NEWSPAPERS had achieved unprecedented popularity in America by the 1850s, principally because there were so few other purveyors of intellectual and literary interests available to the reading public. The establishment of state supported free schools in Pennsylvania after 1834 had resulted in an effective awakening of public interest in public affairs and the newspapers performed their share of the task of creating a better informed electorate. Ofttimes the number of readers of a certain newspaper far exceeded the actual number of copies printed, since the journals were circulated throughout the neighborhood. As the newspaper became a more popular source of public information it increased its influence in molding public opinion.

This was the period of "personal journalism." Each newspaper was associated with the personality of its editor-publisher. Pennsylvania had its share of capable journalists. As one chronicler of the period expressed it:

The editors were . . . strong writers and thoroughly familiar with the political movements of the day, and I could name of that period a half dozen newspapers of either party whose considerate expression . . . was vastly more potent in controlling the political action . . . than a like expression would be . . . today. Its editor did the
thinking for his people, and his deliverances were accepted as commands.\textsuperscript{2}

Among the most able and influential of these men was John W. Forney, who began publication of the Philadelphia \textit{Press} in August 1857. His editorial integrity was unquestioned outside of political circles and he was instrumental in turning the state from its traditional adherence to the Democratic party to the support of the Republican viewpoint by 1860. A staunch supporter of the Democratic party during this time was Edward G. Webb, who edited that "Organ of Democracy," the Philadelphia \textit{Pennsylvanian}. When the \textit{Pennsylvanian} ceased publication in 1861, the neighboring \textit{Evening Bulletin} was constrained to remark:

\begin{quote}
With the success of the Republican party, the glory, the hope, and fortune of Democratic papers expired. . . . Who shall write the history of the defunct \textit{Pennsylvanian}? It would be, to some extent, a history of the Democratic party since its first number was issued.\textsuperscript{3}
\end{quote}

One of the most influential, as well as one of the first of the state’s newspaper editors to embrace the principles of the rising Republican party was Morton McMichael, publisher of the Philadelphia \textit{North American}. Forney, in his memoirs, declared that McMichael had "ever kept it characteristically clean, pure, elevated, and impersonal."\textsuperscript{4} Another powerful journalistic spokesman for the infant Republican party was David N. White, who shares with McMichael the credit for early support of the party in the state. White exerted his influence through the columns of the \textit{Pittsburgh Gazette}, "the oldest paper west of the Alleghenies."\textsuperscript{5}

As the political counterbalance of the \textit{Gazette} in Western Pennsylvania was the Pittsburgh \textit{Daily Post}, edited by James P. Barr. This paper held steadfastly to the Democratic faith, although it followed the Philadelphia \textit{Press} in espousing the cause of Stephen

\textsuperscript{4}John W. Forney, \textit{Anecdotes of Public Men} (New York, 1873), II, 120.
A. Douglas in 1860. Alexander Cummings, editor of the Philadelphia Evening Bulletin, also won a respected place in the Philadelphia area, and when he departed to take charge of the New York World in 1860, other Philadelphia editors gave testimony as to his editorial ability and integrity.

There were many other competent and respected editors. In addition to the newspapers named above, others which gained most prominence as political barometers, and from which smaller sheets copied at length, included the Inquirer, the Public Ledger, and the Daily News, all of Philadelphia; the Telegraph, the Patriot and Union, and the Keystone, all of Harrisburg; the Pittsburgh Dispatch, the Reading Gazette, the Lebanon Advertiser, the Lancaster Intelligencer, and the Wilkes-Barre Record of the Times.

Kansas in the Election of 1856; The Dred Scott Decision

The struggle for Kansas between the pro-slavery and the free-soil elements was characterized by violence, intolerance, and fraud. As an eminent student of the period has described it:

Artificially stimulated emigration, fanatical outside interference, campaigns of propaganda, frontier brawls, violence in Congress, frantic debates of press and platform, election frauds, and partisan efforts to make political capital out of the Kansas situation—such were the factors which mark the development of this turbulent territory, and which make it difficult even yet for the historian to sift out the truth in tracing that development.

