg Virginian 29 January 1849; DAB, s.v. "Thomas Stanley Bocock;" BDAC, 606-7. Bocock (1815-1891) was a man of some means holding real estate valued at \$4500 in 1850 and owning 34 slaves. Seventh Census, Schedule No. 1, Appomattox County 29 July 1850, 159; Schedule No. 2, Appomattox County, 29 July 1850, 813.

<sup>49</sup>Richmond Whig, 22 February 1849.



Powell, a supporter of the Virginia and Tennessee Railroad, had served as a Democratic delegate to the General Assembly from 1843 until the time of his nomination.<sup>50</sup> Finally, in the Twelfth District, Democrats nominated Henry Alonzo Edmundson of Salem. He apparently had little interest in politics before 1849 and was criticized during the campaign for failing to vote for Chapman in 1845 and 1847.<sup>51</sup>

Edmundson prepared to face Whig incumbent William B. Preston whose Whig supporters urged him to announce his willingness to seek reelection.<sup>52</sup> Before he could publicly announce his candidacy, Preston was asked to serve as Secretary of the Navy in Taylor's cabinet. The Whig nomination fell to a young Botetourt lawyer, Francis Anderson.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>50</sup>Richmond Enquirer, 17 November 1848; BDAC, 1563.

<sup>51</sup>John T. Anderson to Francis Anderson, 21 March 1849, Anderson Family Papers, Special Collections Department, Alderman Library, University of Virginia, Charlottesville; Alexandria Gazette 21 April 1849. Edmundson (1814-1890) held land valued at \$5,000 and owned six slaves in 1850. Seventh Census, Schedule No. 1, Roanoke County, 3 August 1850, 285; Schedule No. 2, Roanoke County, 2 August 1850, 79.

<sup>52</sup>William W. Boyd to William Ballard Preston, 26 January 1849, Preston Papers.

<sup>53</sup>Richmond Whig, 20 April 1849. Anderson was listed with his father in the 1850 Census. The senior Anderson owned \$50,793 worth of real estate and owned 13 slaves. Seventh Census, Schedule No. 1, Botetourt County, 17 September 1850, 139; Schedule No. 2, Botetourt County, 17 September 1850.

The 29 candidates entered the campaign with the political parties in a state of flux.<sup>54</sup> The Whigs hoped to sustain their coalition of Taylor partisans in their party and the opposition while the regular Democrats found support among the states rights and anti-Taylor Whigs. The "politics of slavery" held center stage during the congressional campaign and was destined to shape the results of this pivotal election.

In the midst of the campaign, Whig Delegate Hugh W. Sheffy of Augusta County wrote, "There never was a greater effort made to creat [sic] political capital than the democrats are making to pervert this slavery question to party ends."<sup>55</sup> Other Whigs echoed Sheffy's sentiments.<sup>56</sup> During one of their many debates on the hustings, Francis Mallory accused Thomas Bayly and the Democrats of agitating the slavery question. This agitation, the Whig reported, was for the "purpose of embarrassing General Taylor, disorganizing the Whig party, and even endangering the continuance of the union."<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>54</sup>McCardell, 291.

<sup>55</sup>Hugh W. Sheffy to John M. Imboden, 3 February 1849, John M. Imboden Papers, Special Collections Department, Alderman Library, University of Virginia, Charlottesville.

<sup>56</sup>Fredericksburg News, 19 October 1849; Richmond Whig, 21 November 1848.

<sup>57</sup>Richmond Whig, 12 January, 23 March 1849.

The Whig Party, however, was equally as guilty of exploiting the slavery issue to their political advantage. As the bank and tariff issues had dominated the campaigns of the early 1840s, so the slavery issue would rise above all others in the canvasses at the end of the decade. Both parties went so far as to advocate the exclusion of traditional party issues in order to focus on the grave issues confronting the institution of slavery. Expressing his "unabated confidence in the measures for which the Whig party has always contended," William Goggin urged Fifth District voters not "to agitate them at this time."<sup>58</sup> The Southern Argus in Norfolk stated that the Whig party was "opposed to reviving old party issues."<sup>59</sup> It happily reported that Mallory and Bayly in their debate at Accomac Courthouse had focused on "which was the sounder on the slavery question."<sup>60</sup> Advising his son, Twelfth District Whig nominee Francis Anderson, John T. Anderson wrote, "you had better avoid discussing the Tariff and other party questions . . . and appeal to their patriotism."<sup>61</sup> Throughout the Commonwealth, the focus of all congressional campaigns was on the slavery question.

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<sup>58</sup>Ibid., 10 April 1849.

<sup>59</sup>Norfolk Southern Argus, 15 March 1849.

<sup>60</sup>Ibid., 5 April 1849.

<sup>61</sup>John T. Anderson to Francis Anderson, 17 March 1849, Anderson Family Papers.

In addition to criticizing the Democratic party for politicizing the slavery question and arousing suspicions about their loyalty to the South, Virginia Whigs accused their opponents of harboring free-soilers in their national party.<sup>62</sup> Whig editors continued to blame Democrats for the Wilmot Proviso controversy claiming southern Democrats initial support of the despised amendment helped to sustain it on the floor of the House of Representatives.<sup>63</sup> Therefore, only the Whigs, who had opposed the Wilmot Proviso from the outset, were the true guardians of the South.

The Democrats countered by condemning the Whigs for their work with northern abolitionists in supporting Gott's resolution and statehood bills excluding slavery.<sup>64</sup> Rallying Democrats for the congressional campaign, the editors of the Enquirer wrote, "Send Democrats to Congress, and we may yet thwart the mad schemes of the abolitionists."<sup>65</sup> During the campaign, Democrats criticized Preston and the other Whig representatives for failing to uphold southern rights.<sup>66</sup> Specifically, the Democrats

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<sup>62</sup>Richmond Whig, 21 November 1848.

<sup>63</sup>Ibid., 23 January, 20 April 1849.

<sup>64</sup>Richmond Enquirer, 29 December 1848.

<sup>65</sup>Ibid.

<sup>66</sup>Ibid., 6 February 1849.

focused on the failure of the Whig Representatives to sign the Southern Address. When Preston withdrew from the campaign to accept his cabinet post, his personal ordeal ended, but the Democratic press continued its condemnation of Botts, Flournoy, Goggin and Pendleton who were constantly forced to defend their actions throughout the campaign.<sup>67</sup> Goggin's failure to sign the Southern Address troubled some of the party faithful who anticipated that their Democratic foes would make "a desperate effort" to turn him out in 1849.<sup>68</sup> Interestingly, Whig John Pendleton had anticipated the political significance of the Southern Address and had urged William Cabell Rives to prepare a substitute preamble and resolutions. Pendleton implored, "We must make the thing whatever it is, our own thunder--and strong thunder at that."<sup>69</sup> Rives' resolutions never came to pass and the National Democrats lost no time in making political capital out of Calhoun's aborted attempt at southern unity. While Botts, Flournoy, Goggin and Pendleton were placed on the defensive, Meade and Boccock received formal thanks and praise for their activities in the Thirtieth Congress

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<sup>67</sup>Richmond Whig, 2 February, 20 March, 10 April 1849.

<sup>68</sup>Ibid., 13 February 1849.

<sup>69</sup>John S. Pendleton to William Cabell Rives, 26, 28, 30 December 1848, Rives Papers.

including their signatures on the Southern Address.<sup>70</sup> Bocoock, however, did have some trepidation about his course of action. The congressman wrote to his political ally Robert T. Hubard that "it is rendered very certain by the developments in this District that I am to have a difficult and close, if not unsuccessful contest[,] this spring."<sup>71</sup>

The Southern Address proved to be somewhat of a stumbling block for incumbent Democrat James McDowell of the Eleventh District. His refusal to sign the address precipitated a move for a convention in his home district. McDowell's supporters urged him to confront this issue immediately so that they might fight off any attempts to force a convention for the purpose of selecting another Democratic nominee.<sup>72</sup> McDowell responded by addressing Congress in late February. He opposed the Southern Address because he believed action should be taken by the "Legislatures of the Southern States in their legislative capacity and not with the congressional representative in his individual capacity."<sup>73</sup> In this speech, which was well

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<sup>70</sup>Petersburg Republican, 5 March 1849; Richmond Enquirer, 2 February 1849.

<sup>71</sup>Thomas S. Bocoock to Robert T. Hubard, 25 March 1849, Hubard Family Papers, Special Collections Department, Alderman Library, University of Virginia, Charlottesville.

<sup>72</sup>C. A. Harris to James McDowell, 23 February 1849, James McDowell Papers, Special Collections Department, Alderman Library, University of Virginia, Charlottesville.

<sup>73</sup>Staunton Vindicator, 2 April 1849.

received by his constituents and congressional colleagues, McDowell appealed to the abolitionists to stop their crusade against slavery before the Union was irreparably split. It went far towards quieting the opposition on the home front.<sup>74</sup> A gifted orator, McDowell first made a name for himself by advocating the gradual emancipation of Virginia's slaves during the 1830s. The hard money, Jacksonian Democrat was elected governor in 1842. He devoted his administration to the development of Virginia's internal improvements where his thinking was considered advanced for the time.<sup>75</sup>

Virginia's Democrats rallied around the Conway Resolutions during the heated campaign and made them as significant an issue as the Southern Address. Taking pride in their united endorsement of the resolutions, Democratic editors declared war on the "immortal thirteen" who voted

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<sup>74</sup>Francis Pendleton Gaines, Jr., "The Political Career of James McDowell" (M.A. thesis, University of Virginia, 1941), 92-98; Lynchburg Virginian 5 April 1849; Alexandria Gazette, 21 April 1849; Richmond Enquirer, 22 February 1849; Staunton Vindicator, 2 April 1849.

<sup>75</sup>DAB, s.v. "James McDowell;" BDAC, 1371. McDowell, a temperate Presbyterian of Scotch-Irish ancestry, had family connections which afforded him many political advantages. He was the nephew of former governor John Floyd and the brother-in-law of Thomas Hart Benton. He also inherited considerable wealth from his family. His real estate was valued at \$120,000 in 1850. Seventh Census, Schedule No. 1, Rockbridge County, 21 November 1850, 430.

against the anti-proviso resolutions.<sup>76</sup> The editors of the Enquirer wrote, "We would make it our special case to vote so as to defeat any member of the last Legislature who opposed those Resolutions."<sup>77</sup> Support of the resolutions became the litmus test for "soundness" on the slavery question. As the editors of the Enquirer stated it: "Let us in all the Spring elections put the Whigs to the test--let us know of their candidates whether they will stand by the South."<sup>78</sup> From Accomac to Randolph the Democratic nominating conventions endorsed the Conway Resolutions and acknowledged the role of their respective delegates. It was the key issue in all General Assembly races as well as the congressional contests.<sup>79</sup>

The Whigs appealed to Virginia's conservatism and loyalty to the Union as their best defense against the Democrats' apparent upper hand in the slavery debate. Those who had opposed the Virginia Resolutions defended their course of action and interpreted support of this measure as contributing to the agitation of the slavery question. Delegate John M. McCue of Augusta County who opposed the

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<sup>76</sup>Petersburg Republican, 24 January 1849; Staunton Vindicator, 29 January 1849.

<sup>77</sup>Richmond Enquirer, 3 April 1849.

<sup>78</sup>Ibid., 16 January 1849.

<sup>79</sup>Ibid., 2 February 1849; Southern Argus, 8 February 1849; Norfolk American Beacon, 7 April 1849.



measures described them as "empty braggadocio threats" destined to "excite the ridicule and contempt of the North and weaken our cause."<sup>80</sup> Thomas Flourney defended his course on the Southern Address in the same language. Appealing to Virginia's conservatism, he outlined the evils of disunion which he perceived to be a consequence of the action proposed by the southern extremists.<sup>81</sup> Goggin concurred with his Third District colleague and he also refused to sign the address because of its "inevitable tendency . . . to dissolve the Union."<sup>82</sup>

The Whigs' other appeal during the congressional canvass was to Zachary Taylor. By supporting Taylor, the Whigs reasoned the threatened dissolution of the Union could be avoided. John Pendleton, Jeremiah Morton, Charles Carter Lee, Francis Anderson, Charles Russell and Francis Mallory all hoped to win elections because of their support of Taylor.<sup>83</sup> They hoped to sustain the coalition which almost carried Virginia in November of 1848. Francis Anderson was told to "be courteous and conciliatory to the Democrats & show them that Genl. Taylor holds out the olive branch & all

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<sup>80</sup>John M. McCue to James T. Clarke, 2 February 1849, John M. McCue Papers, Special Collections Department, Alderman Library, University of Virginia, Charlottesville.

<sup>81</sup>Richmond Whig, 20 March 1849.

<sup>82</sup>Ibid., 10 April 1849.

<sup>83</sup>Ibid., 3, 20 April 1849; Alexandria Gazette, 21 April 1849.

may constantly rally around him."<sup>84</sup> He hoped his appeals to the Twelfth District Taylor supporters would secure his election to Congress.

The Taylor factor played a dual role in the Virginia congressional elections. First, it failed to be the rallying point it had been in 1847. The editors of the Enquirer warned, "do not let us be deceived by the talk of the Whigs, or their profession that they are 'no party' men."<sup>85</sup> In their minds, Democrats had been "humbugged into support of Taylor on account of his residence in the South."<sup>86</sup> During the campaign, they told their readers how Taylor had betrayed the South and his campaign promises to offset the Whigs' cries to rally to the support of the new president.<sup>87</sup> Second, the insistence of some Whigs to run a Taylor candidate in the Sixth District caused considerable turmoil within the party. A minority of the Sixth District Whigs, including the editors of its powerful organ the Richmond Whig, opposed incumbent John Minor Botts because he had not supported Taylor in 1848. The candidacy of Charles Carter Lee, the Taylor Whig nominee, and the virulent protracted press war aimed at Botts caused immeasurable harm

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<sup>84</sup>John T. Anderson to Francis Anderson, 21 March 1849, Anderson Family Papers.

<sup>85</sup>Richmond Enquirer, 9 March 1849.

<sup>86</sup>Ibid., 16 January 1849.

<sup>87</sup>Ibid., 24 April 1849.

to Virginia's Whigs. The editors of the Lynchburg Virginian lamented that

the talents and energy of a portion of the Richmond press which ought to have been directed against Locofocoism employed in the attempt to breakdown one who have [sic] ever been the bitterest, most uncompromising and efficient opponent of Locofocism.<sup>88</sup>

Across the state, Whigs watched while the Richmond Whig condemned Botts in the name of supporting Taylor and the party. William Goggin stated that the Whig's attitude towards Botts jeopardized the success of all Whigs.<sup>89</sup> So instead of being the basis for a coalition, the appeal to Taylor only incited Democrats and created dissension among Sixth District Whigs. The tested winning formula of 1847 would not lead to the road of success in 1849.

The congressional campaign was characterized by Democratic and Whig pleas for soundness on the slavery issue and loyalty to the South, each the embodiment of the "politics of slavery." The 1849 contest, however, saw calls to remove the slavery issue from party politics. Furthermore, the campaign witnessed pleas from party leaders to vote for the opposition's candidate if he supported the southern view on the slavery question.<sup>90</sup> These

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<sup>88</sup>Lynchburg Virginian, 22 March 1849.

<sup>89</sup>Richmond Whig, 27 April 1849; Richmond Enquirer, 10 April 1849.

<sup>90</sup>American Beacon, 7 April 1849; Staunton Vindicator, 9 April 1849.

unprecedented moves, precipitated by the actions of the Thirtieth Congress, the Southern Address and the Virginia Resolutions, signaled the advent of the breakdown of the Second American Party System in Virginia.

In early April of 1849, the editors of the Enquirer wrote,

In many counties the Whig ascendancy may be so strong as to make it advisable to run no Democrats, and in those cases their true policy and patriotic duty is to sustain those Whigs who faithfully responded to the Virginia Resolutions on the slavery question. Though in such a result we would gain nothing in a party view we would yet achieve much for the honor and good name of the state, and the security of southern rights.<sup>91</sup>

In a similar vein, the Democrats of Alexandria vowed not to run a candidate in the Ninth District. They resolved that:

holding the question of interference with slavery by the Congress of the United States, whether by Wilmot Provisos or otherwise, as of more magnitude than any other now before the American people, and as involving a claim, on the part of the North, of power not granted by the Constitution we solemnly declare our readiness at all times, to dissolve our party ties, if it be necessary, in order to put into power, men who are true to the South, true to her equal and chartered right, and true to those interests which are as near to Southern men as their own firesides.<sup>92</sup>

Clearly, party leaders were ready to break ties in order to assure unity on the southern question.

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<sup>91</sup>Richmond Enquirer, 3 April 1849. The same message was copied in the Staunton Vindicator, on 9 April 1849.

<sup>92</sup>Alexandria Gazette, 19 April 1849.

Within the Ninth District, where Whigs Pendleton and Morton sought the same seat, the contest revolved around who was the best southern man. Morton's claims to be the soundest on the southern question were echoed by Democrats who supported the southern rights Whig's quest for Pendleton's congressional seat. According to the editors of the Alexandria Gazette, Morton enjoyed the support of a wide range of Democrats and Whigs because the voters agreed with his "stand on the Proviso, which at this time, is paramount to all others with the people of the South of all parties."<sup>93</sup>

In the Sixth District as well, the question became one of safety on the southern question. Although the contest was colored by the candidacy of John Minor Botts and the Richmond Whig's persecution of him, it ultimately evolved into a mandate on the slavery issue. In late April, the Whig published this appeal to southern slave owners, "you should not hesitate to lay all party feelings and prejudices aside, and cast your votes against the man [Botts] who entertains and avows opinions so entirely opposed to the dearest rights which you possess."<sup>94</sup> The Richmond Enquirer also reflected these same sentiments. Although its motives could be traced to a desire to promote the party, it chose

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<sup>93</sup>Ibid., 25 April 1849.

<sup>94</sup>Richmond Whig, 24 April 1849.

to appeal to the reader's southern nationalism and not to his allegiance to the Democratic party. In March of 1849 the newspaper asked, "Can any sane southern man vote for Mr. John Minor Botts, who flatly admits the constitutionality of the Wilmot Proviso, and condemns the Virginia resolutions over Mr. Seddon."<sup>95</sup> Pleas to lay party prejudices aside and unite as a section to stop northern fanaticism appeared throughout the campaign.<sup>96</sup> These appeals helped to break down allegiances developed throughout the late 1830s and 1840s. The immediate effect of these appeals would be illustrated in the 1849 election returns.

The polls opened on Thursday 26 April 1849 and in some counties remained opened for three days due to inclement weather. In all, over 83,000 Virginians voted, an increase of almost 5,000 over the 1847 congressional election but some 8,000 less than the presidential election in November of 1848.<sup>97</sup> The results, as the Parkersburg Gazette lamented, indicated that the state had "gone Loco, horse, foot and dragoons."<sup>98</sup> Democrats swept all the congressional

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<sup>95</sup>Richmond Enquirer, 9 March 1849.

<sup>96</sup>Richmond Whig, 13 March, 24 April 1849; Richmond Enquirer, 5 December 1848, 16 January 1849.

<sup>97</sup>Whig Almanac 1848, 44-45, 1850, 50, 1852, 40-41; Burnham, 252.

<sup>98</sup>Parkersburg Gazette, as reported in the Richmond Enquirer, 18 May 1849.

seats except the Ninth District where Southern Rights Whig Morton defeated Pendleton, the regular party nominee, by 418 votes. The Democrats won a majority of the House of Delegates seats and kept a two to one margin in the State Senate.<sup>99</sup> The Whigs carried only 52 counties compared with 64 in 1847 and 69 in 1848.<sup>100</sup> Statewide Democrats garnered 57.70 percent of the vote, up 3.04 percentage points from the 1847 vote and up almost 7 points from the presidential election just 6 months before.

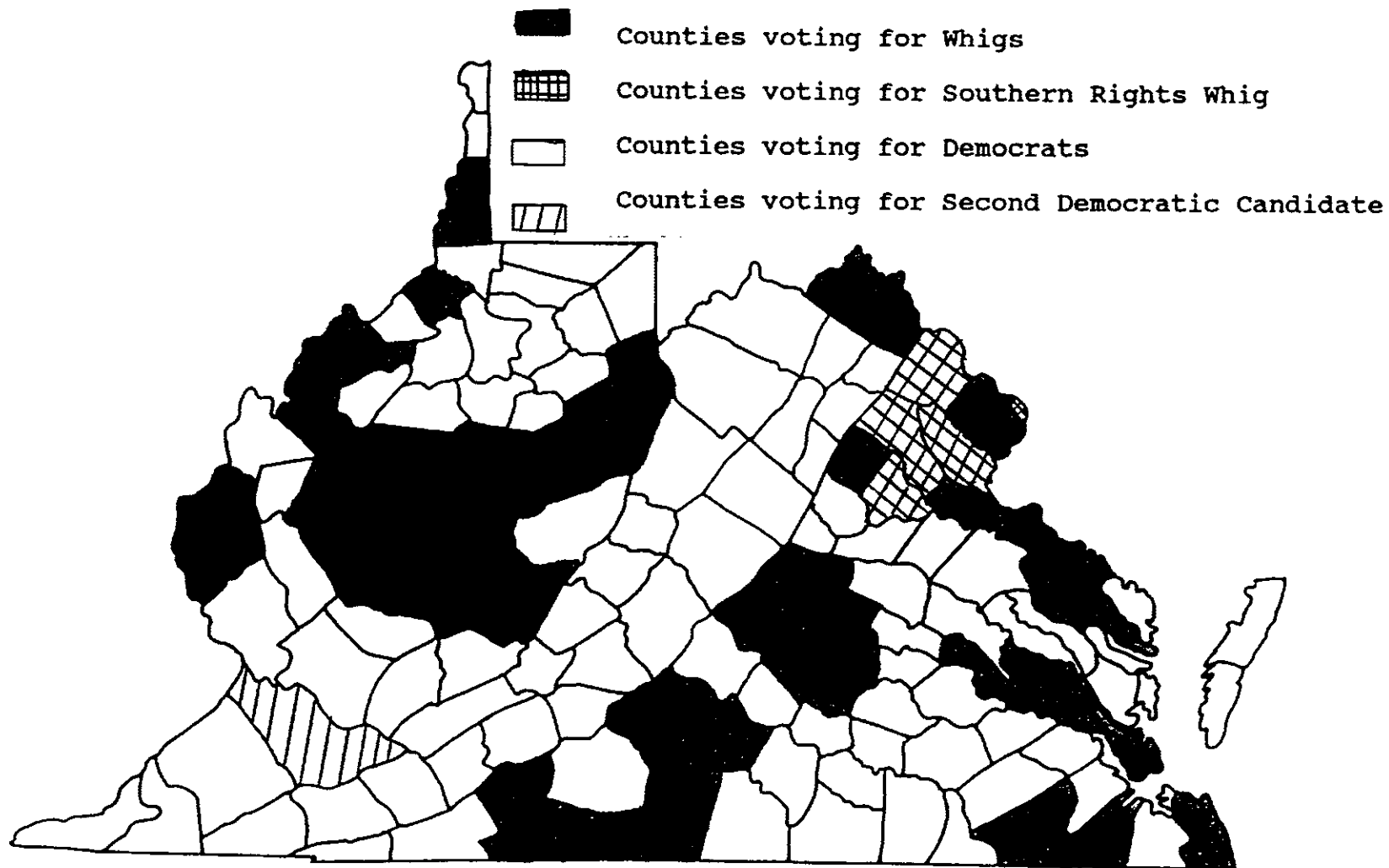
In Virginia's First District John Millson carried 51.6 percent of the vote to defeat Samuel Watts by a margin of 176. The moderately populated district with 32.7 percent of its population slaves had been represented by a Democrat since 1843.<sup>101</sup> Generally, the counties' voting patterns conformed to the district's gradual upward Democratic trend. There were, however, a number of changes in 1849. Nansemond, Southampton and Surry were all counter-trend counties. The Whigs carried Nansemond by 40 additional votes over the 1847 count, while shaving Surry's Democratic margin by 18. Surprisingly, Southampton gave its vote to the Whigs in 1849 by a margin of 24 votes after supporting

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<sup>99</sup>Richmond Whig, 18 May 1849.