The initial trouble arose over the efforts to organize the "Nebraska Territory," as the region was then known, preparatory to

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6 Ibid., p. 292.
8 These are the papers which I found most frequently quoted and referred to in other journals. There were many other newspapers, representing the smaller communities. As a rule, these employed more colorful and even violent language, and they more often resorted to personalities in lieu of issues in their political debates. The Harrisburg Patriot and Union hereafter will be referred to as the Harrisburg Patriot, and the Wilkes-Barre Record of the Times as the Wilkes-Barre Record.
its becoming a state. Pro-slavery and anti-slavery groups strove for dominance in the territorial legislature as a part of the larger struggle for control of the domestic institutions of all the area secured by the Mexican War. The Wilmot Proviso, proposed by a Pennsylvania Democrat in Congress, was the opening shot in this political contest. Following a brief respite, occasioned by the compromise arrangement of 1850, the issue was again injected into national politics by the passage of the Kansas and Nebraska bill in 1854. This measure introduced the doctrine of "popular sovereignty" as a solution to the vexing problem.

The nature of this proposal, which involved permitting the inhabitants of the territories to choose for themselves as to whether or not they desired to enter the Union as a slave state, was fraught with dangerous potentialities. It contributed to the development of what came to be known as "Bloody Kansas," which has been termed the "dress rehearsal for the Civil War."

By January, 1856, two territorial governments, both irregular, had been organized. The free-soil elements had gathered at Topeka and the slavery party operated from Lecompton. Both groups appealed to the federal government for recognition, but President Pierce refused to interfere, although he denounced the free-soil movement as "insurrectionary" and recognized the Lecompton government as legal.10

Naturally, the Pennsylvania press hailed with approval or viewed with alarm the various developments according to the individual editor's political persuasion. The extremists of both camps attacked Pierce with vigor and he was but lukewarmly defended by many of his own party journals.11 His message to Congress was roundly denounced as an "electioneering document," calculated to create political capital at the approaching Cincinnati Convention of the Democratic party.12 The Pittsburgh Dispatch announced that it would not "inflict its [the message's] vapidity" on the paper's readers by a verbatim report. The president's vacillation, declared the Dispatch, was encouraging lawlessness in Kansas on the part of the "border ruffians."13 When Pierce criticized

12 Easton Argus, cited in the Pittsburgh Dispatch, February 12, 1856.
13 February 12, 1856, February 4, 1856.
the Emigrant Aid Society for its furnishing of guns to free-soil settlers, the Wilkes-Barre Record asserted that it was not even safe to live in the hills of Pennsylvania without a rifle.\textsuperscript{14}

The invasion of Lawrence, Kansas, in May 1856, aroused forceful editorial debate in Pennsylvania journalistic circles. Lawrence, a free-soil town, had been raided with considerable destruction of property. Although there was no blood shed, lurid reports inflamed Northern minds. Pierce was accused of sanctioning a "reign of terror,"\textsuperscript{15} and of refusing to interfere "lest damning revelations of fraud and crime in Kansas [be] exposed."\textsuperscript{16} Democratic journals appealed for calmness in judging what was and what was not authentic news from Kansas on the grounds that "crazy partisans" had made the reports so unreliable.\textsuperscript{17}