<sup>100</sup>Burnham, 252; Whig Almanac 1848, 44-45, 1852, 40-41. See Map 5.

<sup>101</sup>The First District ranked eight in population, ninth in slave percentage, tenth in tobacco production and twelfth in wheat harvest. See Appendix B.



Map 5. The Congressional Election of 1849. Fifty-two political jurisdictions voted for Whig candidates including the cities of Norfolk and Richmond.



Democrat Atkinson in 1847. The county was attracted to Taylor in 1848 and may have wanted to sustain his victory; or, the voters may have felt more comfortable supporting Watts, an old States Rights Whig, over Millson, the Ritchie Democrat. Both the City of Norfolk and Norfolk County illustrated the gradual upward Democratic trend. In 1849, the county was carried by the Democrats for the first time, by one vote. In the city, the Whig margin of victory was trimmed by over 100 votes.<sup>102</sup>

Democrat Richard Kidder Meade had no opponent in the Second District. This Democratic stronghold mirrored the state's upward Democratic trend. Throughout the 1840s, Democrats represented the district in Congress. The district gave its votes to both Polk and Cass. In 1847, George Dromgoole narrowly defeated his Whig opponent; but two years later, the Whig opposition had dissipated in a district whose population was almost 60 percent slave.<sup>103</sup> Only the City of Petersburg and Dinwiddie County broke from the pattern by supporting Taylor in 1848 and sending Whig delegates to the General Assembly in 1849.

In the Third District, Democrat Thomas Averett defeated Whig incumbent Thomas Flournoy by a mere five

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<sup>102</sup>See Appendix C.

<sup>103</sup>See Appendix C.

votes.<sup>104</sup> The five county district consisted of four Whig counties and Halifax County, a Democratic stronghold and the most populous slave county in the Commonwealth.<sup>105</sup> In 1848, Franklin, Henry, Patrick and Pittsylvania cast their votes for Taylor but Halifax's margin of 448 votes for Cass carried the district for the Democrat by 22 votes. Henry, Patrick and Pittsylvania all experienced a counter-trend movement in 1849 which included Patrick's switch from the Democratic column in 1847 to the Whigs' in 1849. Again this Whig surge did not compensate for Averett's 349 vote margin in Halifax where the polls were held open for three days.<sup>106</sup> In addition, Averett captured the vote of Franklin County which returned to the Democratic fold after a two election hiatus.<sup>107</sup>

Democrat Thomas Bocock beat Whig challenger Henry P. Irving by 308 votes in Virginia's tobacco belt, the Fourth District. This district's voting trend most closely matched the overall state pattern for congressional elections. The upward Democratic trend was temporarily halted in 1848 when the district's voters gave Taylor an 86 vote victory over

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<sup>104</sup>Whig Almanac 1852, 40.

<sup>105</sup>See Appendix B.

<sup>106</sup>Richmond Enquirer, 4 May 1849.

<sup>107</sup>Franklin supported Polk in 1844, Flournoy in 1847, and Taylor in 1848 before voting for Averett in 1849. Burnham, 824; Whig Almanac 1852, 40. See Appendix C.

Cass. All eight counties voted as they had in 1847 with Charlotte and Appomattox adding significantly to Bocock's margin of victory.<sup>108</sup> The Whig counties of Buckingham, Cumberland and Fluvanna, all of whom elected Whig assemblymen, experienced slight Democratic surges but still cast a plurality of their votes for Irving. The district's most populous county, Campbell, experienced a slight Whig surge in 1849, an unfavorable counter-trend.<sup>109</sup>

The Fifth District was characterized by its balance in both politics and agricultural diversity. During the 1840s, both Democrats and Whigs served in Congress. Yet, only Orange and Amherst Counties reflected this balance. The remaining counties were either strongly Democratic or strongly Whig. The Whig county of Albemarle experienced an upward Democratic trend while sustaining its support for Whig congressional and presidential candidates.<sup>110</sup> Bedford experienced a favorable counter-trend in 1849 when Powell cut into Irving's margin in that Whig county. Powell won

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<sup>108</sup>Bocock carried Appomattox by 147 in 1847 and 232 in 1849 while he carried Charlotte by 13 in 1847 and 106 in 1849.

<sup>109</sup>The Whig candidate carried 53.0 percent of the vote in 1847 and 53.9 percent in 1849. See Appendix C.

<sup>110</sup>Albemarle cast 56.5 percent of its vote for Clay, 57.4 percent for Taylor, 61.5 percent for Goggin in 1847 and 58.9 percent for Goggin in 1849. Burnham, 818; Whig Almanac 1848, 44, 1852, 40-41.

the district with his stunning victories in the Democratic strongholds of Greene and Madison.<sup>111</sup>

James A. Seddon beat both of his Whig opponents in Virginia's most urban and industrial district, the Sixth. Despite the Richmond Whig's anti-Botts campaign, the unionist Whig carried all but 317 Whig votes in the district. Combined, Botts' and Lee's vote fell 69 votes short of Seddon's mark. The Whig counties of Hanover, Henrico and the City of Richmond all experienced the upward Democratic trend. In the case of Hanover, the increased Democratic vote gave Seddon a victory in the county. Interestingly, Botts' vote changed only slightly from 1845 when he lost to Seddon in a two man race.<sup>112</sup> The comparison of the 1845 and the 1849 results illustrate the consistency of the voting patterns in all counties with one notable exception, Powhatan. This county, a major tobacco growing area with 64.7 percent of its population slaves, switched its allegiance. In 1847, Botts had carried Hanover, Henrico and Richmond in his victory over Democrat Walter Leake. Two years later he managed to carry only the City of Richmond by

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<sup>111</sup>The two counties gave the Democrat a 731 cushion and helped him overcome Irving's margin of 699 from Albemarle, Bedford and Nelson. See Appendix C.

<sup>112</sup>See Table 3.

TABLE 3  
SIXTH DISTRICT ELECTION RETURNS

County	1845		1849			
	Seddon	Botts	Seddon	Botts	Lee	%Slave
Chesterfield	560	260	568	170	18	49.3%
Goochland	279	114	281	155	19	56.5%
Louisa	443	262	450	198	7	59.1%
Hanover	494	461	483	444	34	55.4%
Henrico	379	463	434	484	40	38.6%
Powhatan	222	241	248	159	46	64.6%
Richmond City	303	646	380	848	153	36.1%

Source: compiled from Richmond Whig, 1 May 1849; Whig Almanac 1852, 40.

a significant majority. He did, however, narrowly defeat Seddon in Henrico.<sup>113</sup>

Thomas Bayly carried six of the Seventh District's 13 counties in his successful bid for reelection in 1849. His overwhelming margin in his home county of Accomac ensured the win.<sup>114</sup> In its congressional vote, the district followed the statewide Democratic uptrend but it was predominantly Whig in character. Eleven of its thirteen counties sent Whigs to the General Assembly in 1849 and the district cast its vote for Clay in 1844 and Taylor in 1848. Bayly's personal popularity ensured his success in spite of his party affiliation. All of the counties mirrored this district's trend except Elizabeth City and Warwick which experienced an unfavorable counter-trend in 1849.<sup>115</sup> Virginia's least populated congressional district was an area of small farms with almost no tobacco cultivation.<sup>116</sup>

In Virginia's Eighth District, Alexander Holladay defeated John Forbes by carrying Caroline, King and Queen, King William, Middlesex and Spotsylvania Counties. His margin of victory was slightly less than Democrat Richard L.

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<sup>113</sup>See Appendix C.

<sup>114</sup>Bayly defeated Mallory by 526 votes. Accomac accounted for 37 percent of his total vote. Whig Almanac 1852, 40.

<sup>115</sup>See Appendix C.

<sup>116</sup>The Seventh District ranked fifteenth in tobacco and fourteenth in number of property owners. See Appendix B.

T. Beale's in 1847 and meant that the district did not match the state's trend. The Northern Neck district represented an area in transition. Five counties sent Democrats to the General Assembly and four sent Whigs. In 1848, the district voted for Taylor and this vote may have carried over to the congressional election as both Essex and Westmoreland counties experienced a slight surge in the Whig vote.<sup>117</sup>

Virginia's bastion of Whiggery showed no tendency to conform to the state's upward Democratic trend in the 1849 election. Jeremiah Morton, the Southern Rights Whig, defeated incumbent John Pendleton, the regular party nominee, by carrying Alexandria, Loudoun, Culpeper, Fauquier and Democratic Prince William County. In Fairfax, Stafford and Rappahannock, Morton gained a similar percentage as the 1847 Democratic nominee. He did not carry Stafford which had voted for Cass in 1848 and supported the Democratic nominee in 1847. Pendleton's belief in the constitutionality of the Wilmot Proviso and his opposition to the Clayton Compromise cost him support.<sup>118</sup> A number of Democrats in the district campaigned against him during the canvass.<sup>119</sup> Both Whigs and Democrats conceded that the

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<sup>117</sup>See Appendix C.

<sup>118</sup>Richmond Enquirer, 1 May 1849.

<sup>119</sup>Richmond Whig, 22 May 1849.

latter party's vote secured the election for Morton.<sup>120</sup> This was a wealthy district with the second highest land value in the state and whose residents paid the second highest amount in taxes.<sup>121</sup>

Virginia's Tenth Congressional District, located at the northern end of the Valley, elected Democrat Richard Parker in 1849. Parker carried Democratic strongholds Page and Warren Counties by an overwhelming margin. His opponent managed just 99 votes out of 794 cast in the two counties.<sup>122</sup> While Page and Hampshire maintained a relatively stable Democratic vote, Berkeley, Clarke, Frederick, Jefferson and Warren sustained a favorable counter-trend Democratic surge. Morgan County, on the other hand, appeared to be in the midst of a Democratic downtrend. After supporting Democrat Henry Bedinger with 50.9 percent of its vote, the county cast only 41.5 percent for Parker two years later.<sup>123</sup> Morgan, a sparsely populated county, had the smallest proportion of slaves in any county east of

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<sup>120</sup>John S. Pendleton to William A. Graham, 27 October 1850 in The Papers of William Alexander Graham, 3 vols., ed. J. G. de Roulhac Hamilton (Raleigh: North Carolina State Department of Archives and History, 1960), 3:466; Richmond Enquirer, 4 May 1849. See Table 4 and Appendix C.

<sup>121</sup>See Appendix B.

<sup>122</sup>Warren--Parker 188, Faulkner--41; Page--Parker 606, Faulkner 58. Whig Almanac 1852, 40-41.

<sup>123</sup>See Appendix C.



TABLE 4  
ANALYSIS OF VOTE IN THE NINTH DISTRICT

1849	<u>Democratic Vote</u>		<u>Whig Vote</u>	
	Morton	Pendleton	Morton	Pendleton
Stafford	214	2	24	249
Rappahannock	138	14	13	251
Culpeper	364	27	83	316
Pr. William	240	1	5	120
Fauquier	468	15	56	453
Fairfax	135	91	94	204
Alexandria	87	13	159	445
Loudoun	254	11	445	456

Source: Richmond Enquirer, 8 June 1849; Richmond Whig, 5 June 1849.

the Allegheny Mountains. The district's slave population comprised just 20 percent of its total.<sup>124</sup>

After an initial threat of competition, James McDowell was reelected without opposition in the Eleventh District. The central Valley district was equally divided between Whig and Democratic counties; however, the Democrats' almost complete domination of Rockingham and Shenandoah helped to carry the district for the Democratic presidential candidates in 1844 and 1848 and give McDowell his victory in 1847 when his opponent carried all other counties in the district.<sup>125</sup> McDowell was so well liked by the Whigs that they chose not to field a candidate in 1849. The Whig counties continued to nominate candidates for the General Assembly and successfully returned Whigs Sheffy, McCue and Welton to office in spite of the fact that they had voted against the Conway Resolutions.<sup>126</sup>

Virginia's Twelfth District, nestled on either side of the Allegheny Mountains, elected Henry A. Edmundson to Congress in 1849. All of the district's counties displayed an upward Democratic trend similar to the state pattern including Logan, Mercer, Monroe, Montgomery and Pulaski

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<sup>124</sup>See Appendix B.

<sup>125</sup>Gray's margins--Augusta 390, Hardy 152, Pendleton 12, Rockbridge 100; McDowell's margins Rockingham 746, Shenandoah 768. Whig Almanac 1848, 44-45.

<sup>126</sup>Staunton Spectator, 7 February, 7 March 1849. See Appendix C.

which voted for Edmundson after previously supporting Whig William Preston in 1847. Only Greenbrier County failed to vote for Edmundson in 1849. Whig Francis Anderson carried 68.2 percent of the county's vote in his losing effort.<sup>127</sup>

In Virginia's Thirteenth District, located in the southwest corner of the state, two Democrats clashed in a race won by Fayette McMullen. McMullen carried all counties but John George's home of Tazewell.<sup>128</sup> Although primarily a Democratic district, a Whig was able to win in 1847 when the Democrats fielded two candidates. Both Tazewell and Russell counties voted for Taylor in 1848 and sent Whigs to the General Assembly.<sup>129</sup> The Thirteenth District was a region of numerous small farmers with few slaves.<sup>130</sup>

The Fourteenth Congressional District was Virginia's largest in terms of land area, number of counties and population. Democrat James M. H. Beale beat William McComas by 159 votes. Beale carried 11 counties while McComas won the Whig stronghold of Kanawha by 309 votes. Most counties were consistently Democratic but the district was very much in transition. In the previous six years, eight new counties were carved out of existing ones in the

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<sup>127</sup>See Appendix C.

<sup>128</sup>See Table 5.

<sup>129</sup>See Appendix C.

<sup>130</sup>See Appendix B.

TABLE 5

## 1849 ELECTION RETURNS IN THE THIRTEENTH DISTRICT

<u>Washington Co.</u>	<u>McM</u>	<u>G</u>	<u>Russell County</u>	<u>McM</u>	<u>G</u>
Court House	347	197	Court House	239	107
Meeks	120	81	New Garden	157	45
Three Springs	130	20	Banner's	74	15
Fleenor's	<u>48</u>	<u>22</u>	Dorton's	82	7
Total	645	393	Pound	50	0
			Geade	40	8
<u>Smyth County</u>	<u>McM</u>	<u>G</u>	Sand Lick	<u>11</u>	<u>17</u>
Court House	189	56	Total	548	199
Broadford	62	47			
Rye Valley	10	34	<u>Scott County</u>	<u>McM</u>	<u>G</u>
Chatham Hill	67	24	Court House	137	63
Sinclair's Bot.	<u>47</u>	<u>57</u>	North Fork	52	61
Total	375	218	Rye Cove	106	49
			Oshorn's Ford	94	34
<u>Wythe County</u>	<u>McM</u>	<u>G</u>	Nicholsville	147	6
Court House	166	100	Jett's	84	7
Jackson Ferry	62	35	Opossum Creek	<u>27</u>	<u>16</u>
Millers	71	29	Total	647	245
Rosenbalm's	18	21			
Muneeey's	36	8	<u>Lee County</u>	<u>McM</u>	<u>G</u>
Umbarger's	<u>34</u>	<u>22</u>	Court House	271	100
Total	387	215	Turkey Cove	60	33
			Walling Creek	23	8
<u>Grayson County</u>	<u>McM</u>	<u>G</u>	Black Water	23	8
Court House	123	57	Chadwell's	<u>121</u>	<u>30</u>
Elk Creek	119	28	Total	598	200
Fields	200	19			
Pughees	<u>118</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>Tazewell Co.</u>	<u>McM</u>	<u>G</u>
Total	560	113	Court House	101	267
			White	74	64
<u>Carroll County</u>	<u>McM</u>	<u>G</u>	Slate	4	66
Court House	226	19	Beaver's	7	28
Carroll's	117	1	Burk's Garden	3	63
Edward's	39	12	Peter Dills	8	75
Blain's Forge	<u>32</u>	<u>46</u>	Blue Stone	20	65
Total	414	78	Tug	<u>32</u>	<u>10</u>
			Total	247	638

Notes: McM--McMullen  
G--George

Source: Abingdon  
Virginian, 19 May 1849.

district.<sup>131</sup> These boundary alterations make it difficult to evaluate political trends. The vast majority of the counties had a fairly steady Democratic vote including Doddridge where a strong German immigrant community was located. Kanawha and Wayne Counties voted consistently Whig.<sup>132</sup> The Ohio River counties of Jackson, Cabell and Mason showed the greatest fluctuation by voting for candidates of one party and sending delegates to the General Assembly from the other.<sup>133</sup>

The northwest panhandle constituted the Fifteenth District. In 1849, the voters elected Democrat Alexander Newman. He carried eight counties. His Whig opponent, Charles Russell carried Ohio by 451 votes and Marshall by 155 votes but fell short of victory by 255. Only Randolph and Tyler counties experienced an unfavorable counter trend. These Democratic counties fell off the mark both in the 1848 presidential election and the congressional contest five months later.<sup>134</sup> The Fifteenth had the fewest slaves and slave owners.

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<sup>131</sup>Taylor was formed in 1844 from Harrison, Barbour and Lewis; Doddridge in 1845 from Harrison, Tyler, Ritchie and Lewis; Gilmer also in 1845 from Lewis and Kanawha; Wetzel in 1846 from Tyler; Boone in 1847 from Kanawha, Cabell and Logan; Putnam in 1848 from Kanawha, Cabell and Mason; and Wirt in 1848 from Wood and Jackson.

<sup>132</sup>Ambler, Sectionalism, 252.

<sup>133</sup>See Appendix C.

<sup>134</sup>Ibid.

Before the Thirty-first Congress convened, the Whigs were able to recapture one more seat in the House of Representatives when Representative-elect Newman died on board the Steamer "Companion" in Pittsburgh on 15 September 1849. Nominating conventions were held in late September and throughout October for the special election scheduled on 8 November 1849.<sup>135</sup> Surprisingly, the Whigs did not select Charles Russell, their nominee from the spring. Instead they called on Thomas Sherwood Haymond of Marion County.<sup>136</sup> Haymond's opponent was George W. Thompson, the son of Irish immigrant parents, from Ohio County.<sup>137</sup> Haymond narrowly defeated Thompson.<sup>138</sup> He carried only 4 of the 12 counties in the Fifteenth District. Haymond failed to carry both Randolph and Tyler counties which had voted for Russell in April but carried the lower panhandle counties of Marshall and Ohio. Haymond was the only Whig elected from the district in the period from 1843 until 1852. His popularity in his home county secured his election. He defeated his

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<sup>135</sup>Wellbsurg Weekly Herald, 24 October 1851.

<sup>136</sup>BDAC, 1093. Haymond (1794-1869) owned real estate valued at \$15,000 and owned four slaves. Seventh Census, Schedule No. 1, Marion County 14 August 1850, 139; Schedule No. 2, Marion County, 6 July 1850.

<sup>137</sup>BDAC, 1809; Atkinson, 781-785. Thompson (1806-1888), a lawyer of some means, held real estate valued at \$16,500. Seventh Census, Schedule 1, Ohio County, 8 July 1850, 4.

<sup>138</sup>Total vote--Haymond 2873, Thompson 2807, Haymond's margin of victory--66. Richmond Enquirer, 30 November 1849.

opponent in Marion by 83 votes while just a little more than six months before Democrat Newman had carried it by 358. The election returns show no other significant Whig surges.<sup>139</sup>

While the election results reveal that the Second American Party System was still alive and well in some counties of the Commonwealth, the Whig party was clearly losing strength and failed to provide even token opposition in some districts. The Whigs did not help their cause by sitting out both the Second and Eleventh District contests. In 1847, the Second District Whig lost by just 16 votes. The prospects for Whig victory in the Eleventh were not as favorable; however, the Whig candidate most assuredly would have received handsome majorities from Augusta, Hardy and Rockbridge Counties.<sup>140</sup> The Fourth, Seventh and Twelfth Districts experienced a greater rise in the Democratic vote than the state's average.<sup>141</sup> The Whigs' poor showing in these districts was a precursor of coming elections. In 1851, neither Edmundson of the Twelfth, nor Bayly of the Seventh would face a Whig opponent. Thirty-three counties,

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<sup>139</sup>See Table 6.

<sup>140</sup>Pluralities for Whig congressional candidates in 1847 were 390, 152 and 100 respectively. Whig Almanac 1848, 45.

<sup>141</sup>The state Democratic percentage, 57.07%, increased by 3.04 from the 1847 figure of 54.66%. All the counties in the Second and Eleventh Districts had greater rises than the state trend because the Democratic candidates ran unopposed.