More Northern indignation and sense of outrage was injected into the editorial columns of Republican newspapers of the state when word was circulated of the physical attack on Charles Sumner, of Massachusetts, by Preston S. Brooks, of South Carolina. Sumner, who had distinct abolitionist leanings, was "chastised" with a cane by the Southerner for the New England Senator's "insulting" remarks concerning Brooks' kinsman, Senator Butler, of South Carolina. The anti-administration papers of the state advised all sorts of actions, ranging from a transfer of the national capital to "some city in the free west where freedom of speech will be tolerated,"\textsuperscript{18} to the admittance of Northern "inferiority" and "graceful submission to . . . inevitable destiny."\textsuperscript{19} The editor of the Pittsburgh Gazette was moved to predict that "those cut-throat Southerns will never learn to respect Northern men until some one of their number has a rapier thrust through his ribs, or feels a bullet in his thorax."\textsuperscript{20} Democratic journals, however, in an attempt to repudiate the violence of Brooks without injury to their party standing, were more moderate in their criticism of the South Carolinian. For the most part, they termed Brooks' action "uncalled for," yet they could not forbear remind-

\textsuperscript{14} August 6, 1856.
\textsuperscript{15} Harrisburg Telegraph, August 6, 1856.
\textsuperscript{16} Pittsburgh Gazette, May 23, 1856.
\textsuperscript{17} Philadelphia Public Ledger, May 26, 1856.
\textsuperscript{18} Pittsburgh Gazette, May 27, 1856.
\textsuperscript{19} Wilkes-Barre Record, May 28, 1856.
\textsuperscript{20} May 24, 1856.
ing their readers of Sumner's "intemperate invective" and irresponsible statements.\(^{21}\)

These incidents were, of course, surface indications of the growing struggle for dominance in the federal government between the two sections of the United States. There were extremists on both sides, but between the abolitionists of the North and the "fire-eaters" of the South there was a large, if not quite so vociferous, body of moderate opinion. In the anti-slavery wing they were the "free-soilers" while the moderate apologists for slavery became advocates of "popular sovereignty." These two groups lent their influence to promoting measures calculated to avoid the pitfalls of extremism.

From 1856 to 1860 the Pennsylvania party newspapers were largely dominated by these two "center" factions. An important portion of the newspapers of the state did reject the "middle-of-the-road" policy and became "all-outers" for abolitionism, or for non-interference with Southern domestic institutions, but this latter element was facing a natural handicap in the free state of Pennsylvania. Meanwhile, the opposition to the administration forces was steadily adopting the mantle of Republicanism in which "free-soilism" had taken early root.\(^{22}\) The important task facing the Republicans in the state was to unite all the opposition to the Democratic party, a task which involved serious obstacles, since this opposition was a heterogeneous mass of free-soilers, old-line Whigs, Native Americans (Know-Nothings), disgruntled Democrats, and the embryo Republican party organization.\(^{23}\)

Thus the principal issue in Pennsylvania in 1856 was early recognized as that of free-soil versus "popular sovereignty."\(^{24}\) The free-soilers did not delay in launching their campaign. A national convention of "anti-Nebraska" men met in Pittsburgh on February 22, 1856 as a preliminary to a national nominating convention which was to be held later.\(^{25}\) In June the convention delegates assembled in Philadelphia, nominated John C. Frémont for the presidency, and erected a platform which included a free-soil

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\(^{24}\) Pittsburgh Daily Post, April 25, 1856.
\(^{25}\) A. W. Crandall, The Early History of the Republican Party (Boston, 1930), p. 44.
plank. Appeals were made to all those who disliked the administration's Kansas policy, and efforts were instituted to unite all the opposition under the standard of Republicanism. A previous attempt had been made to attract Know-Nothing adherents into Republican ranks so as to insure an "overwhelming defeat" for the "Slavery Democracy."

As was to be expected, Democratic papers did not view the proceedings of the Pittsburgh convention of February with much enthusiasm. They termed it a "sectional gathering," in which not a single slave state was represented. This, the sectional nature of the Republican party, was to be the key argument employed by the Democrats in the political contests for the next four years.

The Democrats faced their task of nominating a candidate and drafting a platform in May. With the approach of the convention, Pennsylvania newspapers of Democratic persuasion busied themselves in promoting the candidacy of the state's most prominent Democrat, James Buchanan. They reminded the voters of his intimate association with the patron saint of the party, Andrew Jackson, and "his standing clear from many recent disturbing issues." His subsequent selection by the Cincinnati Convention was hailed as a personal tribute to the man as well as to the state's long devotion to the Democratic party.

The convention at Cincinnati placed the party squarely on the "popular-sovereignty" plank. Party newspapers throughout the state approved of this action, deeming "popular sovereignty" as the "very foundation for all our republican institutions." The opposition, however, managed to insert a sour note by claiming that the South interpreted this plank to mean the extension of slavery into the territories.

23 Charles W. Johnson, Proceedings of the First Three Republican National Conventions of 1856-1864 (Minneapolis, 1893), p. 44.
27 Pittsburgh Dispatch, June 20, 1856.
29 Pittsburgh Daily Post, February 29, 1856.
30 Ibid., February 26, 1856.
31 Harrisburg Patriot, June 8, 1856; Philadelphia Public Ledger, June 7, 1856; Carlisle American Volunteer, June 12, 1856; Harrisburg Keystone, June 25, 1856.
32 Pittsburgh Daily Post, June 10, 14, 1856; Philadelphia Pennsylvanian, June 14, 1856.
33 Pittsburgh Dispatch, June 24, 1856.
And thus was the issue joined between free soilism and popular sovereignty. The offensive was undertaken immediately by Republican journals who launched an attack on Pierce’s policy, which they called the “Kansas iniquity.”6 The Kansas and Nebraska Act was termed “a breach of faith between the sections,” a measure carried by “a mousing scheming race of petty politicians.”7 The measure demonstrated how abjectly Congress bowed to the will of the “Slavocracy,” declared the Pittsburgh Gazette,8 and the issue was delineated as to whether slavery was a “state or national institution.”9 The influential Philadelphia North American, however, disavowed abolitionism in its editorial columns, thus reflecting the majority opinion expressed by Pennsylvania Republican editors.10

Forced to the defense of Buchanan and Pierce, Democratic newspapers denied that either the party or the nominee intended to impose slavery on any territory contrary to the wishes of its inhabitants.11 All the turmoil, declared they, could be explained by Republican desire for political agitation.12 One Democratic editor declared that the Republicans were putting the interests of three million Negroes before that of twenty-five million whites, and he added with irritation that Republican newspapers were giving their readers “Negro for breakfast, negro for dinner, negro for supper, negro every day in the week, Sundays not excepted—and Kansas, Kansas, Kansas perpetually, as a mere adjunct of negro-dom.”13 Another upstate Democratic journal observed that “present-day” beatification of the Missouri Compromise came strangely from Republicans who a few years before were characterizing it as “a covenant with death and an agreement with hell.”14

Although Kansas did not figure as largely in the 1856 contest in Pennsylvania as it was to do later, Buchanan’s margin of victory was so narrow that it indicated a growing dissatisfaction with

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64 *Ibid.*, June 20, 1856.
65 Philadelphia North American, August 2, 1856.
66 August 28, 1856.
67 Pittsburgh Dispatch, October 10, 1856.
68 November 1, 1856.
69 Harrisburg Patriot, July 15, 1856.
71 Pittsburgh Daily Post, June 9, 1856, August 11, 1856.
72 Doylestown Democrat, cited in Greensburg Democrat, July 22, 1856.
Democratic party policy in the state. A bare majority of 1,500 votes out of the 422,000 cast went to Buchanan.\(^4\) The severity of the Pennsylvania contest moved Democratic editors to reassure their readers that Buchanan would never sanction "radical abolitionism . . . in Kansas councils,"\(^4\) and that he would reflect the "conservative sentiment" of Pennsylvania.\(^4\)

The senatorial contest in the state legislature served as a vehicle for keeping alive the Kansas issue during the winter following the 1856 election. To the surprise and consternation of the Democrats, their candidate for the United States Senate, John W. Forney, was defeated by the opposition nominee, Simon Cameron. This was particularly significant in that the Democrats had a slight majority in the legislature. Opposition journals interpreted Cameron's success as evidence of Pennsylvania's preference for a "free Kansas and a protective tariff,"\(^6\) while Democrats charged that his election was purchased, since there was "nothing in his record to attract support other than for pecuniary reimbursement."\(^6\)