TABLE 6  
 FIFTEEN DISTRICT  
 COMPARISON OF APRIL 1849 ELECTION RETURNS  
 AND NOVEMBER 1849 ELECTION RETURNS

County	Majority Party <u>April 1849</u>	Majority Party <u>November 1849</u>
Barbour <sup>a</sup>	86 Democrat	86 Democrat
Brooke	3 Democrat	4 Democrat
Hancock	94 Democrat	57 Democrat
Marion	358 Democrat	83 Whig
Marshall	203 Whig	155 Whig
Monongalia	286 Democrat	217 Democrat
Ohio	591 Whig	451 Whig
Preston	262 Democrat	111 Democrat
Randolph	50 Whig	64 Democrat
Taylor <sup>a</sup>	15 Whig	2 Whig
Tyler <sup>b</sup>	138 Whig	4 Democrat
Wetzel	257 Democrat	82 Democrat

Source: Compiled from Whig Almanac 1852, 45; Richmond Enquirer 30 November 1849.

<sup>a</sup>only small section of county located in the Fifteenth District.

<sup>b</sup>also includes vote for that portion of Doddridge County located in the Fifteenth District.



including six of the thirteen counties in the Seventh District and ten of the fifteen counties in the Twelfth District experienced a Democratic surge greater than the state trend.<sup>142</sup> The majority of the counties in the state saw Democratic increases which corresponded to the state trend. There were, however, eight Democratic counties which saw a small Whig increase and sixteen Whig counties which strengthened their numbers.<sup>143</sup> On the whole, these Whig increases pale when compared to the Democratic rise in an overwhelming number of Virginia's counties.

Democrats interpreted their victory as a triumph for their party and the South. To southern nationalists, the near sweep was an example for all southern states to emulate as it would send a strong message to the North.<sup>144</sup> In analyzing John Minor Botts' defeat in the Whig Sixth District, the editors of the Enquirer wrote, "None can doubt

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<sup>142</sup>The counties were Accomac, Alleghany, Amelia, Appomattox, Bath, Botetourt, Cabell, Chesterfield, Cumberland, Floyd, Fluvanna, Franklin, Giles, Gloucester, Henrico, James City, Jefferson, Lewis, Louisa, Lunenburg, Mason, Matthews, Mercer, Monroe, Montgomery, New Kent, Nicholas, Norfolk City, Pulaski, Richmond, Roanoke, Warren and Williamsburg. See Appendix for percentages.

<sup>143</sup>The Democratic counties were Charlotte, King William, Madison, Pocahontas, Powhatan, Southampton, Spotsylvania and Surry. The Whig counties were Campbell, Elizabeth City, Essex, Fayette, Henry, Jackson, Kanawha, Morgan, Nansemond, Patrick, Pittsylvania, Princess Anne, Warwick, Westmoreland and Wood.

<sup>144</sup>F. W. Byrdsall to John C. Calhoun, 7 May 1849 in Calhoun's Correspondence, 502-3.

that it was for his obnoxious views on the delicate question of slavery."<sup>145</sup> The Democrats believed the election returns indicated the unpopularity of the Taylor administration. The editors of the Enquirer proclaimed, "Taylorism has come out in a desperate condition."<sup>146</sup> In the Fourth, Fifth, Sixth, Seventh and Fourteenth Districts where the Whigs found success just five months before in the presidential election, Democrats were elected over Whigs including two incumbents. The Taylor coalition had been defeated. Of the 69 counties voting for Taylor in 1848, only 46 would vote for the Whig congressional candidate in 1849. One observer remarked that the "Taylor-Democrats, carried off temporarily by the 'no party' profession last summer now see these pledges broken, and hopes ruined, and 'disgusted' with their late allies have returned to their old faith."<sup>147</sup>

The Whigs, refusing to accept the election results as a referendum on the Taylor administration, chose to blame their defeat on party apathy, overconfidence and electoral fraud. The Whigs complained bitterly about the gerrymandering done by the General Assembly in establishing the congressional districts in 1843. They also believed the polls were opened or closed to their disadvantage. Calling

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<sup>145</sup>Richmond Enquirer, 25 May 1849.

<sup>146</sup>Ibid., 4 May 1849.

<sup>147</sup>Ibid., 18 May 1849.

for reform, the editors of the Whig warned that the Legislature would have to change the law or "the elective franchise will become a mere nullity."<sup>148</sup> While some Whigs prepared a litany of excuses for their failure in the election, other more sagacious ones observed that all was not well with their party.<sup>149</sup> Frustrated by the appeal of the growing radicalism among Democrats and their apparent loss of the higher ground on the slavery issue, the editors of the Whig asked, "Is the Union of so little value that we can afford to throw it away, because a clause is introduced to exclude slavery from a country where it could never go?"<sup>150</sup>

A number of historians have drawn attention to the Whig losses in the Virginia congressional election of 1849.<sup>151</sup> The party's dramatic reverses in light of Taylor's recent victory possibly signaled trouble with the political system. The Democrats indicated willingness to work with the Southern Rights Whigs by helping to elect Jeremiah Morton in the Ninth District.<sup>152</sup> Party loyalty was fading in the face of the threat to slavery. Traditional party issues

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<sup>148</sup>Richmond Whig, 8 May 1849.

<sup>149</sup>Lynchburg Patriot, as reported in the Richmond Whig, 4 May 1849.

<sup>150</sup>Richmond Whig, 27 May 1849.

<sup>151</sup>McCardell, 291-92; Holt, Political Crisis, 75-76.

<sup>152</sup>Craven Growth, 60-61.

failed to play a significant role in these elections and party barriers had eased as a consequence. Although the Whigs suffered a significant setback in the 1849 election, there was still life within the party. One optimist noted in his post-election analysis that,

the state is very nearly Whig, it can be made wholly so, by proper exertions, and if Whigs will forthwith begin the good work, they will realize that glorious result at the next spring election.<sup>153</sup>

The election results reveal a strong element of continued party allegiance in spite of the agitation of the slavery issue. As one Virginian noted, "there are a few voters . . . so bound to party that they would be willing to see the place sink to have their party triumph."<sup>154</sup> While its parties were weakened by the pull to unite on the slavery issue, the Second American Party System survived the contest in 1849 to face another election.

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<sup>153</sup>Valley Whig reported in the Richmond Whig, 8 June 1849.

<sup>154</sup>Henry Loving to Joseph R. Anderson, 28 April 1849, Anderson Family Papers.

## CHAPTER 5

### THE CONGRESSIONAL ELECTION OF 1851

The years between the congressional elections of 1849 and 1851 were momentous ones for Virginia and the nation. The passage of the Compromise measures in the fall of 1850 went far to alleviate the sectional tensions precipitated by Taylor's plan for California and the Mexican Cession, the continuing debate over the Wilmot Proviso, the calls for the abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia and the problem of fugitive slaves.<sup>1</sup> In Virginia, rising sectionalism gave birth to a constitutional convention in 1850. These same tensions created a stalemate in the convention as delegates argued over the basis of representation. The West held out for the white basis of apportioning the legislature while their eastern counterparts insisted on the mixed basis based on taxes and population. Finally, under the threat that the western counties would break off from the rest of the Commonwealth, a compromise was effected. The new framework broadened the franchise, reapportioned the General Assembly and allowed for the popular election of state officials including the

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<sup>1</sup>McCardell, 293.

governor.<sup>2</sup> While the constitutional convention debated the representation issue in the early spring of 1851, Virginians prepared to nominate their candidates for the April congressional elections. The political turmoil of the preceding two years had taken its toll on Virginia's political parties. From the Nashville Convention, to the Compromise of 1850, to the call for the constitutional convention, Virginia's Whigs and Democrats found themselves pulled together and then pushed apart as they attempted to regroup for each election. Under the circumstances the General Assembly, meeting concurrently with the constitutional convention, deemed it wise to postpone the congressional elections until the fall. At that time, the people could decide on a new framework of government for the Commonwealth and select a new congressional delegation.

When the canvass for the Virginia congressional election began in the winter of 1850-51, the Compromise of 1850 soon became the central issue of the campaign.<sup>3</sup> The editors of the Fredericksburg News observed that,

The compromise bill has connected with it extraneous questions, which are so peculiarly and exclusively applicable to the South that Virginia will not throw them out of the contest--They will be blended with and control the election despite every effort the

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<sup>2</sup>Craig Simpson, "Political Compromise and the Protection of Slavery," Virginia Magazine of History and Biography 83 (October 1975): 387-405; Chandler, 69-71.

<sup>3</sup>S. F. Leake to Paulus Powell, 30 December 1850, Paulus Powell Papers, Virginia Historical Society, Richmond.

friends of the administration may make. The issues will be made upon the Compromise, not whether it shall be sustained for we believe both parties are willing to acquiesce, but whether those members of Congress who opposed it shall be condemned for this opposition.<sup>4</sup>

Others saw the contest as a battle between "the genuine and hearty supporters of the Compromise and the lukewarm, milk & water acquiescents."<sup>5</sup> By election day, 23 October 1851, the contest had evolved into a referendum on the finality of the Compromise and the right of secession.<sup>6</sup>

The postponement of the election from April until October disrupted the nomination process. Some candidates were nominated during the winter while others were not selected until late summer. In some districts, the Whigs never selected a candidate. Democrat Richard Kidder Meade of the Second District, Thomas Bayly of the Seventh District, Alexander Holladay of the Eighth District, Henry Edmundson of the Twelfth District and Fayette McMullen of the Thirteenth District all faced no opposition in their bids for re-election. Whigs in both the Second and Seventh District considered running but declined to enter the contest officially. Essex County Whigs pleaded with their Eighth District brethren to nominate a candidate to oppose

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<sup>4</sup>Fredericksburg News, 18 February 1851.

<sup>5</sup>Staunton Spectator quoted in the Virginia Free Press, 4 September 1851.

<sup>6</sup>Lynchburg Virginian, 16 October 1851.

Holladay.<sup>7</sup> One other Democratic candidate, John Letcher of the Eleventh District, faced no opponent in 1851.

John Letcher was the political protege of James McDowell. For ten years, Letcher ably edited the Democratic organ the Lexington Valley Star while lashing out against protective tariffs, abolitionism and federally financed internal improvements. In 1847, Letcher and several other Valley men asked Washington College President, Henry Ruffner, to publish an address delivered to the Franklin Literary Society which outlined the social and political evils of slavery. While Letcher later denounced his former views on the slavery issue, his support of the Ruffner pamphlet caused him some political difficulties.<sup>8</sup> Eleventh District Democrats nominated Letcher for their congressional seat following the death of incumbent congressman James McDowell on 24 August 1851.<sup>9</sup> As a reward for his outstanding defense of western interests in the Constitutional Convention, the Whigs offered no opposition to Letcher's candidacy in 1851.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>7</sup>Southern Argus, 13 August 1851; Richmond Whig 7 October 1851; Fredericksburg News 21 February 1851.

<sup>8</sup>Shanks, 57-58. Letcher (1813-1884) owned six slaves in 1850. Seventh Census, Schedule No. 2, Rockbridge County, n.d., 197.

<sup>9</sup>Richmond Enquirer, 3 October 1851.

<sup>10</sup>Frances Nash Boney, John Letcher of Virginia: The Story of Virginia's Civil War Governor (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1966), 51.



In the First District, Democrats endorsed the candidacy of incumbent congressman John Millson. Millson was praised at the Sussex County Convention as "one among the true patriots of the South who battled it to the last for southern rights and southern principles."<sup>11</sup> He received similar accolades from the other county conventions as they met to approve his candidacy.<sup>12</sup> Millson's opponent in 1851, Captain Leopold Copeland Parker Cowper of Portsmouth, was nominated by the First District Whig Convention held in Suffolk on 11 August.<sup>13</sup> No delegates from Sussex, Surry, Isle of Wight or Southampton Counties attended the convention.<sup>14</sup> The convention urged all District Whigs to unite behind the candidacy of Cowper because of "the critical importance of the present election to the cause of whiggery and the Union of the States."<sup>15</sup>

In the Third, Fifth and Fifteenth Districts, the same candidates who had sought office in 1849 squared off again to seek a seat in the Thirty-second Congress. Third District incumbent Democrat Thomas Averett faced Whig Thomas

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<sup>11</sup>Southern Argus, 15 September 1851.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., September-October 1851.

<sup>13</sup>For biographical information on Cowper see George Wesley Rogers, Officers of the Senate of Virginia, 1776-1956 (Richmond: Garrett and Massie, Inc., 1957), 51.

<sup>14</sup>Southern Argus, 13 August 1851.

<sup>15</sup>American Beacon, 13 August 1851.

Flournoy; Fifth District incumbent Democrat Paulus Powell opposed Whig William Goggin; and Fifteenth District incumbent Whig Thomas Haymond ran against Democrat George Thompson.<sup>16</sup> In the Fourteenth District, incumbent Democrat James Beale faced a new Whig opponent in his bid for re-election.<sup>17</sup> The Whigs nominated General Daniel Smith over Colonel Gideon Camden of Harrison County.<sup>18</sup> Smith, a veteran politician and physician who practiced in Kanawha County, had served seven terms as the Whig representative from Kanawha between 1827 and 1845.<sup>19</sup>

The Whigs of the Fourth District began to select a nominee to face incumbent Democrat Thomas Bocock in the winter of 1851.<sup>20</sup> They finally settled on Philip A. Bolling, a lawyer from Cumberland County. In 1832, Bolling represented Cumberland County in the General Assembly and

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<sup>16</sup>Neither Haymond nor Thompson had been candidates in the regular election but they opposed one another in the special contest held to fill the vacancy cause by the death of Democratic Congressman Newman.

<sup>17</sup>The Fourteenth District Democrats were apparently unable to hold a convention and Beale finally declared himself the candidate in late August. Richmond Enquirer, 4 September 1851.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid.

<sup>19</sup>Dr. Smith owned \$6,500 worth of real estate and 12 slaves. Seventh Census, Schedule No. 1, Kanawha County, 4 August 1850, 45; Schedule No. 2, Kanawha County, 4 August 1850.

<sup>20</sup>Willis P. Bocock to R. M. T. Hunter, 13 February 1851, Hunter's Correspondence, 124-25.

took part in the formal debate on the issue of the gradual emancipation of Virginia's slaves. The young Bolling remarked that slavery was "a blighting, withering curse that robs Virginia soil of its rich verdure, and is drying up the very lifeblood of her national wealth, honor and prosperity."<sup>21</sup> By 1851, Bolling changed his view on the peculiar institution and defended his previous stand by establishing the context within which it was made. In 1832, Bolling represented a county where blacks outnumbered whites and many of his constituents were fearful of an uprising in the aftermath of the Nat Turner Rebellion.<sup>22</sup> Bolling had just completed a term in the Virginia General Assembly when he accepted the nomination of the Fourth District Whigs.<sup>23</sup>

James A. Seddon, Sixth District Democratic congressman, announced in January of 1851 that he would not be a candidate for re-election. He cited family responsibilities and the agitating scenes of the previous session as his reasons for retirement. In spite of his announced intentions, the Sixth District Democratic Convention nominated Seddon in March. With the postponement

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<sup>21</sup>Richmond Examiner, 23 September 1851.

<sup>22</sup>Lynchburg Virginian, 14 August 1851.

<sup>23</sup>Bolling did not report the value of his real estate holdings in the 1850 Census. They must have been fairly extensive because he owned 41 slaves. Seventh Census, Schedule No. 1, Cumberland County, 24 September 1850, 314; Schedule No. 2, Cumberland County, 24 September 1850, 115.

of the election until October, Seddon had additional time to reconsider and once again stepped down on 7 August 1851. Although he had been berated by the Whig presses in the preceding months for his course in Washington, Seddon claimed his physical well being was the sole motivation for his resignation from the canvass.<sup>24</sup> In his place, the Democrats nominated John Caskie, a young Richmond lawyer. Caskie, Seddon's understudy, was also a Calhoun follower but more moderate than his Virginia mentor. Caskie never took exception to Seddon's opposition to the Compromise while he personally claimed to be in favor of the settlement.<sup>25</sup>

Caskie's opponent was John Minor Botts. The Sixth District Whig Convention finally nominated the beleaguered Whig in September of 1851. The District's Whigs had been split into factions since Taylor's election in 1848. Botts himself wondered if his fellow party members would ever forgive his course in that election. In addition his recent support of the white basis of representation in the Constitutional Convention further alienated him from some of the District's Whigs.<sup>26</sup> Following his nomination the editors of the Lynchburg Virginian wrote,

We hope the Whigs of Richmond District, will now bury the hatchet and excite themselves unitedly and

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<sup>24</sup>Richmond Whig, 22 August 1851.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid., 19, 23 September 1851.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid., 19 September 1851.

zealously to secure the election of a man, who whatever may have been his offenses against party is a true Whig, a devoted friend of the Union, and possessed of an intellect inferior to none in the state.<sup>27</sup>

Some weeks later the Charles Carter Lee faction publicly acknowledged their support for Botts.<sup>28</sup>

Southern Rights Whig congressman Jeremiah Morton of the Ninth District announced his candidacy for re-election in January of 1851.<sup>29</sup> The editors of the News responded that Morton "has faithfully discharged his duties and ought we think, to be sustained."<sup>30</sup> However, others in the district took issue with the "pseudo Whig." Morton's defeat of the regular party nominee in 1849, his opposition to Robert Winthrop's election to the speakership of the House and his voting record on the Compromise measures cost him the united support of the Ninth District Whigs.<sup>31</sup> James French Strothers of Rappahannock secured the backing of some of the disgruntled Whigs.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>27</sup>Lynchburg Virginian quoted in the Richmond Whig, 16 September 1851.

<sup>28</sup>Richmond Examiner, 17 October 1851.

<sup>29</sup>Fredericksburg News, 24 January 1851.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid., 14 October 1851.

<sup>31</sup>Richmond Whig, 14 October 1851; Alexandria Gazette, 17 October 1851.

<sup>32</sup>BDAC 1770-71. In 1850, Strothers (1811-1860) had real estate holdings valued at \$13,700. Seventh Census, Schedule No. 1, Rappahannock County, 3 October 1850, 110.

Richard Parker, Democratic congressman in the Tenth District, was ineligible for re-election in 1851 because he had accepted the judgeship of the thirteenth circuit on the fifteenth of January. In April, a Democratic convention convened with representatives from Hampshire and Morgan Counties. The delegates from Warren, Berkeley and Frederick hoped to postpone the selection of a nominee until late summer but were overruled by other delegates. Henry Bedinger, the former Tenth District congressman from Charlestown, was nominated by a majority of the delegates.<sup>33</sup>

Not all Tenth District Democrats were satisfied with Bedinger's nomination. For some he was "tainted with the South Carolina heresies."<sup>34</sup> Another Democratic Convention was called in July. This group nominated Richard E. Byrd of Frederick. Byrd, a strong unionist candidate, had been assured by the Tenth District Whigs that they would not run a candidate when he entered the contest. When the Whigs subsequently nominated Charles J. Faulkner as their party candidate, Byrd decided to withdraw from the race instead of risking a potential split in the Democratic vote and assuring a Whig victory in the Tenth District.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>33</sup>Martinsburg Gazette, 8 April 1851; BDAC, 572.

<sup>34</sup>Alexandria Gazette, 23 July 1851.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid., 4 September 1851; Martinsburg Gazette, 5 August, 2 September 1851.

The Whigs pinned their hopes on a Compromise and Union platform in 1851. Since the passage of the Compromise measures, the Whigs had called for public pledges on the finality of the settlement.<sup>36</sup> They hoped to split the Democrats, to build a coalition of Compromise men and to carry the congressional election for the Whig party. From the outset of the campaign, the Whigs began a fierce attack on the anti-compromise members of the Virginia congressional delegation.<sup>37</sup> In their mind, Seddon, Meade, Averett, Powell and Bocock had taken "extreme ground and held forth their constituents as ready to unite with Disunionists of the South to prevent an amicable adjustment of the past differences."<sup>38</sup> This departure from the duties of a representative could not be tolerated. For this reason, the Whig press continued their truculent attack of the anti-compromise men and called upon the people of Virginia to run opposition candidates in all districts where the incumbent had voted against the Compromise.<sup>39</sup> In

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<sup>36</sup>Richmond Whig, 31 January 1851.

<sup>37</sup>See Table 7 for vote on Compromise measures by Virginia's congressional delegation.

<sup>38</sup>Richmond Whig, 15 October 1851; see also Lynchburg Virginian, 11 August 1851. Bocock who failed to vote on any of the measures was always included in the anti-compromise group by the Whig presses while Millson and Holladay who voted against the measures were not always singled out for their opposition.

<sup>39</sup>Richmond Whig, 17 February 1851.

TABLE 7

## VOTES OF VIRGINIA CONGRESSMEN ON THE COMPROMISE OF 1850

Representative	Dist.	Texas (9/6)	Calif. (9/7)	Utah (9/7)	Fug Sl (9/12)	Slave Tr (9/17)
Millson	1	N	N	NV	Y	N
Meade	2	N	N	N	Y	NV
Averett	3	N	N	Y	Y	N
Bocock	4	NV	NV	NV	NV	NV
Powell	5	N	N	NV	Y	N
Seddon	6	N	N	N	Y	N
Bayly	7	Y	N	Y	Y	N
Holladay	8	N	N	N	Y	N
Morton	9	Y	N	Y	Y	NV
Parker	10	Y	N	Y	Y	N
McDowell	11	Y	N	Y	NV	N
Edmundson	12	Y	N	Y	Y	N
McMullen	13	Y	N	Y	Y	N
Beale	14	Y	N	Y	Y	Y
Haymond	15	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y

Source: Compiled from Holman Hamilton, Prologue to Conflict: The Crisis and Compromise of 1850 (New York: W. W. Norton and Co., 1966), 191-92, 195-200.

Notes: Y--Yea; N--Nay; NV--No Vote; Texas--Texas-New Mexico Border Bill; Calif--California Statehood Bill; Utah--Utah Territorial Government Bill; Fug Sl--Fugitive Slave Act; Slave Tr--Bill to Abolish the Slave Trade in the District of Columbia.



particular, James Seddon was singled out for his extreme anti-compromise position. Even when he withdrew from the race, the Whig continued its attack. The editors claimed that "the new nominee, no matter who must be held responsible for the Disunionism thus held by [Seddon's] party."<sup>40</sup>

In the fall of 1850, the Democrats were looking to unify their divided ranks.<sup>41</sup> The crisis surrounding the Compromise allowed the Calhoun wing to gain more of a foothold in the state's party. The extreme course advocated by these Democrats distanced them from the more moderate party members. Party leaders were faced with the challenge of uniting the party behind the Whig backed Compromise or risk losing some congressional seats. Initially, some attempt was made to unite the group by illustrating the effectiveness of the Compromise. The editors of the Richmond Enquirer cited examples of the recapture of fugitive slaves and claimed, "this evidence of good faith, and execution of the law, is a cheering sign."<sup>42</sup> They subsequently chose to rebut the Whigs' accusations in other ways.

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<sup>40</sup>Ibid., 22 August 1851.

<sup>41</sup>Richmond Enquirer, 24 September 1850.

<sup>42</sup>Ibid., 1 October 1850.

Recognizing the opposition's political ploy in exploiting the Compromise issue, the editors of the Enquirer wrote, "Everybody knows that, if the issue be raised, dissensions must shatter the Democratic party and enure to the benefit of the Whigs."<sup>43</sup> Not wishing to revive a dead issue, nor jeopardizing their party unity, Democrats settled on a policy of acquiescence to the Compromise. The Enquirer further reported,

while some measures of the Compromise were hailed by us with pleasure, we freely expressed our decided opposition to others and strenuously urged their modification. In the whole batch, however adopted as one system of final settlement we avowed ourselves willing to acquiesce.<sup>44</sup>

The Virginia General Assembly also considered several resolutions on the finality of the Compromise in the early months of 1851. The House of Delegates rejected a series of resolutions offered by Philip Bolling of Cumberland County and voted to postpone indefinitely formal support of the settlement. Some Democrats saw these resolutions as a Whig scheme to defeat them in the upcoming elections.<sup>45</sup> Finally, the General Assembly adopted a series of resolutions on 27 March 1851 in which the Commonwealth agreed to abide by the settlement, avowed its sympathy for South Carolina, advised against secession and refused to take part in any

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<sup>43</sup>Ibid., 28 January 1851.

<sup>44</sup>Ibid.

<sup>45</sup>Richmond Whig, 21, 28 January 1851.

southern congress.<sup>46</sup> The action of the General Assembly momentarily suppressed cries for public pledges of support for the Compromise. Virginians began to focus on the proceedings of the Constitutional Convention while the campaign for congressional seats temporarily subsided.

In March, the General Assembly established 23 October 1851 as congressional election day. The Assembly subsequently designated the three day period beginning on the twenty-third and ending on the twenty-fifth of October as the time to vote on the adoption of the new constitution. While the congressional election was opened to those qualified to vote under the existing state constitution, the referendum on the new framework was open to all adult white males who had resided in the Commonwealth for two years.<sup>47</sup>

The constitutional issue did not dominate the election campaign. Little space was devoted to the issue in the political press following its adoption by the Convention. There was some opposition expressed in eastern Whig journals. The apportionment question and universal manhood suffrage provision were perceived by easterners as a threat to the institution of slavery.<sup>48</sup> Western editors reminded their readers of eastern opposition and warned "failure to

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<sup>46</sup>Virginia, Acts of the General Assembly of Virginia 1850-51, 201-2.

<sup>47</sup>Richmond Enquirer, 17 October 1851.

<sup>48</sup>Fredericksburg News, 11 August 1851.

vote, resulting from general over confidence [sic] may prove disastrous."<sup>49</sup> Both political parties saw the extension of suffrage as a growth opportunity. The Spirit of Jefferson reported, "It will change the state of parties in many counties . . . it will roll up such a majority for the Democracy as will almost deter opposition from that time forth."<sup>50</sup> On the other hand, the Martinsburg Gazette announced that the new constitution would "give Virginia to the Whig Party."<sup>51</sup>

When the congressional canvass resumed in the late summer, the debate over the fate of the anti-compromise congressmen recommenced. In defending these congressmen, the party press proudly acknowledged their defense of the South and their resistance to federalism and abolitionism. They further contended that the group had acted "in accordance with the positive dictates of the Legislature at home."<sup>52</sup> The anti-compromisers continued to defend their congressional records but all publicly acquiesced to the measures.<sup>53</sup> Not content with this "pretended acquiescence,"

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<sup>49</sup>Wellsburg Weekly Herald, 3 October 1851.

<sup>50</sup>Spirit of Jefferson quoted in Southern Argus, 2 September 1851.

<sup>51</sup>Martinsburg Gazette, 19 August 1851; see also Fredericksburg News, 31 October 1851.

<sup>52</sup>Richmond Examiner, 23 September 1851; see also Southern Argus, 15 September 1851.

<sup>53</sup>Richmond Enquirer, 28 January 1851.

Whigs continued to insist that the this group be held accountable. Millson, Averett, Bocock and Powell were forced to defend their course on the hustings.<sup>54</sup>

The heated congressional races took place in the Third, Fourth, Fifth, Sixth and Tenth Districts. Although there were contested races in the First, Ninth, Fourteenth and Fifteen Districts, the campaigns in these areas were overshadowed in the press by the spirited debates taking place elsewhere. In most districts, the candidates debated the issues of union and secession, the merits of the Compromise and the course of South Carolina, with the Whigs taking a strong union position and the Democrats claiming "union propensities, with an acknowledgment of the abstract right of secession."<sup>55</sup>

Thomas Averett defended his voting record on the Compromise measures and acknowledged the right of secession in a public debate with his Whig challenger, William Flournoy. In response, Flournoy called his Democratic opponent a disunionist and urged all Third district voters to unite behind the Whigs, the party of Compromise and Union.<sup>56</sup> Similar charges of disunionism were leveled at Paulus Powell by his Whig opponent William Goggin. Unlike

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<sup>54</sup>Lynchburg Virginian, 11 September 1851; Richmond Whig, 26 September 1851.

<sup>55</sup>Fredericksburg News, 17 October 1851.

<sup>56</sup>Richmond Enquirer, 24 October 1851.

1849 when Powell refused to meet Goggin during the campaign, the two protagonists debated on a number of occasions. In August, Goggin attacked Powell for his vote on the Compromise. The district's Whigs had previously expressed their doubts about his "professions of acquiescence;" but Powell's Democratic colleagues assured him that there was "no dissatisfaction with your votes on the Compromise."<sup>57</sup> By October, the two candidates were arguing their own merits as champions of slavery while Goggin blasted Powell for his views on secession and his support of South Carolina's activities.<sup>58</sup>

In the Fourth District, debate initially centered on how each candidate would have voted on the Compromise measures. For some unexplained reason Bocock was absent from Washington and failed to vote on any of the bills. In his debates with Philip Bolling, he claimed he would have voted for both the Utah and Fugitive Slave bills. Bolling addressed each of the Compromise measures separately and said he would have voted for them all "as a series of peace measures, intended and calculated to restore quiet and

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<sup>57</sup>S. F. Leake to Paulus Powell, 30 December 1850, B. M. DeWitt to Paulus Powell, 17 January 1850 [1851], Powell Papers; Richmond Whig, 17 February 1851.

<sup>58</sup>Richmond Examiner, 14 October 1851; Richmond Enquirer, 7 October 1851.

harmony to the whole country."<sup>59</sup> From a discussion on the Compromise, the two candidates became involved in a protracted debate over the right of secession. Bocock, a member of the Calhoun faction of the Virginia Democratic Party, defended the right of a state to secede peaceably and expressed his sympathy for the plight of South Carolina.<sup>60</sup> Bolling, believing there was neither cause for secession nor the possibility for a peaceful secession, stopped short of denying the existence of the right to secede.<sup>61</sup> Bocock, hoping to present himself as the candidate "safe upon the slavery question," brought attention to Bolling's anti-slavery stand during the 1832 General Assembly session. In rebuttal, Bolling reminded Fourth District voters that he too was a slaveowner and that the slavery issue was the exclusive domain of the states.<sup>62</sup>

A lively debate over the right of a state to secede from the Union also ensued in Virginia's Tenth District. Whig Charles J. Faulkner and former Tenth District congressman Henry Bedinger met eight different times during

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<sup>59</sup>Richmond Whig 3 October 1851; Lynchburg Virginian 14 August 1851; Richmond Enquirer 9 August 1851.

<sup>60</sup>Richmond Whig, 3 October 1851.

<sup>61</sup>Lynchburg Virginian 14 August, 8 September 1851; Goldfield, "Triumph of Politics," 105.

<sup>62</sup>Lynchburg Virginian, 14 August, 13 October 1851.

the canvass to debate publicly the secession question.<sup>63</sup> Bedinger "made an effort to revive some of the old party issues but he soon abandoned them finding nothing in fact upon which he could make any appeals to Party."<sup>64</sup> The only issue dividing the candidates was the right of secession. Faulkner, stating "the Union must be preserved," denounced the right of secession. While he did not back the right of a state to secede, Faulkner had moved away from the position he held in the 1830s. While a member of the General Assembly he had introduced a bill calling for the gradual abolition of slavery in Virginia.<sup>65</sup> By the mid 1840s, his section of Virginia experienced a growing loss of slave property. Pennsylvania's personal liberty law stymied Virginia's attempts to recover their runaway slaves so Faulkner sought the assistance of John C. Calhoun to strengthen the federal fugitive slave act.<sup>66</sup> His opponent, Bedinger, on the other hand, stated his belief in the right of secession as a course of last resort. The Democrat did not sanction the action of South Carolina nor wish to agitate the secession issue in his debates with Faulkner;

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<sup>63</sup>Martinsburg Gazette, 24 August-21 October 1851; Virginia Free Press, 21 August-16 October 1851.

<sup>64</sup>Martinsburg Gazette, 2 September 1851.

<sup>65</sup>Appleton's 2:421; BDAC, 931.

<sup>66</sup>C. J. Faulkner to John C. Calhoun, 15 July 1847 in Calhoun's Correspondence, 385-87.



but the lack of alternative issues forced Bedinger to debate the question with his Whig opponent throughout the campaign.<sup>67</sup>

The Sixth District was the focal point of the 1851 Virginia congressional elections. Staunch unionist John Minor Botts battled John Caskie in a campaign that was waged over the legal right of a state to secede from the union. Caskie charged the Whig with "pursuing an anti-southern course" while Botts accused his Democratic opponent of being a Calhounite.<sup>68</sup> Botts and Caskie met each other at courthouses throughout the Sixth District to debate the "question of fidelity to the Compromise measures and the Union."<sup>69</sup> Caskie pledged his support to the Compromise and his attachment to the Union, "not for the sake of the Union merely, but of the objects it was designed to accomplish." The Democrat could not support a Union of "northern domination and southern degradation."<sup>70</sup> During their debates, Botts would take a decidedly unionist stance expressing his opposition to the Nashville Convention, his belief in the constitutionality of the Wilmot Proviso, and his denial of the right of secession. Botts often addressed

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<sup>67</sup>Ibid.; Virginia Free Press, 11 September 1851.

<sup>68</sup>Richmond Examiner, 7 October 1851.

<sup>69</sup>Richmond Whig, 17 October 1851.

<sup>70</sup>Richmond Examiner, 7 October 1851.

hostile audiences and was once unable to respond to his Democratic challenger when the crowded "hissed" him down.<sup>71</sup>

The extended campaign finally came to a close on the twenty-third of October when Virginians went to the polls. In calling the voters to the polls, the Whig declared that the Commonwealth would decide if "she is satisfied with and intends faithfully to abide by the great measures of safety and peace adopted by the last Congress." The voters would further decide "whether a state of this Union has a right, at her own option, and without accountability to the other States, to withdraw from the Union."<sup>72</sup> For the Democrats the significance of the contest would be its impact on the upcoming state elections. Rallying the party faithful for the election, the editors of the Examiner reminded Democrats that "a Whig victory in this contest will be quoted as a proof of increasing Whig strength in the state, and will seriously affect, if not decide, the state elections which are to come after it."<sup>73</sup> So, the Virginia voter went to the polls to elect congressmen and delegates and to decide on a new framework of government.

Democrat John Letcher, writing to Henry Wise on the thirtieth of October declared, "the election is over and the

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<sup>71</sup>W. B. Hubbard to R. I. Hubbard, 11 October 1851, Hubbard Family Papers.

<sup>72</sup>Richmond Whig, 21 October 1851.

<sup>73</sup>Richmond Examiner, 17 October 1851.

result is all we could desire."<sup>74</sup> The Democrats captured 13 seats and carried 112 counties.<sup>75</sup> Overall the state experienced a rise in Democratic vote to sustain the upward Democratic trend begun in the 1840s.<sup>76</sup> The constitution was adopted by a vote of 68,073 to 11,172 with only 8 eastern counties voting in opposition.<sup>77</sup> A predominantly Democratic legislature was elected, but it never sat as a body because the adoption of the new constitution necessitated a new election of senators and delegates in December.

By virtue of running unopposed Democrats Meade, Bayly, Holladay, Edmundson and McMullen were reelected to the House of Representatives from the Second, Seventh, Eighth, Twelfth and Thirteenth Districts respectively. Democrat John Letcher was elected for the first time as the Eleventh District congressman. Despite the fact that the Whigs failed to field a candidate in each of these districts, the party held its own in the House of Delegate elections except

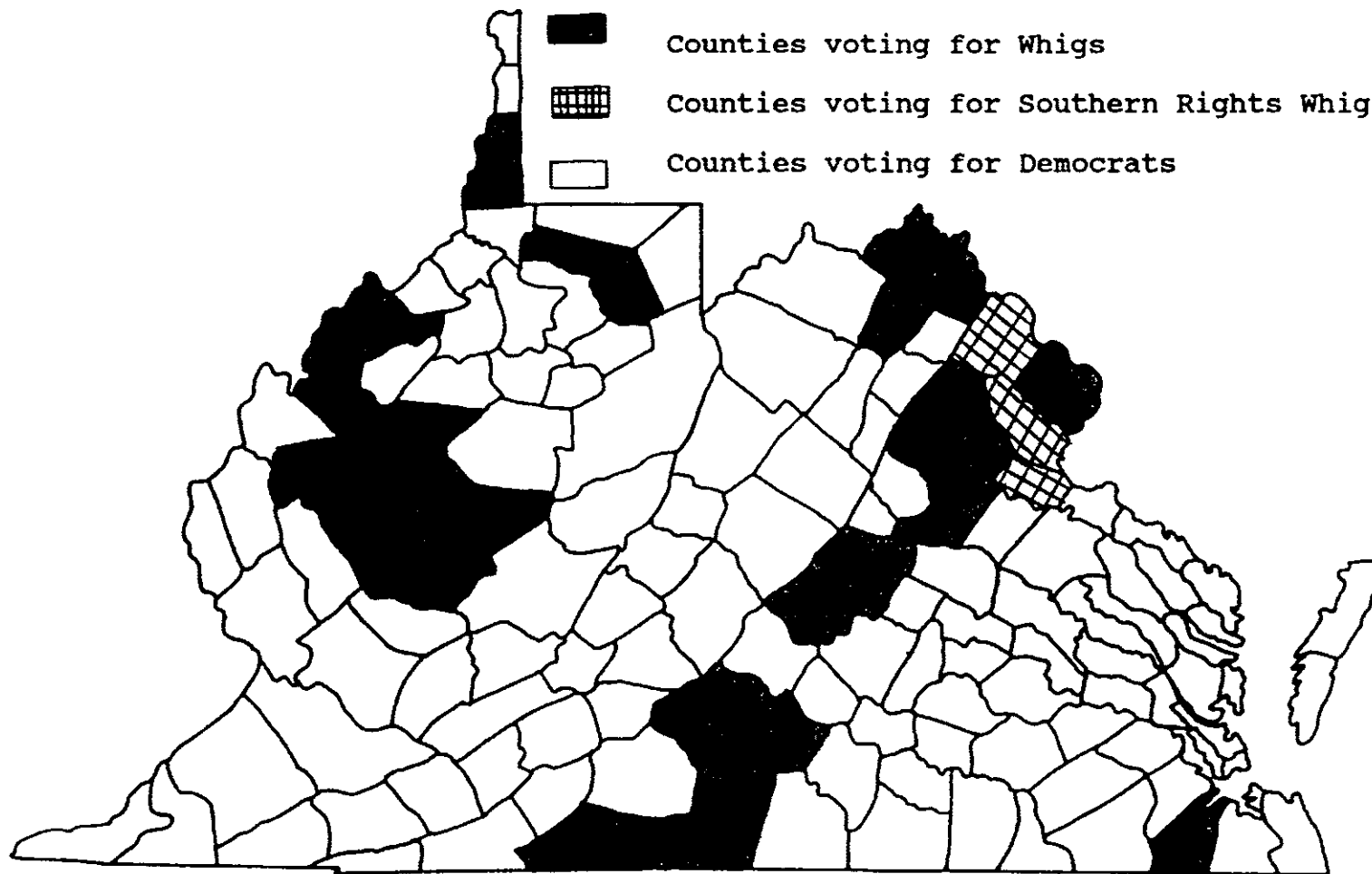
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<sup>74</sup>John Letcher to Henry A. Wise, 30 October 1851, Hench Collection, Special Collections Department, Alderman Library, University of Virginia, Charlottesville.

<sup>75</sup>Whig Almanac 1852, 40-41. See Map 6.

<sup>76</sup>Percentage of vote cast for Democratic congressional candidates in 1851 was 63.16, up 5.43 from 1849.

<sup>77</sup>Wythe County in southwest Virginia cast as many ballots for the Constitution as against it. Vote compiled from "Vote on the Amended Constitution and the Schedule," 1851 Special Election MS Statement of Vote, MSS Election Records, 1850-51 Convention Record No. 3, Virginia State Library and Archives, Richmond.



Map 6. The Congressional Election of 1851. Thirty-three political jurisdictions voted for Whig candidates including the City of Richmond.

that the Democrats swept all eight seats in the Second Congressional District including the seat from the City of Petersburg.<sup>78</sup>

In the First District, John Millson defeated L. C. P. Cowper by a substantial margin. Millson carried every county except Nansemond where he managed to trim the Whig majority by two percentage points. The only counter-trend county was Sussex where the Democratic vote fell off by four percent. Norfolk, Princes Anne and Surry Counties all experienced an upward Democratic trend greater than the state average. For the first time, the City of Norfolk cast its ballot for the Democratic candidate. Norfolk increased its Democratic percentage from 39.2 in 1849 to 57.0 in 1851.<sup>79</sup>

Thomas Averett defeated William Flourney by 249 votes. This was the widest margin separating the two Third District candidates since 1845. In 1847, Flourney won by one vote, and then lost to Averett in 1849 by six. Once again, the Democrats assured their victory with a large majority in Halifax County where Averett gained almost 80 more votes than he had in 1849. Flourney won Henry, Patrick and Pittsylvania just as he had in 1849 but lost some 90 votes

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<sup>78</sup>See Appendix D.

<sup>79</sup>James Janius of Portsmouth wrote, "the Whigs of Norfolk City have committed manslaughter." James Janius to C. J. Faulkner, 3 November 1851, Charles J. Faulkner Papers, Virginia Historical Society, Richmond. See Appendix E.

from his previous margin in the latter county. He did, however, carry Franklin by 18 more votes than previously. Each of the counties showed a slight Democratic up-trend but nowhere near the magnitude of the state average. The Whigs appeared to be losing ground in the district. In 1847, they sent six Whigs to the House of Delegates but sent only three in 1851.<sup>80</sup>

In the Fourth District, Thomas Bocock soundly defeated Philip Bolling by over 900 votes.<sup>81</sup> Bocock carried every county, but Campbell and he reduced Bolling's margin of victory there by 65. Every county, except Campbell and Lunenburg, showed a greater Democratic upswing than the state figure. Bocock carried Buckingham, Cumberland and Fluvanna Counties which had gone Whig in 1849. He secured the largest Democratic percentage of any candidate in a contested race. Perhaps, Bolling's former views on slavery cost him some of the traditional Whig vote in this district composed of over 50 percent slaves.<sup>82</sup> There was, however, no corresponding loss of House of Delegate seats. The

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<sup>80</sup>See Appendices D and E.

<sup>81</sup>Whig Almanac 1852, 40-41.

<sup>82</sup>The Lynchburg Virginian apparently anticipated the disastrous results because Bolling's opinions on slavery had been misrepresented during the campaign. Lynchburg Virginian, 30 October 1851.

Fourth sent five Whigs to Richmond in 1851 just as it had in 1847.<sup>83</sup>

Democrat Paulus Powell once again defeated William Goggin in the Fifth District. The Democrat increased his winning margin by almost five percentage points. Greene, Madison and Nelson Counties showed slight Democratic increases while Albemarle, Bedford and Orange exhibited negative counter-trends. Both Albemarle and Bedford were Whig strongholds that managed to retain their constituencies throughout the Compromise crisis. Bedford did, however, elect two Democrats to the General Assembly in 1851.<sup>84</sup> Powell carried Orange in 1849 by .5 percent but lost by 5 percent in 1851. By carrying over 85 percent of the vote in his home county of Amherst, Powell secured his re-election.<sup>85</sup> Amherst was the only county to show a significant Democratic uptrend.

Just five days after the election, the editors of the Whig lamented, "the total want of [party discipline] has just ruined the election here and given this noble District over to Locofocoism and secession."<sup>86</sup> The Democratic

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<sup>83</sup>See Appendices D and E.

<sup>84</sup>See Appendix D.

<sup>85</sup>Voter turnout dropped drastically in Amherst. Powell won 40 fewer votes in 1851, but Goggin fell almost 400 votes shy of his 1849 total.

<sup>86</sup>Richmond Whig, 28 October 1851.

nominee had beaten John Minor Botts once again. John Caskie carried all counties while Botts won in the City of Richmond. Henrico County voted Democratic for the first time in the decade but still sent a Whig to the General Assembly. Powhatan, Hanover and the City of Richmond all exceeded the state average for an upward Democratic trend. Goochland and Louisa showed a slight counter-trend while Henrico's upward trend fell just short of the state figure. Chesterfield sustained its solid Democratic majority that helped Caskie offset Botts' victory in Richmond.<sup>87</sup>

In the Ninth District, the Whig Party regrouped and secured the election of regular party nominee James Strothers over incumbent Jeremiah Morton. Strothers gained a similar total to Pendleton's in 1849 while Morton fell over 900 votes short of his previous vote.<sup>88</sup> Morton lost in Alexandria, Culpeper and Fauquier, all counties he had carried in 1849. He picked up Stafford County but fell short of his mark in Loudoun by over 100 votes. For the second consecutive election, the Democrats decided not to run a candidate because they "believed that more could be accomplished for the good of their party by uniting upon Mr. Morton."<sup>89</sup> Morton did win in both Democratic counties in

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<sup>87</sup>See Appendix E.