The Kansas controversy was prolonged and intensified by two events which occurred early in March 1857. The first of these was the accession of James Buchanan to the presidency, and it was assumed by Democratic editors that the White House now held a devotee of "popular sovereignty." The second event was the decision of the Supreme Court in regard to the famous Dred Scott case. This dictum of the highest tribunal produced an immediate storm of partisan debate.

The decision, which upheld the Southern side of the controversy, was greeted with contempt and indignation by Republican editors. One bewailed that "Slavery is triumphant!"\(^48\) The editor of the Pittsburgh Gazette was so stirred that he muddled his phraseology and described the decision as one of "an almost diabolical spirit [which] goes out of its way to protect Freedom at the expense of Slavery [sic]."\(^49\)

\(^43\) Buchanan's election has been interpreted as due to his conservative utterances which attracted conservative opinion unable to abide Frémont's radical support. See G. S. P. Kleeberg, *The Formation of the Republican Party* (New York: 1905), p. 83.
\(^44\) Harrisburg Keystone, December 24, 1856.
\(^45\) Lancaster Intelligencer, December 23, 1856.
\(^46\) Wilkes-Barre Record, January 14, 1857.
\(^47\) Philadelphia Pennsylvanian, January 17, 1856.
\(^48\) Wilkes-Barre Record, March 11, 1857.
\(^49\) March 7, 1857.
Democratic editorials defended the court as a body which, above all others in government, could be trusted. If it could not, it was asked, who can be? They accused the Republicans of not hesitating to “cast odium upon the highest and most sacred institutions of our government.” It was “Constitutional prejudice and mental weakness” that inspired these Republican attacks, as well as chagrin over having their platform removed. The editor of the Luzerne Union of Wilkes-Barre disdained to defend the legal or political implications of the decision and rejoiced that “The Constitution is triumphant! Abolitionism is in the dust.”

The Beginnings of Anti-Lecomptonism

Pennsylvania Republican journals did not allow Buchanan much time in office before they began to question his Kansas policy. One paper professed to see a departure from his pre-election pledges, those which had brought him victory in the state in 1856. The nomination of David Wilmot, of “Wilmot Proviso” fame, for governor by the Republicans renewed the debate. He was deemed the “logical candidate” by another opposition paper which appealed once again for a united opposition to the Democrats. The Democratic editors apparently sensed a Republican plan to focus the attention of Pennsylvania voters on the Kansas issue and proclaimed that “Our people are heartily sick of this everlasting slavery question.” The Democratic Pittsburgh Daily Post dismissed the issue with the thought that the Kansas and Nebraska Act had, in the face of “unrelenting hostility,” failed to produce the evils so freely predicted of it. John W. Forney's Philadelphia Press made its appearance in August 1857
and entered the lists with powerful argument. The true issue, an early Forney editorial declared, was whether “popular sovereignty,” as duly enacted, would be applied, or whether the Republican party would continue to encourage the “insurrectionary” Topeka government.

Democratic editors of the state took a firm stand for “popular sovereignty” during the spring and summer of 1857. They apparently had no idea that the Buchanan administration would fail to do likewise. The president had declared that the Kansas and Nebraska bill gave the “force of law to this elementary principle of self-government.” Although he ostensibly prepared to carry out his pledges, the action of the Lecompton Convention appeared to repudiate the Administration’s promises.