<sup>88</sup>Whig Almanac 1852, 40-41.

<sup>89</sup>Alexandria Gazette, 17 October 1851.



the district but he apparently lost his Democratic support in Culpeper and failed to retain the support of the Whigs in Alexandria who returned to the regular party fold.<sup>90</sup>

Writing of the Whig party the editor of the Alexandria Gazette stated,

Their organization has been destroyed and Mr. Morton has been the chief instrument in its destruction, and it is but natural that they should feel some resentment toward the man who has shown such deadly hostility to their interests.<sup>91</sup>

Henry Bedinger lost his bid to return to Congress as the Tenth District Representative to his Whig opponent, Charles Faulkner. Commenting on Faulkner's victory, the editors of the Virginia Free Press wrote, "We do not call this a Whig triumph for the Democracy has a large majority in the District-but it is emphatically an Union triumph."<sup>92</sup> Faulkner's Union stance and independent political character apparently had wide appeal in the Tenth. One of Faulkner's political supporters described him as "too Democratic" for the Whig Party.<sup>93</sup> In addition, Faulkner benefited from the split in the district's Democrats. The unionist Byrd faction in Frederick apparently defected en masse. The county went for Faulkner by 304 votes when it had supported

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<sup>90</sup>See Appendix E.

<sup>91</sup>Alexandria Gazette, 17 October 1851.

<sup>92</sup>Virginia Free Press, 30 October 1851.

<sup>93</sup>Charles Blue to C. J. Faulkner, 7 January 1847, Faulkner Papers.

Parker in 1849 by 99. The trend in the Tenth District was opposite to that of the state at large. Although its increase was less than the state figure, only Hampshire exhibited an upward Democratic trend. Clarke, Page and Warren Counties experienced a slight decrease in their Democratic percentages while Frederick, Jefferson and Berkeley showed negative counter-trends. Morgan County continued its downward Democratic spiral and elected a Whig to the House of Delegates. By carrying the Tenth District, the Whigs won their first regular election, except for the Ninth District, since 1847. Democratic factionalism, Bedinger's views on secession and Faulkner's coalition gave the Whigs their last congressional victory in Virginia.

In the Fourteenth District, James Beale soundly defeated his Whig challenger, General Daniel Smith, by almost 1200 votes.<sup>94</sup> Beale carried 16 counties while Smith won only 7. The Democratic counties of Harrison, Lewis, Gilmer and Mason continued their upward trend. The increased Democratic vote in Wayne, Cabell and Braxton placed them in the Democratic winner's column for the first time in 1851. The Whig counties of Kanawha, Wood and Nicholas also showed Democratic gains but still sustained Smith. Only Fayette and Jackson showed a gain in Whig strength. Political identities continued to shift in the

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<sup>94</sup>Whig Almanac 1852, 40-41.

Fourteenth District. The creation of new counties make it is difficult to determine trends in a majority of the counties.<sup>95</sup>

George Thompson recaptured the Fifteenth District seat for the Democrats in 1851. He defeated incumbent Thomas Haymond by a majority of 401 by gaining 400 votes more than he won in the 1849 special election.<sup>96</sup> Surprisingly, the "politics of slavery" played a role in this district composed of less than one percent slaves. In nominating Thompson for Congress, the Democrats resolved that "Congress should hereafter abstain from all interference with the subject of slavery in the States and Territories."<sup>97</sup> Thompson, hoping to make political capital, charged Haymond with distributing Salmon P. Chase's abolition speech in the district.<sup>98</sup> The Whigs believed Haymond's support of all the Compromise measures and his "resolute efforts for the preservation of the Union" would win him support from Fifteenth District Democrats. Thompson succeeded in carrying the traditional Democratic constituency and denied Haymond his bid for re-election. He carried 8 counties and won the election on the strength of his 326 vote win in

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<sup>95</sup>See Appendix E.

<sup>96</sup>Whig Almanac 1852, 40-41.

<sup>97</sup>Richmond Enquirer, 4 February 1851.

<sup>98</sup>Ibid., 15 August 1851.

Wetzel County. The Whig strongholds of Ohio and Marshall supported Haymond. Marion, traditionally a Democratic County, had given a large vote to Newman in 1849 but voted for Haymond in 1851. Hancock, Preston and Monongalia had a slight drop in the Democratic vote while the remainder of the counties, except Marion, experienced Democratic uptrends.

At their great debate at Hanover Court House in late September, John Caskie asked John Minor Botts, "Is the Whig Party at an end?" Whereupon the Whig replied, "No sir they are resuscitated and revived as the Union party of the country."<sup>99</sup> Charles Faulkner campaigned in the Tenth District as a no party unionist candidate. As one editor remarked, "it was not as a Whig but as a friend to the Union that Mr. Faulkner presented himself before the District."<sup>100</sup> The Democrats remarked of their Whig opponents, "They are not Whig candidates, as they were two years ago."<sup>101</sup> The Whig Party hoped to rally support for their "Union candidates for Congress" and to build a coalition that would secure victory for their party. It was not to be. The Whigs played with a weak hand. Even they had long admitted the superior activity and organization of their Democratic

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<sup>99</sup>Richmond Whig, 26 September 1851.

<sup>100</sup>Virginia Free Press, 30 October 1851; Richmond Enquirer, 5 September 1851.

<sup>101</sup>Richmond Examiner, 23 September 1851.

foes.<sup>102</sup> Although some leaders applauded the party move to consolidate efforts and run candidates in only selected districts, particularly where incumbent Democrats had voted against the Compromise, it did not enhance the position of the party within the Commonwealth.<sup>103</sup>

The Democrats chided the Whigs for their strategy and abandonment of their old party principles. In one scathing letter to the editor, a Democratic author wrote:

one of the most shallow specimens of quackery and unmitigated humbugs of modern times are the protestations of the Whigs of the South, of their excruciating devotion to the Union abandoning their old issues and principles by which they have heretofore agitated the country, like drowning men they have seized upon the last plank in the shipwreck of their party organization, and think to save themselves by claiming to be the exclusive advocates of the Union.<sup>104</sup>

The Union strategy may have won the Whigs some votes in the Tenth District, but their victory was aided by Democratic factionalism. This strategy did not elicit widespread support. As an editor of the Enquirer succinctly stated it, "Their great 'union' humbug was smothered to death by the people of Virginia."<sup>105</sup>

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<sup>102</sup>Lynchburg Virginian, 30 October 1851; Fredericksburg News, 5 September, 31 October 1851.

<sup>103</sup>Richmond Whig, 17 February 1851; Richmond Examiner, 17 October 1851.

<sup>104</sup>Southern Argus, 20 September 1851.

<sup>105</sup>Richmond Enquirer, 11 November 1851.

Like the 1849 congressional election campaign, the 1851 canvass witnessed many calls to look beyond party allegiance and to vote for candidates true to the Compromise, true to the South or true to the Union.<sup>106</sup> Rallying support during his canvass of the Fifth District, William Goggin had "repudiated party names and party issues and conjured the people to throw off their shackles and rally to the rescue of the Union from the dangers which encompass it."<sup>107</sup> On a number of occasions, Bedinger and Faulkner had tried to debate the old party issues but found there were none.<sup>108</sup> In the First District, L. C. P. Cowper was prepared to debate the old issues of banks, tariffs and internal improvements by the federal government only to be urged by his fellow Whigs to let "by gones [sic] to be by gones."<sup>109</sup>

With no real issues to debate, candidates were forced to discuss such philosophical questions as the right of secession and the finality of the Compromise. The discussions over these issues merely raised sectional consciousness and weakened the Second American Party System.

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<sup>106</sup>Richmond Whig, 28 January 1851; Virginia Free Press, 11 September 1851; Fredericksburg News, 18 February 1851; Lynchburg Virginian, 11 August 1851.

<sup>107</sup>Lynchburg Virginian, 29 September 1851.

<sup>108</sup>Virginia Free Press, 4 September 1851.

<sup>109</sup>Southern Argus, 18 October 1851.

As one Virginian remarked in the aftermath of the election, "party feelings seemed for the time forgotten."<sup>110</sup>

Traditional allegiances were eroding. For the moment, the Democrats could bask in the glory of their stunning defeat of their political foes. The Whig party as a competitive factor in national elections was on the verge of disintegration. In the fall of 1851, the Whigs failed to see the warning signs. They shrugged off the results of the congressional election of 1851 as just the loss of a preliminary battle. The real test and the one on which they would stake their future as a political party in Virginia was yet to come.

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<sup>110</sup>Fredericksburg News, 28 October 1851.

## CHAPTER 6

### THE DEMISE OF THE SECOND AMERICAN PARTY SYSTEM IN VIRGINIA

Just six weeks after the congressional election of 1851, Virginians went to the polls again to elect for the first time the governor, lieutenant governor and attorney general. Virginians had been preoccupied with this election since the close of the Constitutional Convention.<sup>1</sup> In the midst of the congressional campaign, the newspapers throughout the Commonwealth provided in-depth coverage of county nominating conventions for state office and carried lengthy reports on both the Whig and Democratic state conventions.<sup>2</sup> In spite of the lively debate on the right of a state to secede from the Union, the congressional election in October failed to lure voters to the polls.<sup>3</sup> The turnout fell below that for the two preceding contests. Even the total vote cast on the constitutional referendum in three

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<sup>1</sup>Prior to the congressional election newspaper mastheads listed the state slates before the congressional candidate. On election day itself the political press seemed more preoccupied with the approaching gubernatorial race than the one at hand. Virginia Free Press, 25 September, 23 October 1851; Richmond Enquirer, 19 September 1851.

<sup>2</sup>Richmond Enquirer, 5, 30 September 1851.

<sup>3</sup>Fredericksburg News, 28 October 1851.



days of polling by an expanded electorate fell below the totals in 1847, 1848 and 1849.<sup>4</sup> Virginia Whigs and Democrats were waiting for the gubernatorial election for their all out battle.

The ratification of the new constitution brought with it a hope for a renewed Commonwealth where Virginia would recapture its lost glory and begin a new era of progress and prosperity.<sup>5</sup> Virginia's Whigs and Democrats also had hopes for a new beginning. In particular, the Whigs saw the first popular election for statewide office as an opportunity to reorganize. The Whig press urged the party faithful to nominate candidates in each county.<sup>6</sup> The party continued to stress the importance of the election in determining its future. John Minor Botts wrote before the election:

nothing I suppose is likely to occur that would go so far to reanimate the Whig Party as that we should

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<sup>4</sup>It is difficult to determine the exact voter turnout for the 1851 congressional canvass because actual vote totals for those districts where candidates ran unopposed were often unavailable. Nevertheless, approximately 70,000 Virginians voted in the congressional election, some 5,000 less than in 1847, 22,000 less than the 1848 presidential race, and 13,000 less than in 1849. The three day vote total for the constitutional referendum was only 79,245, just 40.6 percent of the eligible voters.

<sup>5</sup>Alexandria Gazette, 22 July 1851; Goldfield, "Triumph of Politics."

<sup>6</sup>Fredericksburg News, 5 September, 3 October 1851.

carry the vote of V[irginia] in the general election . . . or that we should cast such a vote as would inspire a hope for the future.<sup>7</sup>

The Whigs nominated George W. Summers of Kanawha County for governor at their state convention in September. Summers, an ardent nationalist and veteran politician, served in both the General Assembly and House of Representatives prior to his nomination.<sup>8</sup> His opponent, Joseph Johnson of Harrison County, defeated both ex-governor John B. Floyd and former congressman Henry A. Wise at the Democratic state convention.<sup>9</sup> Johnson, a native of New York who moved to Virginia at the age of sixteen, had a career equally as distinguished as that of Summers. He represented the Fourteenth District in Congress from 1845 to 1847 and had recently served in the Virginia Constitutional Convention.<sup>10</sup>

The two western Virginians entered the campaign hoping to lead their respective parties to victory. While Virginians may have looked forward to the dawn of a new era, the same divisive national issues of the preceding years would be debated on the hustings by Johnson and Summers.

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<sup>7</sup>John Minor Botts to Alexander H. H. Stuart, 30 November 1851, Alexander H. H. Stuart Papers, Special Collections Department, Alderman Library, University of Virginia, Charlottesville.

<sup>8</sup>BDAC, 1775-76.

<sup>9</sup>Glass, 102.

<sup>10</sup>BDAC, 1194-95.

Instead of articulating a philosophy for promoting the growth and prosperity of the Commonwealth, the two protagonists chose to battle over the issues of the Compromise and the right of secession. Undeterred by their recent defeat, the Whigs again stood by the Compromise and Union platform.<sup>11</sup> Summers vigorously opposed the right of secession in the hope of carrying the West. The Democrats attempted to rally support by highlighting Johnson's past as a Jacksonian Democrat.<sup>12</sup> Both candidates attempted as well to use the slavery issue to their benefit. The Whigs tried to make a campaign issue out of Johnson's vote for the Oregon Bill while the Democrats accused Summers of having an association with abolitionists through the Methodist Episcopal Church.<sup>13</sup>

The Democrats ultimately triumphed and swept the December 1851 elections. They carried 112 counties and 53 percent of the vote in electing a Democratic governor, lieutenant governor and attorney general.<sup>14</sup> The party also captured 87 out of 152 House of Delegates seats and beat out the Whigs in the Senate, 34 seats to 16. A record 126,550 Virginians, 64.53 percent of the eligible voters, cast

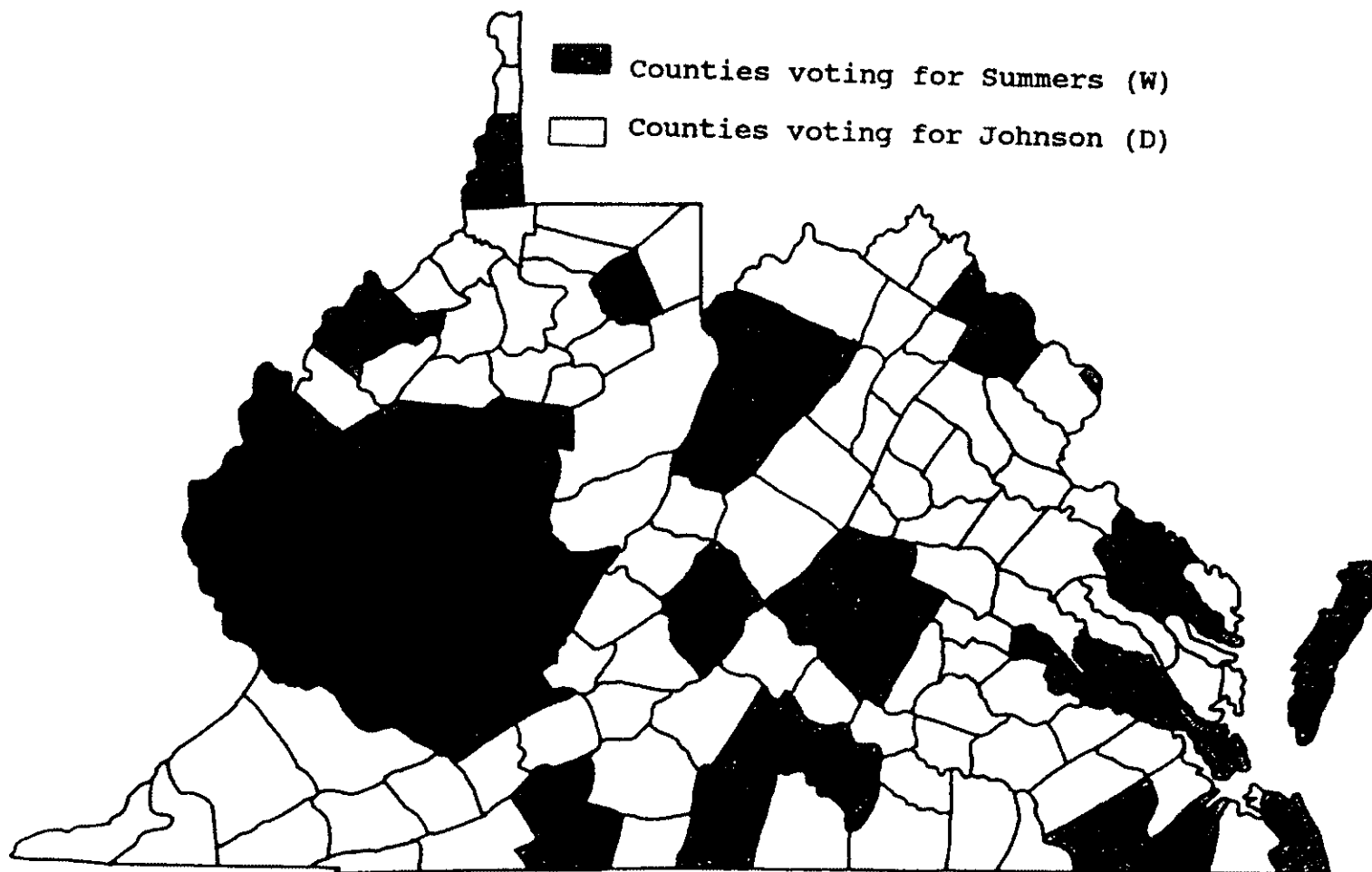
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<sup>11</sup>John Minor Botts to Alexander H. H. Stuart, 30 November 1851, Stuart Papers.

<sup>12</sup>Richmond Examiner, 30 September 1851.

<sup>13</sup>Ambler, Sectionalism, 293.

<sup>14</sup>Whig Almanac 1853, 40-41. See Map 7.



Map 7. The Gubernatorial Election of 1851. Fifty-six political jurisdictions voted for the Whig candidate including the cities of Norfolk and Richmond.

ballots in the election. This included some 50,000 more voters than in October as the newly enfranchised came to the polls for the first time.<sup>15</sup> Johnson won by virtue of his strong showing in the Valley and northwest Virginia. He carried Berkeley, Morgan, Frederick, Orange, Henry, Jackson and Marion Counties which had all voted for Whig congressional candidates.

The Whigs carried every congressional district east of the Blue Ridge Mountains for Summers except the First and Eighth. This included the Second and Seventh Districts where Democrats had run unopposed just six weeks before. Summers' appeal to his neighbors was apparent in the voting returns. He carried almost all of the Kanawha River Valley counties and won both the Twelfth and Fourteenth Districts, traditionally Democratic areas. The Whigs gained 47 percent of the vote, an increase of 27.6 percent from the October congressional election. Some 34 counties returned to the Whig fold. The majority of these counties were in

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<sup>15</sup>There were 196,086 adult white males and 134,589 land owners in Virginia in 1851. Using these figure at least 30 percent of the adult white male population was disenfranchised, but in all probably the percentage should be larger since not all land owners were eligible to vote under the 1830 Constitution. Figures compiled from Virginia Constitutional Convention, Documents containing Statistics of Virginia, 1851.

congressional districts where the Whigs had failed to run candidates in October.<sup>16</sup>

The gubernatorial election results revealed that the Whigs had regrouped somewhat but still had fallen behind their 1848 marks. Less than one-half of the 33 counties which voted Whig in the congressional election supported Summers in December.<sup>17</sup> In the long run, the Whigs were destined to be losers. By failing to capture a majority in the General Assembly even on a joint ballot, they lost the opportunity to redistrict the Commonwealth following the 1850 census. Virginia lost three seats after the reapportionment of the House of Representatives. The new districts were configured so that the old Ninth District, the "bastion of whiggery," was split into two new districts.<sup>18</sup> The election may have marked the return to normal voting patterns, but this is difficult to determine definitively. The broadened electorate, the regional identifications of the candidates and the novelty of the

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<sup>16</sup>Braxton, Buckingham, Cabell, Charlotte, Fluvanna, Henrico, Mason, City of Norfolk, Princess Anne, Raleigh, Southampton, and Wayne Counties had the opportunity to vote for a Whig congressional candidate but voted Democratic and then turned around and voted for the Whig gubernatorial candidate in December.

<sup>17</sup>The counties were Albemarle, Alexandria, Bedford, Campbell, Fayette, Loudoun, Marshall, Nansemond, Nelson, Nicholas, Ohio, Patrick, Putnam, City of Richmond, Taylor and Wood.