A cry of protest arose, not only from Republican ranks, but from many Northern Democrats as well. Douglas immediately announced his opposition. Robert J. Walker, the Buchanan-appointed governor of Kansas later resigned in protest. Democratic newspapers of the state reflected an early bewilderment. They apparently refused to believe that Buchanan would sanction the action of the Lecompton Convention. He had been misunderstood, declared Forney’s Press. But as the president made no move to disavow the action of the convention, Democratic editorial columns began to exhibit disagreement and uncertainty. Some, in their reluctance to give aid and comfort to the enemy, refused open criticism. Others followed the lead of Forney’s Philadelphia Press and asked searching questions of the president. They assumed, at least in their columns, that he would refuse to approve a pro-slavery Kansas.

Buchanan’s congressional message of December, 1857, clarified his stand on the controversy. The president denied that the Lecompton Convention had been bound by the Kansas and Nebraska

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James Buchanan, Works (J. B. Moore, ed.), X, 83.

Daniel W. Wilder, The Annals of Kansas (Topeka, 1875), pp. 140-146. The people were not to vote on the whole constitution, but only upon the slavery clause, thus, the “Constitution with slavery,” or the “Constitution without slavery.” It provided for the protection of slave property already existing in their territory with emancipation with compensation at owner’s consent.

October 31, 1857; November 3, 1857.

These included the Philadelphia Pennsylvanian, Bedford Gazette, Reading Gazette, and the Lebanon Advertiser.

Philadelphia Press, November 19, 30, 1857; December 2, 1857.
Act, and complained that too much ado was being made over Kansas when there were "far more important subjects for public consideration." This message brought an open break between Buchanan and Douglas. The administration press throughout the nation immediately read Douglas out of the party. It precipitated an open break among Pennsylvania Democrats as well, and the disillusionment of the anti-Lecompton Democratic editors paved the way for the schism which was to weaken party cohesion and bring a Republican victory in 1860.

Douglas was supported in his stand by an important portion of the Democratic press in Pennsylvania. Forney led the way. In fact, the development of "anti-Lecomptonism" in the state between 1857 and 1860 can be largely explained in terms of Forney and the influence of his newspaper. He lashed at the Buchanan administration with powerful editorial attacks. He indignantly denied, however, that he favored the "ridiculous farce, the Topeka Government." He waged this battle with very little aid from his party colleagues. For the most part they condemned him as a traitor to his party, and many editors, who had at first balked at Buchanan's course, now scampered back into the orthodox fold and denounced both Forney and Douglas in colorful language. Even Forney was not yet prepared to completely sever himself from the party, and the Press continued to profess adherence to "true Democratic principles." But Forney never wavered in his opposition to the administration's Kansas policy.

Naturally, Republican journals welcomed this split in Democratic ranks. They copied the denunciations of the administration which the anti-Lecompton newspapers were printing, using Forney's editorials at length. Forney's prestige and the pure potency of his argument assured him a wide hearing. They sniped away at Buchanan as "an imbecile, or at least a lunatic on the question

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*Richardson, op. cit., pp. 454-455.
*Philadelphia Press, December 15, 23, 1857; January February 18, 1858; March 8, 1858.
*Ibid., February 4, 1858.
*At one time or another the following Democratic papers were critical of Buchanan's Kansas policy: Pittsburgh Daily Post, Harrisburg Herald, Carlisle Volunteer, Wilkes-Barre Luzerne Union, and Harrisburg Keystone.
*Carlisle Volunteer, March 4, 1858; Wilkes-Barre Luzerne Union, March 3, 1858; Lewistown True Democrat, February 25, 1858.
*Philadelphia Press, April 14, 1858.
of slavery." Had John Adams or Alexander Hamilton dared promulgate "doctrines as monarchial . . . there would have been another revolution."

Out of this controversy, and because of it, the attention of Pennsylvanians was attracted to the senatorial contest in Illinois. There, Stephen A. Douglas, prominently identified with the Kansas issue, was engaging in a series of political debates with his Republican opponent, Abraham Lincoln. The Douglas-Buchanan break had encouraged Republicans everywhere, and there is evidence that Buchanan would have welcomed the defeat of Douglas in this contest. Forney immediately came out for Douglas, declaring that the issues impending in Illinois were identical with those in Pennsylvania. The Press was fulsome in its praise of the "Little Giant" and had a "Special Correspondent" to make the debate tour with the two Illinois senatorial aspirants. This correspondent sent a full account for the readers of the Press.