<sup>18</sup>Parsons, Districts and Data, 90-91.

first statewide election were all reflected in the election results and preclude an accurate measurement of party strength.<sup>19</sup>

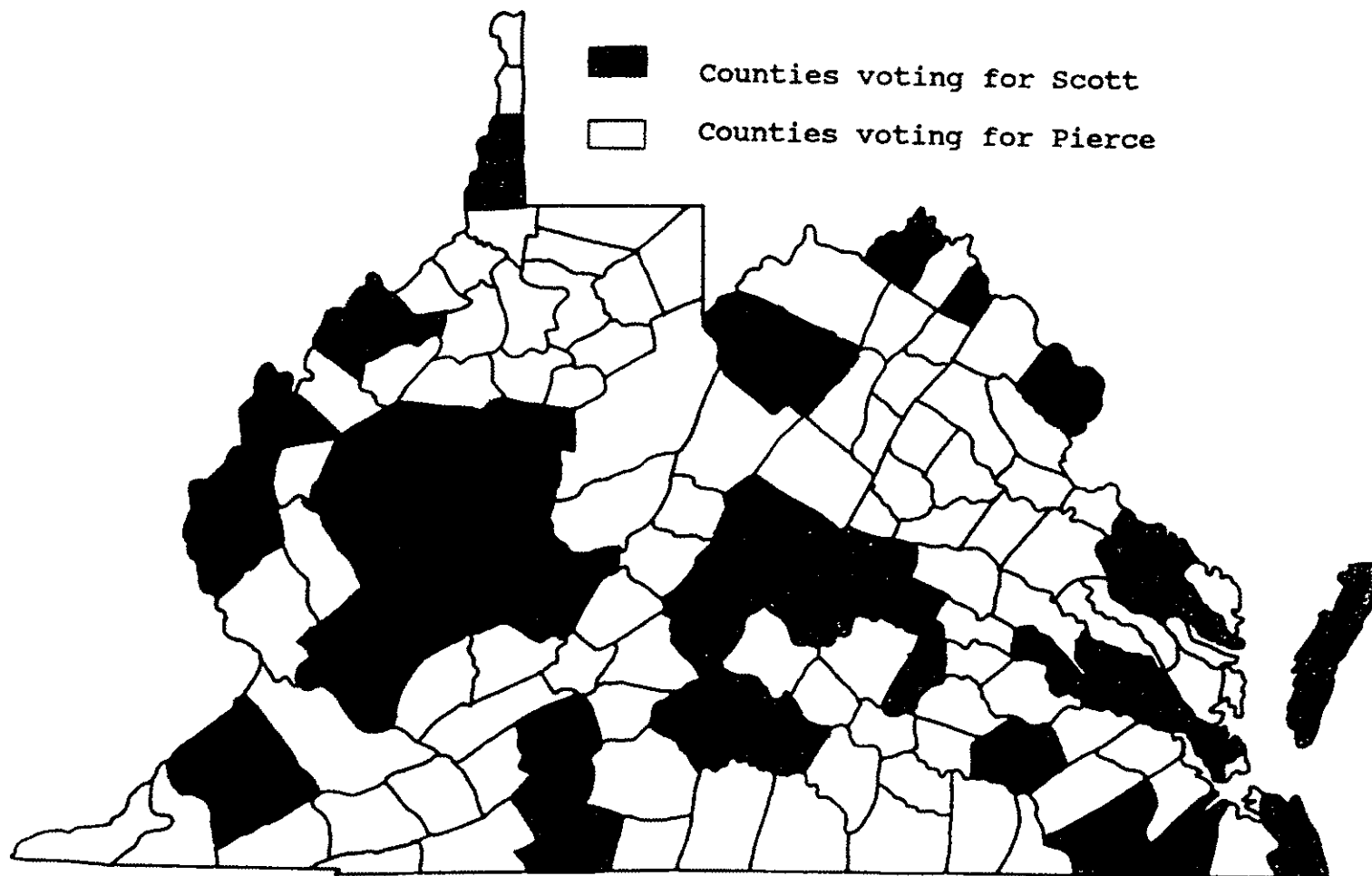
Virginians next voted in the presidential election of 1852. The Compromise was still a political issue and both national parties included its acceptance in their platforms. Franklin Pierce, the Democratic nominee, ran against Whig Winfield Scott, a native of Petersburg. Pierce soundly defeated Scott carrying 55.71 percent of the vote and 97 counties as he gained 6,798 more votes than Johnson did a year before and some 27,000 more votes than Cass in 1848.<sup>20</sup> Although Scott garnered 13,467 votes more than Zachary Taylor, he fell 744 short of Summers mark in 1851. The Whig vote did in fact increase as a number of historians have indicated, but this was due to the extended suffrage and was not a reflection of growing Whig strength.<sup>21</sup> The Whigs had

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<sup>19</sup>It is difficult to determine the party allegiance of the newly enfranchised. Using the figures from the 1848 and 1852 presidential elections some estimates can be made. Assuming those who voted Democratic in 1848 also voted Democratic in 1852, then the new Democrats made up 72 percent of the new vote margin in the Tidewater, 69 percent in the Piedmont, 73 percent in the Valley and 64 percent in the West. These figures are probably inflated because of Democratic defection in 1848. It is possible that the new voter was attracted to the Democratic party, because of its recent success and dominance of state party politics, in greater proportions than the old restricted electorate.

<sup>20</sup>Burnham, 242, 252-54. See Map 8.

<sup>21</sup>McCardell, 301; Holt, 127. Holt does, however, acknowledge the extended suffrage.



Map 8. The Presidential Election of 1852. Forty-seven political jurisdictions voted for the Whig candidate including the City of Richmond.



their worst showing in a presidential election since 1836 when Hugh L. White, gaining only 43 percent of Virginia's vote, lost to Martin Van Buren. Thirteen counties voted for Pierce after having supported Summers in the 1851 gubernatorial election while only six counties who had voted for Johnson returned to the Whigs in the 1852 contest.<sup>22</sup>

The Whigs' death knell was sounded 6 months later when they lost all 13 congressional seats, captured only 30.88 percent of the vote, and carried just 18 counties.<sup>23</sup> They contested only one-half of the races. In only two districts, the Seventh and the Eighth, did they manage to poll as much as 47 percent of the vote, Summer's percentage in 1851. The Whig party was finished as a competitor in Virginia's congressional elections.

Virginia was essentially a Democratic state. The party experienced a gradual increase in the Democratic vote during the life-span of the Second American Party System. The Democratic presidential nominee captured 53.05 percent, 50.80 percent, 55.71 percent and 59.96 percent of the vote in 1844, 1848, 1852 and 1856 respectively. They won 65 out of 80 possible congressional seats and controlled the

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<sup>22</sup>Voting for Pierce after supporting Summers were Boone, Buckingham, Charlotte, Elizabeth City, Giles, Logan, Loudoun, Mercer, Monroe, City of Norfolk, Pendleton, Pittsylvania and Putnam while Augusta, Bedford, Cumberland, Dinwiddie, Fairfax and Morgan returned to the Whig fold in 1852. Burnham, 816-43, 852-65.

<sup>23</sup>Whig Almanac 1854, 56-57. See Map 9.



General Assembly a majority of the time. Nevertheless, the Whigs were serious competitors for the Democrats. They broke the Democratic upswing in 1848, won six congressional seats in 1847 and controlled the House of Delegates in 1841, 1844 and 1847.<sup>24</sup> The competition index for the congressional and presidential elections exceeded 90 entering the Compromise Crisis period.<sup>25</sup> The Whigs controlled the major urban areas on both sides of the mountains and generally maintained the support of the wealthiest and most literate counties in the transmontane. The Democratic strongholds were found in the wealthy counties of the East, particularly the larger tobacco producing counties while their western strength came from counties raising grain and livestock.<sup>26</sup> With the introduction of the Wilmot Proviso and the start of the sectional crisis, the voting patterns began to change.

The Virginia congressional elections of 1849 and 1851 illustrated the decline of traditional political issues separating Whigs and Democrats. The "politics of slavery"

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<sup>24</sup>See Tables 8 and 9.

<sup>25</sup>The Competition Index was derived to measure the level of competition between candidates. It is determined by subtracting the difference between the vote percentages from 100. A Competition Index between 99.9 and 90.0 is considered high competition; between 89.9 and 60.0 is considered medium competition; and below 59.0 is considered low competition. See Chambers, 174-97.

<sup>26</sup>Dent, 395-97.

TABLE 8

## PARTY AFFILIATION OF CONGRESSMEN 1843-1851

<u>Dist.</u>	<u>1843</u>	<u>1844</u>	<u>1845</u>	<u>1847</u>	<u>1847S</u>	<u>1849</u>	<u>1849S</u>	<u>1851</u>
1	D		D	D		D		D
2	D		D	D	D	D		D
3	D		D	W		D		D
4	D		D	D		D		D
5	D	W	D	W		D		D
6	D		D	W		D		D
7	D	D	D	D		D		D
8	W		D	D		D		D
9	W		W	W		W		W
10	D		D	D		D		W
11	D		D	D		D		D
12	D		D	W		D		D
13	D		D	W		D		D
14	W		D	D		D		D
15	D		D	D		D	W	D

Source: Compiled from Guide to U. S. Elections.

TABLE 9

## POLITICAL MAKE-UP VIRGINIA HOUSE OF DELEGATES

<u>Year</u>	<u>Democrats</u>	<u>Whigs</u>	<u>Democratic %</u>
1841	66	68	49.25%
1842	84	50	62.68%
1843	75	59	55.97%
1844	63	71	47.01%
1845	78	54	59.09%
1846	72	60	54.54%
1847	62	73	45.92%
1848	73	60	54.88%
1849	74	60	55.22%
1850	79	56	58.51%
1851	87	65	57.23%

Source: Compiled from Richmond Enquirer 1841-1851.

had become so all encompassing few party members dared debate other issues. Throughout the Compromise Crisis, Virginia Whigs and Democrats played a game of political one-upmanship where they attempted to present themselves as the exclusive guardians of southern rights and the more sound party on the issue of slavery. The high water mark for the Whigs came in 1847-48 when they were able to capitalize on Democratic factionalism precipitated by the Wilmot Proviso and Calhoun's activities and rally behind the candidacy of Zachary Taylor in both the congressional election of 1847 and the presidential election of the following year. From that point forward, the Whigs were never able to present themselves in the same favorable light as the Democrats whose national component was still willing to allow southerners to set party policy on the issues of slavery. A Democratic editor asked before the 1849 congressional election, "Is William R. Goggin, or any other champion stronger than the South and the cause of the Constitution?"<sup>27</sup> The election results indicated that Virginians agreed with the editor. The Democrats appeared to have gained the upper hand in the "politics of slavery."

Between the congressional elections of 1847 and 1851, the Whigs lost 19 counties to the Democrats. This included seven with slave populations in excess of 40 percent, two

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<sup>27</sup>Richmond Enquirer, 25 December 1848.

counties surrounding urban areas, Henrico and Norfolk and two cities, Williamsburg and Norfolk. In the presidential contest, the Whigs lost 26 counties between 1848 and 1852. Some undoubtedly were marginally Democratic counties that had been wooed by Taylor's candidacy but returned to the fold in 1852; however, others were counties where the Whig majority was disintegrating. Ten of the 26 were more than 40 percent slave.<sup>28</sup> In a recent study, Alison Goodyear Freehling contends that slavery was strengthening its hold in Virginia's southern Piedmont and Trans-Allegheny counties during the decade between 1850 and 1860.<sup>29</sup> A number of the counties lost by the Whigs during the Compromise Crisis were in these regions. Interestingly, Trans-Allegheny counties Mercer, Montgomery and Pulaski all switched from the Democrats to the Whigs at a time when the proportion of slaves was beginning to rise.

In 1847, there were 31 counties that cast more than 65 percent of their vote for the Democratic congressional

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<sup>28</sup>The counties changing in the congressional elections were Amherst, Braxton, Buckingham, Cabell, Cumberland, Fluvanna, Franklin, Gloucester, Hanover, Henrico, Logan, Mason, Mercer, Monroe, Montgomery, Norfolk, Norfolk City, Pulaski and Williamsburg. The counties changing in the presidential elections were Amherst, Bath, Berkeley, Clarke, Culpeper, Elizabeth City, Fauquier, Franklin, Henry, Jackson, King George, Loudoun, Mercer, Monroe, Norfolk City, Orange, Petersburg, Pittsylvania, Putnam, Rappahannock, Smyth, Spotsylvania, Taylor, Tyler, Williamsburg and Wythe.

<sup>29</sup>Alison Goodyear Freehling, Drift Toward Dissolution: The Virginia Slavery Debate of 1831-1832 (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1982), 247.

candidate. By 1851, 80 counties gave better than 65 percent of their vote to the Democrats.<sup>30</sup> Correspondingly in 1848, 21 counties cast more than 65 percent of their vote for the Democrats and by 1852 this figure had risen to 33 counties.<sup>31</sup> In all cases, the number of counties falling below the neutral designation decreased, indicating greater Democratic strength. The Whigs carried only 20 counties in all three congressional elections during this period while managing to hold onto 43 counties in both the 1848 and 1852 presidential contests.<sup>32</sup>

The Whigs' loss of the "politics of slavery" agenda hurt them as a political force in Virginia. As one Whig wrote, "I am in favor of a protective tariff, national banks, distribution and every Whig measure; but, if the Whigs of the South be 'free soilers'. . . then I am none of them."<sup>33</sup> The slavery issue appears to have broken allegiances and disrupted voting patterns. A majority of

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<sup>30</sup>This figure is inflated somewhat because it includes all counties where the Democrats ran unopposed. The anti-Democrat figure is also inflated because it includes all eight counties of the Ninth District where no Democrat ran in either 1849 or 1851. See Table 10.

<sup>31</sup>See Table 10.

<sup>32</sup>The counties voting for Whig candidates in all three congressional elections were Albemarle, Alexandria, Bedford, Berkeley, Campbell, Culpeper, Fairfax, Fauquier, Henry, Jackson, Jefferson, Kanawha, Loudoun, Mason, Nansemond, Nelson, Nicholas, Pittsylvania, Richmond City and Wood.

<sup>33</sup>Letter to the Editor, Richmond Enquirer 7 February 1851.

TABLE 10  
PARTY STRENGTH OF COUNTIES

	Congressional Elections			Presidential Elections	
	1847	1849	1851	1848	1852
<u>Democrats</u>					
Very Strong (65%-100%)	31	47	80	21	33
Strong (57.5%-64.9%)	18	18	8	22	28
Moderate (52.5%-57.4%)	11	13	13	14	21
Neutral (47.5%-52.4%)	22	17	12	26	26
Mod. Anti (42.5%-47.4%)	21	14	8	22	19
Strong Anti (35.0%-42.4%)	16	14	8	18	5
Very Str. Anti (34.9%-0%)	14	17	11	14	6
<u>Whigs</u>					
Very Strong (65%-100%)	14	17	11	14	6
Strong (57.5%-64.9%)	16	14	8	18	5
Moderate (52.5%-57.4%)	21	14	8	22	19
Neutral (47.5%-52.4%)	22	17	12	26	26
Mod. Anti (42.5%-47.4%)	11	13	13	22	28
Strong Anti (35.0%-42.4%)	18	18	8	22	28
Very Str. Anti (34.9%-0%)	31	47	80	21	33

Source: Figures calculated from election returns in the Whig Almanac 1848-1852 and Burnham, 816-43, 852-65.



the disruptions occurred in the counties east of the mountains where slavery was a factor. It is significant that counties such as Amherst, Buckingham, Cumberland and Hanover switched during this period. Each had a heavy slave based economy. When the voting percentages are grouped according to geographic sections, the change in the East becomes more apparent. Taylor carried both eastern regions but lost because of the larger Democratic majorities in the West in 1848. The most significant jump in Democratic percentages occurred in the East during the congressional elections. The Piedmont's percentage rose from 48.53 percent in 1847 to 60.15 percent in 1849. The Tidewater actually showed a decline in the Democratic percentage between 1847 and 1849 but then showed an increase of over 75 percent by 1851.<sup>34</sup>

Another study of Virginia politics suggested there was no significant relationship between slave holding and voting in specific presidential elections between 1824 and 1844.<sup>35</sup> When viewed in the aggregate, there appear to be few correlations between the Democratic vote and slave related factors in either the presidential or congressional elections of the period. The larger slave holding counties appear to be divided between the parties. In examining the

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<sup>34</sup>See Table 11.

<sup>35</sup>Dent, 387.

TABLE 11

## DEMOCRATIC PERCENTAGES BY REGION

Year Election	Region 1 West	Region 2 Valley	Region 3 Piedmont	Region 4 Tidewater	State
1844P	55.32%	57.72%	50.55%	55.32%	53.05%
1848P	51.87%	57.33%	42.36%	47.02%	50.80%
1852P	55.88%	61.97%	53.59%	53.55%	55.71%
1847C	63.64%	55.36%	48.53%	49.69%	54.66%
1849C	63.64%	67.97%	60.15%	47.86%	57.70%
1851C	69.26%	68.97%	60.83%	63.63%	63.16%
1851G	49.93%	60.09%	53.09%	50.55%	53.00%
% Slave	6.89%	18.75%	49.98%	45.17%	33.24%

Source: Figures calculated from election returns in the Whig Almanac 1848-1852 and Burnham, 816-43, 852-65.

elections systematically over time, changes in the voting patterns of antebellum Virginians become evident. While Virginia was generally experiencing an upward Democratic trend in the period between 1847 and 1852, it appears to have been accelerated by the erosion of the Whig party, due in part to their inability to present themselves as sound on the slavery issue.

Michael Holt attributes the collapse of the Second American Party System to the social, economic and political developments between 1848 and 1853 that obscured differences between Whigs and Democrats. The system was sustained as long as the voters perceived differences between the parties and continued to give their support at the ballot box. The parties' initial efforts to present alternatives on the sectional issues prolonged the life of the system and prevented sectional parties. When the voter lost faith in his party's ability to effect change and control government, the system began to collapse. Fearful that republican institutions were in jeopardy, southerners turned on their political allies in the North and united as a section killing the Second American Party System.<sup>36</sup>

Certain ambiguities existed in Virginia politics and the disciplined party structure characteristic of the Second American Party System in many northern states never fully

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<sup>36</sup>Holt, Political Crisis, 102-5, 110-11, 258-59.

developed in the Commonwealth.<sup>37</sup> Both Virginia Whigs and Democrats claimed to be heirs of Jefferson and his legacy of republican principles. This common heritage allowed for a relatively easy transition from the Whig to the Democratic party, and vice versa. Nevertheless, party loyalty and consistency at the polls were a part of Virginia's political life. It is possible that the underdevelopment of the system contributed to its rapid demise in Virginia.

Thomas Jeffrey concluded in his study of antebellum politics in North Carolina that state party leaders' failure to deal with local issues may have contributed to the demise of the Second American Party System in the Tarheel State.<sup>38</sup> In Virginia as well, voters had expressed their displeasure with their political leaders' preoccupation with national issues particularly following the adoption of the new Constitution. Expressing his frustration, a Virginia editor wrote,

There has been too great an excess of party spirit in the country and while our legislators should have been busy in framing laws for the development of our resources for the education of our people and the general improvements of the country their time has been spent in discussing Federal politics in making longwinded speeches, and very often in being gloriously 'drunk all night and dry in the morning.'

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<sup>37</sup>Sharp, 218-19.

<sup>38</sup>Jeffrey, 46-47.

In other words, our politicians have enslaved us, tied up our hands and left us one hundred years behind the age.<sup>39</sup>

The party system was based on a symbiotic relationship between the state and national organizations. Discontent on the home front signaled trouble with the system at large. Virginians expected the political parties to become more responsive to state affairs after 1851, but her political leaders had focused so long on national issues that this national focus precluded any significant rebirth of a system centered on Virginia issues.<sup>40</sup>

A two tiered political system appears to have developed in Virginia. One historian has suggested the idea of dual politics where separate organizations contested state and federal elections.<sup>41</sup> In Virginia's case, it appears some counties may have developed separate political identities for local and national elections. Buckingham County, for example, supported Democratic presidential candidates and starting in 1851 supported Democratic congressional candidates while electing Whigs to the House of Delegates and supporting Whig gubernatorial nominees. When the national tier broke down under the strain of the slavery issues during the Compromise Crisis, some semblance

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<sup>39</sup>Lynchburg Virginian, 25 August 1851.

<sup>40</sup>Goldfield, "Triumph of Politics."

<sup>41</sup>Shade, 91.

of organization was maintained throughout the 1850s at the state level. Virginia Whigs proved their ability to be a competitor during the gubernatorial election of 1851. Remarkably, they were able to sustain a Competition Index of better than ninety until the end of the decade and provided a formidable challenge to Democratic gubernatorial hopefuls.<sup>42</sup>

The slavery issue brought to the forefront during the Compromise Crisis destroyed the Virginia Whig party as a significant factor in elections for national office and led to the demise of the Second American Party System in the Commonwealth. In 1847, the Whigs won six congressional seats, gained 45.34 percent of the vote and contested 14 of 15 races. By 1851, they could barely claim one third of the vote and failed to run candidates in six districts. The competition index fell from a high of 90.68 in 1847 to 73.68 in 1851. The slavery issue had permeated elections at every level and dominated each campaign between 1847 and 1851. Defense of the peculiar institution became paramount and party lines were disrupted as a result. The National Whig Party's untenable position on slavery caused the erosion of some of its traditional support in the Piedmont and Tidewater while it failed to win them numerous converts in

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<sup>42</sup>The Democrats gained only 53 percent, 53.19 percent and 51.87 percent of the vote in the three gubernatorial races of the 1850s.

the predominantly white West. Although the system survived to a degree on the state level for the remainder of the decade, its dependence on a national component assured its eventual collapse. The highly contested elections of the 1840s gave way to token opposition to the dominant Democrats in many districts in the years following the Compromise. The Whigs could never expect to gain the ascendancy and, therefore, were limited in their effectiveness as a party in Virginia. Their successors, the Know-Nothings and other opposition, managed to mount several campaigns; but they, like their Whig predecessors, were never able to overcome the "politics of slavery." Without a viable contender to keep them in check, Virginia's Democrats fought with one another until they too were split irreparably at both the state and national levels. The destruction of the Democratic party brought about the complete demise of the Second American Party System and severed a major bond uniting the North and the South.

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## APPENDIX A

## THE 1848 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

## 1848 COUNTER-TREND DEMOCRATIC COUNTIES WITH PERCENT OF SLAVES

<u>County</u>	<u>1844</u>	<u>1848</u>	<u>1852</u>	<u>Percent of slaves</u>
Amherst	50.5	49.8	55.4	46.9
Tyler	53.7	47.2	53.0	0.7
Taylor	51.1	48.1	52.2	3.1
Spotsylvania	50.2	49.5	56.2	56.2
Smyth	57.4	48.3	52.5	13.0
Clarke	52.5	48.8	51.5	49.2
Franklin	52.1	49.9	56.4	32.9
Jackson	55.2	49.4	51.1	0.8
Monroe	52.0	49.0	50.1	10.4
Wythe	64.2	49.2	64.9	18.2
Orange	54.6	48.7	54.2	58.9
Bath	56.1	44.9	53.2	27.6
Mercer	50.6	49.1	51.0	4.2

WHIG COUNTIES EXPERIENCING ONE-TIME SURGE  
IN PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS

<u>County</u>	<u>1844</u>	<u>1848</u>	<u>1852</u>	<u>Percent of slaves</u>
Petersburg	47.2	45.9	60.0	36.4
Nicholas	46.1	29.7	39.9	1.8
Loudoun	24.0	22.4	30.3	25.6
Campbell	44.0	41.1	44.4	46.8
Bedford	40.4	37.6	44.8	41.8
Fairfax	48.8	36.6	49.9	30.4
Braxton	45.6	37.4	42.8	2.1
Rappahannock	46.7	44.0	56.8	39.3
New Kent	47.3	36.5	46.0	56.2
Nelson	39.6	36.8	42.9	48.1
Kanawha	31.0	26.8	38.8	20.5
Fauquier	44.4	42.3	53.0	49.6
Accomac	45.4	35.2	68.8	27.9
Mason	46.7	44.0	47.0	8.6
Fluvanna	44.4	41.2	46.2	50.9
Fayette	39.6	34.3	47.8	3.9
Essex	44.8	42.1	46.0	66.2
Cumberland	43.0	40.8	49.6	64.9

DEMOCRATIC COUNTIES WHERE UPWARD DEMOCRATIC TREND  
BROKEN BY THE ELECTION OF 1848

<u>County</u>	<u>1844</u>	<u>1848</u>	<u>1852</u>	<u>Percent of slaves</u>
Carroll	68.9	60.0	69.6	2.6
Brunswick	67.8	61.3	71.1	60.9
Botetourt	63.8	59.8	61.3	25.0
Alleghany	61.2	58.9	68.9	19.7
Stafford	59.8	52.6	62.4	41.2
Halifax	75.2	68.1	75.5	55.7
Roanoke	61.2	57.6	64.9	29.6
Mecklenburg	69.1	59.2	69.1	60.4
Logan	59.0	54.2	64.0	2.4
Lewis	67.5	61.2	71.6	3.7
King and Queen	57.5	53.5.	67.4	55.9
Harrison	61.3	58.0	62.3	4.2
Goochland	66.9	60.2	67.0	56.5
Preston	56.9	53.4	58.8	0.7

Source: Figures represent Democratic percentages in Presidential Elections. Compiled from Burnham, 615-65, 816-65.

## APPENDIX B

## RANKING OF CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT CHARACTERISTICS

<u>Dist</u>	<u>%Slave</u>	<u>Taxpc</u>	<u>Prop</u>	<u>Slave</u>	<u>Land</u>	<u>Toba</u>	<u>Wheat</u>	<u>Den</u>	<u>Pop</u>	<u>Farms</u>
1	9	3	12	6	10	10	12	5	8	10
2	1	6	11	3	8	3	10	6	6	15
3	12	13	8	13	2	2	14	10	9	5
4	2	7	10	2	11	1	6	7	3	11
5	5	10	8	4	12	4	4	8	5	7
6	4	1	3	1	3	5	15	1	2	14
7	7	8	15	9	15	15	11	2	15	12
8	3	5	14	7	14	6	8	4	12	13
9	8	2	5	5	6	13	3	3	4	8
10	10	4	9	10	9	14	1	9	14	9
11	12	11	4	11	4	9	2	11	10	6
12	11	9	2	12	2	7	7	13	7	2
13	13	15	7	13	7	12	13	15	11	3
14	14	14	1	14	1	8	9	15	1	1
15	15	13	6	15	5	11	5	12	13	4

Source: Compiled from DeBow Seventh Census, 320-35.

Notes: Dist--Congressional District; %Slave--percentage of population slave; Tax pc--tax per capita; Prop--property owners; Slave--slave owners; Land--land owners; Toba--tobacco; Wheat--wheat; Den--density; Pop--population; and Farms--number of farms.

## APPENDIX C

## THE VIRGINIA CONGRESSIONAL ELECTION OF 1849

District 1 <u>County</u>	Margin of Victory Cong. Elections		Party Affiliation of Gen. Assembly Delegates		
	<u>1847</u>	<u>1849</u>	<u>1847</u>	<u>1848</u>	<u>1849</u>
	Isle of Wight	D-288	D-317	D	D
Nansemond	W-31	W-71	D	W	W
Norfolk City	W-322	W-206	W	I	W
Norfolk	W-93	D-1	WW	DW	DW
Princess Anne	W-21	W-59	W	D	W
Southampton	D-37	W-24	D	W	W
Surry	D-30	D-16	D	D	D
Sussex	D-184	D-202	D	D	D

District 1 <u>County</u>	Democratic Percentages in Congressional and Presidential elections			
	<u>1847</u>	<u>1849</u>	<u>1848</u>	<u>% Slave</u>
Isle of Wight	82.4	81.9	78.90	36.3
Nansemond	47.4	43.7	47.4	42.6
Norfolk City	29.1	39.2	40.7	30.0
Norfolk	45.3	50.0	50.8	32.6
Princess Anne	47.6	45.4	44.5	40.8
Southampton	53.1	48.4	47.6	42.6
Surry	57.9	54.2	62.7	43.7
Sussex	75.8	78.2	76.9	61.0

District 2 <u>County</u>	Margin of Victory Cong. Elections		Party Affiliation of Gen. Assembly Delegates		
	<u>1847</u>	<u>1849</u>	<u>1847</u>	<u>1848</u>	<u>1849</u>
	Amelia	D-74	D-99	D	D
Brunswick	W-86	D--	DD	DD	DD
Dinwiddie	W-100	D--	W	D	D
Greensville	D-31	D--	D	D	D
Mecklenburg	D-156	D--	DD	DD	DD
Nottoway	W-54	D--	W	W	D
Petersburg	W-191	D--	W	W	W
Prince George	D-14	D--	D	D	D

		Democratic Percentages in Congressional and Presidential elections			
District	2	<u>1847</u>	<u>1849</u>	<u>1848</u>	<u>% Slave</u>
<u>County</u>					
Amelia		59.3	64.0	54.8	14.6
Brunswick		61.7	100.0	61.3	60.9
Dinwiddie		40.6	100.0	44.4	52.9
Greensville		59.3	100.0	62.8	67.1
Mecklenburg		61.8	100.0	59.2	60.4
Nottoway		40.8	100.0	55.0	71.7
Petersburg		33.8	100.0	45.9	36.4
Prince George		52.7	100.0	62.9	58.0

		Margin of Victory Cong. Elections		Party Affiliation of Gen. Assembly Delegates		
District	3	<u>1847</u>	<u>1849</u>	<u>1847</u>	<u>1848</u>	<u>1849</u>
<u>County</u>						
Franklin		W-80	D-67	WW	DD	DD
Halifax		D-212	D-349	DD	DD	DD
Henry		W-36	W-54	W	D	W
Patrick		D-93	W-57	W	W	D
Pittsylvania		W-190	W-281	WW	WW	WW

		Democratic Percentages in Congressional and Presidential Elections			
District	3	<u>1847</u>	<u>1849</u>	<u>1848</u>	<u>% Slave</u>
<u>County</u>					
Franklin		46.7	53.0	49.9	32.9
Halifax		61.8	63.6	68.1	55.7
Henry		46.5	43.2	44.3	37.7
Patrick		57.0	46.3	41.3	24.2
Pittsylvania		42.8	38.5	41.4	44.4

		Margin of Victory Cong. Elections		Party Affiliation of Gen. Assembly Delegates		
District	4	<u>1847</u>	<u>1849</u>	<u>1847</u>	<u>1848</u>	<u>1849</u>
<u>County</u>						
Appomattox		D-147	D-232	D	D	D
Buckingham		W-41	W-12	W	W	W
Campbell		W-72	W-98	WW	WW	WW
Charlotte		D-13	D-106	D	W	W
Cumberland		W-105	W-82	W	W	W
Fluvanna		W-93	W-48	W	W	W
Lunenburg		D-126	D-163	D	D	D
Prince Edward		D-45	D-47	D	D	D

		Democratic Percentages in Congressional and Presidential Elections			
District	4	<u>1847</u>	<u>1849</u>	<u>1848</u>	<u>% Slave</u>
County					
Appomattox		65.0	72.1	62.8	52.2
Buckingham		47.1	49.2	51.2	59.0
Campbell		47.0	46.1	41.1	46.8
Charlotte		51.8	50.5	51.1	64.4
Cumberland		35.0	40.9	40.8	64.9
Fluvanna		37.9	45.2	41.2	50.9
Lunenburg		62.1	66.1	61.7	61.5
Prince Edward		54.4	54.4	54.5	60.7

		Margin of Victory Cong. Elections		Party Affiliation of Gen. Assembly Delegates		
District	5	<u>1847</u>	<u>1849</u>	<u>1847</u>	<u>1848</u>	<u>1849</u>
County						
Albemarle		W-321	W-232	WW	WW	WW
Amherst		W-8	D-69	D	D	D
Bedford		W-343	W-317	WW	WW	WW
Greene		D-246	D-255	D	D	D
Madison		D-487	D-476	D	D	D
Nelson		W-158	W-150	W	W	W
Orange		W-13	D-6	D	D	D

		Democratic percentages in Congressional and Presidential Elections			
District	5	<u>1847</u>	<u>1849</u>	<u>1848</u>	<u>% Slave</u>
County					
Albemarle		38.5	41.1	42.6	51.7
Amherst		49.5	53.4	49.8	46.9
Bedford		37.5	39.5	37.6	41.8
Greene		83.6	82.3	81.1	38.6
Madison		86.5	83.6	87.6	50.6
Nelson		37.8	38.6	36.8	48.1
Orange		48.8	50.5	48.7	58.9

		Margin of Victory Cong. Elections		Party Affiliation of Gen. Assembly Delegates		
District	6	<u>1847</u>	<u>1849</u>	<u>1847</u>	<u>1848</u>	<u>1849</u>
County						
Chesterfield		D-241	D-380	D	D	D
Goochland		D-89	D-107	D	D	W
Hanover		W-44	D-5	W	W	W
Henrico		W-266	W-10	W	W	W
Louisa		D-57	D-245	W	D	D
Powhatan		D-70	D-43	W	D	D
Richmond City		W-638	W-468	W	W	W

		Democratic Percentages in Congressional and Presidential Elections			
District	County	<u>1847</u>	<u>1849</u>	<u>1848</u>	<u>% Slave</u>
6	Chesterfield	65.5	75.1	63.0	49.3
	Goochland	61.2	61.8	60.2	56.5
	Hanover	47.7	50.3	51.0	55.4
	Henrico	35.9	45.3	39.9	38.6
	Louisa	53.6	68.7	59.0	59.1
	Powhatan	60.7	54.7	56.7	64.6
	Richmond City	24.6	27.5	36.1	24.5

		Margin of Victory Cong. Elections		Party Affiliation of Gen. Assembly Delegates		
District	County	<u>1847</u>	<u>1849</u>	<u>1847</u>	<u>1848</u>	<u>1849</u>
7	Accomac	D-365	D-526	DD	DW	DW
	Charles City	W-81	W-36	W	W	W
	Elizabeth City	D-2	W-43	W	W	W
	Gloucester	W-77	D-50	W	W	W
	James City	W-38	W-12	W	W	W
	Lancaster	W-16	W-2	W	W	W
	Matthews	D-44	D-77	D	D	D
	New Kent	W-30	W-7	W	W	W
	Northampton	W-29	D-46	W	W	W
	Northumberland	D-150	D-163	D	D	D
	Warwick	W-21	W-31	W	W	W
	Williamsburg	W-4	D-27	W	W	W
	York	W-24	W-14	W	W	W

		Democratic Percentages in Congressional and Presidential Elections			
District	County	<u>1847</u>	<u>1849</u>	<u>1848</u>	<u>% Slave</u>
7	Accomac	71.8	77.3	35.2	27.9
	Charles City	0.0	30.9	29.0	53.2
	Elizabeth City	50.4	41.3	47.4	46.8
	Gloucester	31.2	58.6	51.6	52.8
	James City	33.3	46.0	27.2	43.9
	Lancaster	45.2	48.9	43.9	56.1
	Matthews	58.7	66.1	58.2	43.5
	New Kent	44.6	48.3	36.5	56.2
	Northampton	55.6	58.0	35.8	48.7
	Northumberland	68.7	69.9	59.2	50.1
	Warwick	30.9	25.4	19.5	58.5
	Williamsburg	43.8	73.7	42.0	65.2
	York	42.9	46.7	42.2	48.9

District 8 County	Margin of Victory Cong. Elections		Party Affiliation of Gen. Assembly Delegates		
	<u>1847</u>	<u>1849</u>	<u>1847</u>	<u>1848</u>	<u>1849</u>
Caroline	D-42	D-45	D	D	D
Essex	W-50	W-68	W	W	W
King and Queen	D-90	D-96	D	D	D
King George	W-10	W-3	W	W	W
King William	D-199	D-184	D	D	D
Middlesex	Tie	D-4	D	D	D
Richmond	W-110	W-17	W	W	W
Spotsylvania	D-68	D-40	D	D	D
Westmoreland	W-149	W-205	W	W	W

District 8 County	Democratic Percentages in Congressional and Presidential Elections			
	<u>1847</u>	<u>1849</u>	<u>1848</u>	<u>% Slave</u>
Caroline	51.9	52.5	53.7	57.8
Essex	43.5	40.4	42.1	66.2
King and Queen	58.4	60.7	53.5	55.9
King George	47.9	49.5	42.9	57.0
King William	77.0	73.4	71.6	65.2
Middlesex	50.0	50.7	51.9	53.3
Richmond	28.3	47.6	44.8	35.3
Spotsylvania	54.2	52.3	49.5	56.2
Westmoreland	25.2	21.0	19.4	44.0

District 9 County	Margin of Victory Cong. Elections		Party Affiliation of Gen. Assembly Delegates		
	<u>1847</u>	<u>1849</u>	<u>1847</u>	<u>1848</u>	<u>1849</u>
Alexandria	W-199	WS-105	W	W	W
Culpeper	W-25	WS-104	D	D	D
Fairfax	W-113	W-66	W	W	D
Fauquier	W-98	WS-56	WW	WW	WD
Loudoun	W-603	WS-232	WWW	WWW	WWW
Prince William	D-183	WS-124	D	D	D
Rappahannock	W-41	W-124	W	W	W
Stafford	D-80	W-13	D	D	W



		Democratic Percentages in Congressional and Presidential Elections			
District	9	<u>1847</u>	<u>1849</u>	<u>1848</u>	<u>% Slave</u>
<u>County</u>					
Alexandria		18.2	0.0	29.5	13.8
Culpeper		48.2	0.0	47.3	54.4
Fairfax		40.1	0.0	39.6	30.4
Fauquier		43.8	0.0	42.3	49.6
Loudoun		23.6	0.0	22.4	25.6
Prince William		70.7	0.0	66.6	30.7
Rappahannock		46.4	0.0	44.0	39.3
Stafford		60.7	0.0	52.6	41.2

		Margin of Victory Cong. Elections		Party Affiliation of Gen. Assembly Delegates		
District	10	<u>1847</u>	<u>1849</u>	<u>1847</u>	<u>1848</u>	<u>1849</u>
<u>County</u>						
Berkeley		W-121	W-80	WW	WW	WD
Clarke		D-12	D-55	D	D	D
Frederick		D-51	D-99	DW	DD	DW
Hampshire		D-36	D-45	DD	DD	DD
Jefferson		W-276	W-35	WW	WW	WW
Morgan		D-7	W-72	W	D	W
Page		D-469	D-548	D	D	D
Warren		D-122	D-147	D	D	D

		Democratic Percentages in Congressional and Presidential Elections			
District	10	<u>1847</u>	<u>1849</u>	<u>1848</u>	<u>% Slave</u>
<u>County</u>					
Berkeley		43.1	46.2	47.2	16.6
Clarke		52.0	55.8	48.8	49.2
Frederick		51.6	53.1	52.7	14.4
Hampshire		52.1	51.9	53.1	10.2
Jefferson		35.7	48.3	44.6	28.3
Morgan		50.9	41.5	51.7	3.5
Page		92.1	91.3	89.6	12.6
Warren		69.9	82.1	70.0	26.5

		Margin of Victory Cong. Elections		Party Affiliation of Gen. Assembly Delegates		
District	11	<u>1847</u>	<u>1849</u>	<u>1847</u>	<u>1848</u>	<u>1849</u>
<u>County</u>						
Augusta		W-390	D--	WW	WW	WW
Hardy		W-152	D--	W	W	W
Pendleton		W-12	D--	W	D	D
Rockbridge		W-100	D--	WW	WD	WW
Rockingham		D-746	D--	DD	DD	DD
Shenandoah		D-768	D--	DD	DD	DD

District	11	Democratic Percentages in Congressional and Presidential Elections			
		<u>1847</u>	<u>1849</u>	<u>1848</u>	<u>% Slave</u>
<u>County</u>					
Augusta		31.3	100.0	34.8	20.5
Hardy		32.9	100.0	34.0	13.2
Pendleton		49.2	100.0	52.0	5.6
Rockbridge		40.0	100.0	42.9	26.2
Rockingham		78.0	100.0	80.7	11.5
Shenandoah		86.6	100.0	88.7	6.6

District	12	<u>County</u>	Margin of Victory	Party Affiliation of			
			Cong. Elections	Gen. Assembly Delegates			
			<u>1847</u>	<u>1849</u>	<u>1847</u>	<u>1848</u>	<u>1849</u>
		Alleghany	D-41	D-90	D	D	D
		Bath	D-30	D-76	D	D	D
		Boone	----	D-102	W	D	D
		Botetourt	D-32	D-133	D	D	D
		Floyd	W-71	W-1	W	W	W
		Giles	D-43	D-113	W	D	D
		Greenbrier	W-325	W-259	W	W	W
		Highland	----	D-76	Dw	DD	DD
		Logan	W-4	D-30	W	D	D
		Mercer	W-19	D-14	W	D	D
		Monroe	W-37	D-88	W	D	D
		Montgomery	W-193	D-89	W	W	W
		Pocahontas	D-137	D-130	D	D	D
		Pulaski	W-38	D-37	WD	WD	WW
		Roanoke	D-78	D-132	D	D	D

		Democratic Percentages in Congressional and Presidential Elections			
District	12	<u>1847</u>	<u>1849</u>	<u>1848</u>	<u>% Slave</u>
<u>County</u>					
Alleghany		59.3	70.6	58.9	19.7
Bath		54.7	58.6	44.9	27.6
Boone		----	74.1	65.3	5.7
Botetourt		52.4	57.7	59.8	25.0
Floyd		43.4	49.9	45.4	6.9
Giles		53.1	60.1	55.5	10.0
Greenbrier		31.1	31.8	31.5	13.4
Highland		----	54.7	74.0	8.6
Logan		49.5	53.4	54.2	2.4
Mercer		47.7	52.1	49.1	4.2
Monroe		48.1	60.5	49.0	10.4
Montgomery		37.0	57.1	47.2	17.6
Pocahontas		70.4	68.4	66.7	7.4
Pulaski		42.6	59.2	51.8	28.7
Roanoke		60.2	69.9	57.6	29.6

		Margin of Victory Cong. Elections		Party Affiliation of Gen. Assembly Delegates		
District	13	<u>1847</u>	<u>1849</u>	<u>1847</u>	<u>1848</u>	<u>1849</u>
<u>County</u>						
Carroll		D-171	D-336	D	D	D
Grayson		D-27	D-446	D	D	D
Lee		D-318	D-398	D	D	D
Russell		W-146	D-351	W	W	W
Scott		D-103	D-402	D	D	D
Smyth		W-126	D-157	D	W	D
Tazewell		D2-128	D2-389	D	W	W
Washington		D2-76	D-393	D	D	D
Wythe		W-124	D-172	D	W	W

		Democratic Percentages in Congressional and Presidential Elections			
District	13	<u>1847</u>	<u>1849</u>	<u>1848</u>	<u>% Slave</u>
<u>County</u>					
Carroll		69.3	100.0	60.0	2.6
Grayson		54.8	100.0	50.9	7.5
Lee		73.3	100.0	61.7	7.7
Russell		48.0	100.0	39.6	8.2
Scott		67.0	100.0	60.4	4.8
Smyth		44.9	100.0	48.3	13.0
Tazewell		72.6	100.0	71.8	10.7
Washington		62.6	100.0	58.3	14.6
Wythe		47.4	100.0	49.2	18.2

District	14	Margin of Victory		Party Affiliation of		
		Cong. Elections		Gen. Assembly Delegates		
<u>County</u>		<u>1847</u>	<u>1849</u>	<u>1847</u>	<u>1848</u>	<u>1849</u>
Barbour		----	D-154	D	W	D
Braxton		W-40	W-57	W	W	D
Cabell		W-92	W-41	W	W	D
Doddridge		with Harrison			D	DD
Fayette		D-67	W-98	D	D	D
Gilmer		----	D-65	W	W	D
Harrison		D-261	D-248	D	D	D
Jackson		W-37	W-43	W	W	W
Kanawha		W-236	W-309	W	W	W
Lewis		D-58	D-223	W	W	D
Mason		W-37	D-24	W	W	W
Nicholas		W-52	W-36	W	W	D
Putnam		----	D-57	-	WWW	WWD
Ritchie		D-131	D-146	W	D	W
Taylor		----	D-15	W	W	D
Wayne		W-8	W-85	W	W	D
Wirt		----	D-76	-	W	W
Wood		W-33	W-120	W	D	W

District	14	Democratic Percentages in Congressional and Presidential Elections			
		<u>1847</u>	<u>1849</u>	<u>1848</u>	<u>% Slave</u>
Barbour		----	73.3	62.7	1.2
Braxton		42.4	42.2	37.4	2.1
Cabell		40.8	46.2	44.8	6.2
Doddridge		60.8	60.7	83.0	1.1
Fayette		60.2	39.7	34.4	3.9
Gilmer		----	66.2	69.8	2.1
Harrison		60.8	60.7	58.0	4.2
Jackson		46.7	45.3	49.4	0.8
Kanawha		36.2	31.6	26.8	20.5
Lewis		54.5	62.5	61.2	3.7
Mason		46.7	52.5	44.0	8.6
Nicholas		37.6	43.8	29.7	1.8
Putnam		----	60.4	48.8	11.9
Ritchie		72.4	71.9	73.2	0.4
Taylor		----	52.1	48.1	3.1
Wayne		48.8	32.2	51.2	4.0
Wirt		----	59.0	51.6	1.0
Wood		47.7	42.1	43.0	4.0

District	15	Margin of Victory		Party Affiliation of		
		Cong. Elections		Gen. Assembly Delegates		
<u>County</u>		<u>1847</u>	<u>1849</u>	<u>1847</u>	<u>1848</u>	<u>1849</u>
Brooke		D--	D-3	D	D	D
Hancock		----	D-94	-	D	D
Marion		D--	D-358	W	D	D
Marshall		D--	W-203	W	D	W
Monongalia		D--	D-286	D	D	D
Ohio		D--	W-591	W	W	W
Preston		D--	D-262	D	D	D
Randolph		D--	W-50	D	W	D
Tyler		D--	W-138	D	D	D
Wetzel		D--	D-257	D	D	D
Barbour		D--	D-86	D	W	D
Taylor		D--	W-15	W	W	D

District	15	Democratic Percentages in Congressional and Presidential Elections			
		<u>1847</u>	<u>1849</u>	<u>1848</u>	<u>% Slave</u>
Brooke		100.0	50.5	54.9	0.6
Hancock		----	62.7	58.3	0.1
Marion		100.0	71.4	67.4	0.9
Marshall		100.0	38.6	48.6	0.5
Monongalia		100.0	61.9	65.1	1.4
Ohio		100.0	25.2	32.9	0.9
Preston		100.0	66.8	53.4	0.7
Randolph		100.0	44.5	51.4	3.8
Tyler		100.0	38.2	47.2	0.7
Wetzel		100.0	81.9	78.3	0.4
Barbour		100.0	64.3	62.7	1.2
Taylor		100.0	44.4	48.1	3.1

Source: Compiled from Whig Almanac 1850, 50, 1852, 40-41; Richmond Enquirer, April-June 1849.