By the time Pennsylvanians turned again to their own fall elections, it was generally understood that "Lecomptonism" would constitute the principal issue. Republicans sought to profit by the general sympathy for free-soilism in the state, and Kansas became the moral issue with the tariff as the economic.

The result of the election of 1858 was a victory for the opposition. The defection of Forney, charges of infidelity and corruption, a united opposition, and general dissatisfaction with the Buchanan Kansas policy were contributing causes for this development. The Philadelphia Press interpreted the result as the "triumph of the Democratic principle," and "the defeat of the man [Buchanan] who was elected on it."

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72 Altoona Tribune, February 4, 1858.
74 Kleeberg, op. cit., p. 86.
75 John B. McMaster, History of the People of the United States (New York, 1914), VIII, 317-318.
76 Philadelphia Press, June 1, 1858; July 31, 1858.
79 Davis, op. cit., pp. 36-37.
80 Ibid. See, also, the Lebanon Advertiser, September 1, 1858.
81 October 12, 13, 1858.
Republican newspapers agreed in this interpretation. The Philadelphia *Inquirer* observed:

> If Mr. Buchanan had determined to destroy the Democratic party... he could not have pursued a better course. . . . His conduct has been the more remarkable, because from his long residence in this State, he must have known the sentiments of the people... favorable to protection and opposed to Lecompton.  

Administration journals blamed the defeat on disorganization in Democratic ranks. The disunity in the Democratic party meant that in the contest of 1859 there would be an advantage for the opposition if it could be united. Democratic editors recognized this threat and presented the issue as one of party obligation to sustain the president and administration. Some complied with reluctance. Forney, however, who was drifting toward an open espousal of Republicanism, refused to cease his advocacy of "popular sovereignty" in Kansas. When the Democratic governor of Pennsylvania, William F. Packer, who also had anti-Lecompton leanings, was rebuffed by his party's state convention in March 1859, Forney's patience was exhausted. He issued, through the *Press*, a call for a state-wide anti-Lecompton meeting to be held in Harrisburg in mid-April.

Republicans endeavored to make the most of the continued intra-party strife of the Democrats. One editor declared that Buchanan had "betrayed" his party in Pennsylvania. Packer was declared not wholly without error, but "his political sins are molehills, while Mr. Buchanan's are mountains." Others were certain that anti-Lecomptonism expressed the true Democratic doctrine in the state.

Anti-Lecomptonism furnished the opportunity for a consolidation of Pennsylvania opposition groups, and with national politics revolving around the personalities of Buchanan and Douglas, it was widely recognized that the 1859 elections were but prelim-

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90 October 15, 1858. This paper referred to "popular sovereignty" as "the Republican Cause" on October 14, 1858.
91 Wilkes-Barre *Luzerne Union*, February 23, 1859.
92 Philadelphia *Press*, January 10, 1859.
inaries to the important 1860 campaign. Douglas supporters busied themselves in securing newspaper support throughout the North. It was Forney and the Philadelphia Press that sounded the tocsin for “Douglas Democrats” in Pennsylvania. He was accused of succumbing to personal hatred of Buchanan but he continued to uphold the banner of Douglas.

Nevertheless, the Republicans again swept the state and ended, for the first time, the long Democratic domination of Pennsylvania. For the first time the party of Andrew Jackson had failed to rally from defeat. A united opposition was all that was necessary for the Republican capture of the 1860 electoral vote of Pennsylvania. The party press was hopeful. “If Mr. Buchanan is ever to have his eyes opened so as to see what the people of his own state think . . . now must be the time,” wrote one prominent opposition editor. Forney called it the “third lesson” for Buchanan. Opposition papers expressed a general confidence in the result of the impending campaign. Administration supporters explained the defeat of 1859 in terms of “apathy, treason, and a small poll.”