## APPENDIX D

## WHIGS AND DEMOCRATS IN THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

	<u>1847</u>	<u>1849</u>	<u>1851</u>
District 1	D-5 W-4	D-4 W-5	D-6 W-3
District 2	D-7 W-1	D-9 W-1	D-8 W-0
District 3	D-2 W-6	D-5 W-3	D-5 W-3
District 4	D-4 W-5	D-3 W-6	D-4 W-5
District 5	D-4 W-5	D-4 W-5	D-6 W-3
District 6	D-2 W-5	D-3 W-4	D-5 W-3
District 7	D-4 W-10	D-3 W-11	D-4 W-9
District 8	D-5 W-4	D-5 W-4	D-7 W-2
District 9	D-3 W-8	D-4 W-7	D-5 W-5
District 10	D-6 W-6	D-7 W-5	D-10 W-2
District 11	D-4 W-6	D-5 W-5	D-5 W-5
District 12	D-7 W-10	D-12 W-5	D-9 W-8
District 13	D-8 W-1	D-9 W-2	D-6 W-3
District 14	D-4 W-12	D-12 W-8	D-11 W-14
District 15	D-7 W-4	D-10 W-2	D-10 W-7

Source: Compiled from Richmond Enquirer 1847-1851.

## APPENDIX E

## THE VIRGINIA CONGRESSIONAL ELECTION OF 1851

District 1 County	Margin of Victory Cong. Elections		Party Affiliation of Gen. Assembly Delegates		
	<u>1849</u>	<u>1851</u>	<u>1849</u>	<u>1850</u>	<u>1851</u>
Isle of Wight	D-317	D-244	D	D	D
Nansemond	W-71	W-41	W	W	W
Norfolk City	W-206	D-108	W	W	W
Norfolk	D-1	D-230	DW	DD	DD
Princess Anne	W-59	D-9	W	W	D
Southampton	W-24	D-15	W	W	W
Surry	D-16	D-46	D	D	D
Sussex	D-202	D-119	D	D	D

District 1 County	Democratic Percentages in Congressional and Presidential Elections			
	<u>1849</u>	<u>1851</u>	<u>1852</u>	<u>% Slave</u>
Isle of Wight	81.9	83.5	79.0	36.3
Nansemond	43.7	45.4	48.0	38.4
Norfolk City	39.2	57.0	50.8	30.0
Norfolk	50.0	61.0	57.1	32.6
Princess Anne	45.4	51.1	45.5	40.8
Southampton	48.4	52.1	47.8	42.6
Surry	54.2	64.9	57.8	43.7
Sussex	78.2	74.1	75.1	61.0

District 2 County	Margin of Victory Cong. Elections		Party Affiliation of Gen. Assembly Delegates		
	<u>1849</u>	<u>1851</u>	<u>1849</u>	<u>1850</u>	<u>1851</u>
Amelia	D-99	D--	D	D	D
Brunswick	D--	D--	DD	DD	D
Dinwiddie	D--	D--	D	W	D
Greensville	D--	D--	D	D	D
Mecklenburg	D--	D--	DD	DD	D
Nottoway	D--	D--	D	D	D
Petersburg	D--	D--	W	D	D
Prince George	D--	D--	D	D	D

		Democratic Percentages in Congressional and Presidential Elections			
District	2	<u>1849</u>	<u>1851</u>	<u>1852</u>	<u>% Slave</u>
<u>County</u>					
Amelia		64.0	100.0	62.0	14.6
Brunswick		100.0	100.0	71.1	60.9
Dinwiddie		100.0	100.0	47.2	52.9
Greensville		100.0	100.0	71.5	67.1
Mecklenburg		100.0	100.0	69.1	60.4
Nottoway		100.0	100.0	60.3	71.7
Petersburg		100.0	100.0	60.0	36.4
Prince George		100.0	100.0	75.6	58.0

		Margin of Victory Cong. Elections		Party Affiliation of Gen. Assembly Delegates		
District	3	<u>1849</u>	<u>1851</u>	<u>1849</u>	<u>1850</u>	<u>1851</u>
<u>County</u>						
Franklin		D-67	D-85	DD	DW	DW
Halifax		D-349	D-426	DD	DD	DD
Henry		W-54	W-30	W	W	D
Patrick		W-57	W-45	D	D	W
Pittsylvania		W-281	W-192	WW	WW	WD

		Democratic Percentages in Congressional and Presidential Elections			
District	3	<u>1849</u>	<u>1851</u>	<u>1852</u>	<u>% Slave</u>
<u>County</u>					
Franklin		53.0	53.7	56.4	32.9
Halifax		63.6	67.8	75.5	55.7
Henry		43.2	47.0	50.1	37.7
Patrick		46.3	47.0	44.9	24.2
Pittsylvania		38.5	42.7	50.4	44.4

		Margin of Victory Cong. Elections		Party Affiliation of Gen. Assembly Delegates		
District	4	<u>1849</u>	<u>1851</u>	<u>1849</u>	<u>1850</u>	<u>1851</u>
<u>County</u>						
Appomattox		D-232	D-320	D	D	D
Buckingham		W-12	D-98	W	W	W
Campbell		W-98	W-33	WW	WW	WW
Charlotte		D-106	D-133	W	D	W
Cumberland		W-82	D-15	W	W	D
Fluvanna		W-48	D-30	W	W	W
Lunenburg		D-163	D-209	D	D	D
Prince Edward		D-47	D-139	D	D	D



		Democratic Percentages in Congressional and Presidential Elections			
District	4	<u>1849</u>	<u>1851</u>	<u>1852</u>	<u>% Slave</u>
County					
Appomattox		72.1	88.4	64.7	52.2
Buckingham		49.2	56.7	54.8	59.0
Campbell		46.1	48.0	44.4	46.8
Charlotte		50.5	62.2	52.3	64.4
Cumberland		40.9	52.1	49.6	64.9
Fluvanna		45.2	52.8	46.2	50.9
Lunenburg		66.1	70.4	70.2	61.5
Prince Edward		54.4	75.6	57.1	60.7

		Margin of Victory Cong. Elections		Party Affiliation of Gen. Assembly Delegates		
District	5	<u>1849</u>	<u>1851</u>	<u>1849</u>	<u>1850</u>	<u>1851</u>
County						
Albemarle		W-232	W-213	WW	WW	WW
Amherst		D-69	D-417	D	D	D
Bedford		W-317	W-304	WW	WW	DD
Greene		D-255	D-228	D	D	D
Madison		D-476	D-423	D	D	D
Nelson		W-150	W-118	W	W	W
Orange		D-6	W-46	D	D	D

		Democratic Percentages in Congressional and Presidential Elections			
District	5	<u>1849</u>	<u>1851</u>	<u>1852</u>	<u>% Slave</u>
County					
Albemarle		41.1	41.3	48.7	51.7
Amherst		53.2	85.3	55.4	46.9
Bedford		39.5	38.6	44.8	41.8
Greene		82.3	83.3	82.7	38.6
Madison		83.6	85.2	85.8	50.6
Nelson		38.6	41.3	42.9	48.1
Orange		50.5	45.5	54.2	58.9

		Margin of Victory Cong. Elections		Party Affiliation of Gen. Assembly Delegates		
District	6	<u>1849</u>	<u>1851</u>	<u>1849</u>	<u>1850</u>	<u>1851</u>
County						
Chesterfield		D-241	D-418	D	D	D
Goochland		D-107	D-48	W	D	D
Hanover		D-5	D-139	W	D	D
Henrico		W-10	W-8	W	W	W
Louisa		D-245	D-192	D	D	D
Powhatan		D-42	D-84	D	W	D
Richmond City		W-468	W-401	W	W	WW

Democratic Percentages in Congressional and Presidential Elections				
District 6	<u>1849</u>	<u>1851</u>	<u>1852</u>	<u>% Slave</u>
County				
Chesterfield	75.1	73.1	67.6	49.3
Goochland	61.8	56.7	67.0	56.5
Hanover	50.3	56.7	55.2	55.4
Henrico	45.3	50.5	45.9	38.6
Louisa	68.7	65.9	58.6	59.1
Powhatan	54.7	62.5	66.6	64.6
Richmond City	27.5	35.1	35.3	36.1

District 7	Margin of Victory		Party Affiliation of		
	Cong. Elections		Gen. Assembly Delegates		
County	<u>1849</u>	<u>1851</u>	<u>1849</u>	<u>1850</u>	<u>1851</u>
Accomac	D-526	D--	DW	DW	W
Charles City	W-36	D--	W	W	W
Elizabeth City	W-43	D--	W	W	W
Gloucester	D-55	D--	W	D	D
James City	W-12	D--	W	W	W
Lancaster	W-2	D--	W	W	W
Matthews	D-77	D--	D	D	D
New Kent	W-7	D--	W	W	W
Northampton	D-46	D--	W	W	W
Northumberland	D-163	D--	D	D	D
Warwick	W-31	D--	W	W	W
Williamsburg	D-27	D--	W	W	W
York	W-14	D--	W	W	W

Democratic Percentages in Congressional and Presidential Elections				
District 7	<u>1849</u>	<u>1851</u>	<u>1852</u>	<u>% Slave</u>
County				
Accomac	77.3	100.0	49.5	27.9
Charles City	30.9	100.0	33.6	53.2
Elizabeth City	41.3	100.0	57.5	46.8
Gloucester	58.6	100.0	58.2	52.8
James City	46.0	100.0	31.7	43.9
Lancaster	48.9	100.0	47.3	56.1
Matthews	66.1	100.0	59.0	43.5
New Kent	48.3	100.0	46.0	56.2
Northampton	58.0	100.0	32.6	48.7
Northumberland	69.9	100.0	57.3	51.1
Warwick	25.4	100.0	17.5	58.5
Williamsburg	73.7	100.0	64.8	65.2
York	46.7	100.0	41.1	48.9

District 8 County	Margin of Victory Cong. Elections		Party Affiliation of Gen. Assembly Delegates		
	<u>1849</u>	<u>1851</u>	<u>1849</u>	<u>1850</u>	<u>1851</u>
Caroline	D-45	D--	D	D	D
Essex	W-68	D--	W	D	D
King and Queen	D-96	D--	D	D	D
King George	W-3	D--	W	D	D
King William	D-184	D--	D	D	D
Middlesex	D-4	D--	D	D	D
Richmond	W-17	D--	W	W	W
Spotsylvania	D-40	D--	D	D	D
Westmoreland	W-205	D--	W	W	W

District 8 County	Democratic Percentages in Congressional and Presidential Elections			
	<u>1849</u>	<u>1851</u>	<u>1852</u>	<u>% Slave</u>
Caroline	52.5	100.0	58.4	57.8
Essex	40.4	100.0	46.0	66.2
King and Queen	60.7	100.0	67.4	55.9
King George	49.5	100.0	55.7	57.0
King William	73.4	100.0	71.3	65.2
Middlesex	50.7	100.0	62.3	53.3
Richmond	47.6	100.0	43.6	35.3
Spotsylvania	52.3	100.0	56.2	56.2
Westmoreland	21.0	100.0	22.9	44.0

District 9 County	Margin of Victory Cong. Elections		Party Affiliation of Gen. Assembly Delegates		
	<u>1849</u>	<u>1851</u>	<u>1849</u>	<u>1850</u>	<u>1851</u>
Alexandria	WS-105	W-173	W	W	W
Culpeper	WS-104	W-74	D	D	D
Fairfax	W-66	W-132	D	W	W
Fauquier	WS-56	W-76	WD	WW	WD
Loudoun	WS-232	WS-91	WWW	WWW	WW
Prince William	WS-124	WS-120	D	D	D
Rappahannock	W-124	W-286	W	D	W
Stafford	W-13	WS-18	W	W	D

		Democratic Percentages in Congressional and Presidential Elections			
District	9	<u>1849</u>	<u>1851</u>	<u>1852</u>	<u>% Slave</u>
<u>County</u>					
Alexandria		0.0	0.0	45.1	13.8
Culpeper		0.0	0.0	50.8	54.4
Fairfax		0.0	0.0	49.9	30.4
Fauquier		0.0	0.0	53.0	49.6
Loudoun		0.0	0.0	60.3	25.6
Prince William		0.0	0.0	73.5	30.7
Rappahannock		0.0	0.0	56.8	39.3
Stafford		0.0	0.0	62.4	41.2

		Margin of Victory Cong. Elections		Party Affiliation of Gen. Assembly Delegates		
District	10	<u>1849</u>	<u>1851</u>	<u>1849</u>	<u>1850</u>	<u>1851</u>
<u>County</u>						
Berkeley		W-80	W-337	WD	Wd	Wd
Clarke		D-55	D-32	D	D	D
Frederick		D-99	W-304	DW	DW	DD
Hampshire		D-45	D-99	DD	DD	DD
Jefferson		W-35	W-231	WW	WW	DD
Morgan		W-72	W-182	W	D	W
Page		D-548	D-343	D	D	D
Warren		D-147	D-118	D	D	D

		Democratic Percentages in Congressional and Presidential Elections			
District	10	<u>1849</u>	<u>1851</u>	<u>1852</u>	<u>% Slave</u>
<u>County</u>					
Berkeley		46.2	30.2	64.6	16.6
Clarke		55.8	54.5	51.5	49.2
Frederick		53.1	37.1	58.1	14.4
Hampshire		51.9	55.9	60.9	10.2
Jefferson		48.3	38.2	48.4	28.3
Morgan		41.5	27.3	49.0	3.5
Page		91.3	85.7	88.8	12.6
Warren		82.1	72.0	75.5	26.5

District	11	Margin of Victory		Party Affiliation of		
		Cong. Elections		Gen. Assembly Delegates		
<u>County</u>		<u>1849</u>	<u>1851</u>	<u>1849</u>	<u>1850</u>	<u>1851</u>
Augusta		D--	D--	WW	WW	WW
Hardy		D--	D--	W	W	W
Pendleton		D--	D--	D	D	D
Rockbridge		D--	D--	WW	WW	WW
Rockingham		D--	D--	DD	DD	DD
Shenandoah		D--	D--	DD	DD	DD

District	11	Democratic Percentages in Congressional and Presidential Elections			
		<u>1849</u>	<u>1851</u>	<u>1852</u>	<u>% Slave</u>
Augusta		100.0	100.0	45.3	20.5
Hardy		100.0	100.0	38.2	13.2
Pendleton		100.0	100.0	50.4	5.6
Rockbridge		100.0	100.0	49.6	26.2
Rockingham		100.0	100.0	81.1	11.5
Shenandoah		100.0	100.0	87.7	6.6

District	12	Margin of Victory		Party Affiliation of		
		Cong. Elections		Gen. Assembly Delegates		
<u>County</u>		<u>1849</u>	<u>1851</u>	<u>1849</u>	<u>1850</u>	<u>1851</u>
Alleghany		D-90	D--	D	W	D
Bath		D-76	D--	D	D	D
Boone		D-102	D--	D	D	W
Botetourt		D-133	D-301	D	W	DD
Floyd		W-1	D--	W	D	W
Giles		D-113	D--	D	D	D
Greenbrier		W-259	D--	W	W	W
Highland		D-76	D--	DD	DD	D
Logan		D-30	D--	D	D	W
Mercer		D-14	D--	D	D	W
Monroe		D-88	D--	D	D	WW
Montgomery		D-89	D--	W	D	W
Pocahontas		D-130	D--	D	D	D
Pulaski		D-37	D--	WW	WD	D
Roanoke		D-132	D--	D	D	D

District	12	Democratic Percentages in Congressional and Presidential Elections			
		<u>1849</u>	<u>1851</u>	<u>1852</u>	<u>% Slave</u>
County					
Alleghany		70.6	100.0	68.9	19.7
Bath		58.6	100.0	53.2	27.6
Boone		74.1	100.0	64.4	5.7
Botetourt		57.7	100.0	61.3	25.0
Floyd		49.9	100.0	43.9	6.9
Giles		60.1	100.0	54.9	10.0
Greenbrier		31.8	100.0	43.6	13.4
Highland		54.7	100.0	71.7	8.6
Logan		53.4	100.0	64.0	2.4
Mercer		52.1	100.0	51.0	4.2
Monroe		60.5	100.0	50.1	10.4
Montgomery		57.1	100.0	49.4	17.6
Pocahontas		70.4	68.4	66.7	7.4
Pulaski		59.2	100.0	56.2	28.7
Roanoke		69.9	100.0	64.9	29.6

District	13	Margin of Victory Cong. Elections		Party Affiliation of Gen. Assembly Delegates		
		<u>1849</u>	<u>1851</u>	<u>1849</u>	<u>1850</u>	<u>1851</u>
County						
Carroll		D-336	D--	D	D	D
Grayson		D-446	D--	D	D	D
Lee		D-398	D--	D	D	D
Russell		D-351	D--	W	W	WD
Scott		D-402	D--	D	W	D
Smyth		D-157	D--	D	D	D
Tazewell		D-389	D--	W	D	D
Washington		D-393	D-701	D	D	DD
Wythe		D-172	D--	W	W	W

District	13	Democratic Percentages in Congressional and Presidential Elections			
		<u>1849</u>	<u>1851</u>	<u>1852</u>	<u>% Slave</u>
County					
Carroll		100.0	100.0	69.6	2.6
Grayson		100.0	100.0	54.6	7.5
Lee		100.0	100.0	62.5	7.7
Russell		100.0	100.0	48.7	8.2
Scott		100.0	100.0	62.0	4.8
Smyth		100.0	100.0	52.5	13.0
Tazewell		100.0	100.0	71.6	10.7
Washington		100.0	100.0	56.4	14.6
Wythe		100.0	100.0	64.9	18.2

District	14	Margin of Victory		Party Affiliation of		
		Cong. Elections		Gen. Assembly Delegates		
County		<u>1849</u>	<u>1851</u>	<u>1849</u>	<u>1850</u>	<u>1851</u>
Barbour		D-154	D-102	D	D	D
Braxton		W-57	D-92	D	D	W
Cabell		W-41	D-30	D	D	W
Doddridge			D-130	D	D	D
Fayette		W-98	W-16	D	W	W
Gilmer		D-65	D-233	D	D	D
Harrison		D-248	D-178	D	D	DW
Jackson		W-43	W-117	W	D	D
Kanawha		W-309	W-116	W	W	WD
Lewis		D-223	D-200	D	D	D
Mason		D-24	D-121	W	D	W
Nicholas		W-36	W-25	D	D	W
Putnam		D-57	W-14	WWD	DDW	W
Ritchie		D-146	D-242	W	D	D
Taylor		D-15	W-25	D	D	W
Wayne		W-85	D-9	D	D	D
Wirt		D-76	D-127	W	DD	DW
Wood		W-120	W-9	W	D	W

District	14	Democratic Percentages in Congressional and Presidential Elections			
		<u>1849</u>	<u>1851</u>	<u>1852</u>	<u>% Slave</u>
Barbour		73.3	82.2	64.6	1.2
Braxton		42.2	63.2	42.8	2.1
Cabell		46.2	53.6	48.1	6.2
Doddridge		60.7	92.2	76.8	1.1
Fayette		39.7	47.5	47.8	3.9
Gilmer		66.2	89.0	74.0	2.1
Harrison		60.7	63.4	62.3	4.2
Jackson		45.3	33.6	51.1	0.8
Kanawha		31.6	40.0	38.8	20.5
Lewis		62.5	79.6	71.6	3.7
Mason		52.5	62.1	47.0	8.6
Nicholas		43.8	44.8	39.9	1.8
Putnam		60.4	47.7	51.5	11.9
Ritchie		71.9	90.1	67.0	0.4
Taylor		52.1	42.8	52.2	3.1
Wayne		32.2	52.0	47.8	4.0
Wirt		59.0	74.4	56.5	1.0
Wood		42.1	49.3	48.5	4.0

District	15	Margin of Victory		Party Affiliation of		
		Cong. Elections		Gen. Assembly Delegates		
<u>County</u>		<u>1849</u>	<u>1851</u>	<u>1849</u>	<u>1850</u>	<u>1851</u>
Brooke		D-3	D-81	D	D	D
Hancock		D-94	D-54	D	D	D
Marion		D-358	D-96	D	D	DD
Marshall		W-203	W-16	W	D	W
Monongalia		D-286	D-148	D	D	DD
Ohio		W-591	W-243	W	W	WWW
Preston		D-262	D-67	D	D	DW
Randolph		W-50	D-10	D	D	W
Tyler		W-138	D-26	D	W	D
Wetzel		D-257	D-326	D	D	D
Barbour		D-86	D-48	D	D	D
Taylor		W-15	W-4	D	D	W

District	15	Democratic Percentages in Congressional and Presidential Elections			
		<u>1849</u>	<u>1851</u>	<u>1852</u>	<u>% Slave</u>
Brooke		50.5	59.2	62.1	0.6
Hancock		62.7	57.3	59.2	0.1
Marion		71.4	45.4	68.1	0.9
Marshall		38.6	49.1	49.2	0.5
Monongalia		61.9	56.4	65.5	1.4
Ohio		25.5	40.7	40.5	0.9
Preston		66.8	53.7	58.8	0.7
Randolph		44.5	51.3	52.8	3.8
Tyler		38.2	52.1	53.0	0.7
Wetzel		81.9	83.0	82.7	0.4
Barbour		64.3	56.6	64.6	1.2
Taylor		44.4	48.5	52.2	3.1

Source: Compiled from Whig Almanac 1852, 40-41; Richmond Enquirer, October-November 1851.