Editorial comment was soon to be occupied with the sensational news of the peculiar incident at Harper’s Ferry where John Brown and his little band had raised the standard of insurrection. Northern sympathy for Brown was confined, for the most part, to the abolitionist fringe, but many took the attitude of the Philadelphia Press which said:

Mr. Buchanan, himself, is more guilty in a moral sense . . . than poor old Brown. . . . If it was right in James Buchanan to force slavery upon a people, it was right in John Brown to force freedom on the South.

The orthodox Democratic journals of the state, however, blamed the affair on abolitionist and Republican propaganda. The Philadelphia Public Ledger remarked:

It is not surprising that such civil disturbances as these should take place. For years past war has been preached against the Southern institutions . . . and every effort has

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89 July 11, 1859.
90 Harrisburg Patriot, September 7, 14, 1859.
92 Philadelphia Press, October 12, 1859.
93 Pittsburgh True Press, October 15, 1859.
94 Lebanon Advertiser, October 19, 1859.
95 November 7, 1859.
been made... to awaken sectional strife and plunge the country into civil war.96

But the Republican journals disavowed abolitionism, although they continued to express some sympathy for Brown, and declared that the administration, which had sowed the Kansas wind, was now reaping the Virginia whirlwind.97 The Pennsylvania State Journal called slavery "the great national ulcer, which 'breaks upon the surface' at Harper's Ferry."98 Forney summed up the newspaper comment of the time in the Press:

No recent occurrence has elicited so much editorial comment from the American press as the outbreak at Harper's Ferry. Most of the remarks made, however, are chiefly designed to give it an important political bearing. A large number of Democratic papers evidently suppose that it is well calculated to damage the future prospects of the Republican party, and, acting upon this impression, are determined to make the most of it. The Republican journals are earnestly endeavoring to ward off these supposed injurious influences, and to draw a broad line of distinction between Brown and those who sympathize with him, and the Republican party of the country.99

The 1860 elections found other issues than popular sovereignty versus free soilism dominating the public mind. However, the candidacy of Douglas was opposed by the Southern wing of the Democratic party in view of his insistence on his plan of "popular sovereignty." This sectional breach was widened and complicated in Pennsylvania because of Buchanan's hold upon the state party organization. Forney was elected as Clerk of the House by a Republican dominated House of Representatives, further angering the Democratic stalwarts, who observed that "He will prove a useful instrument as long as he is well rewarded."100 He

96 October 10, 1859. See, also, the Lewistown True Democrat, November 3, 1859; the Lebanon Advertiser, October 26, 1859. 97 Lancaster Examinen. and Herald, October 26, 1859. 98 Cited in Bedford Gazette, November 4, 1859. 99 October 27, 1859. Forney's comment on the "American press" is very applicable to Pennsylvania newspapers. 100 Harrisburg Patriot, February 4, 1860.
was charged, not without some foundation, with "rapidly drifting toward flat-footed Republicanism."\textsuperscript{101}

The Press, however, remained loyal to Douglas' aspirations and with the assistance of the Pittsburgh \textit{Daily Post} drummed up support in the state for the Illinois senator.\textsuperscript{102} When the Democratic Convention at Charleston split over the Yancey revolt, many Pennsylvania Democratic papers expressed their preference for Douglas over the Southern candidate, John C. Breckinridge.\textsuperscript{103} The largest portion of the party press, however, denounced Forney as "that Judas of the Philadelphia \textit{Press}," and continued to appeal for unity against that "ultra of the ultraist kind on abolition," Abraham Lincoln.\textsuperscript{104}

Douglas seems to have been feared more than Breckinridge among Pennsylvania Republican papers during the 1860 campaign. At least he was denounced with more intensity than his Southern opponent. Typical of the assault on him was that of the Lancaster \textit{Examiner and Herald}:

\begin{quote}
Perhaps the most ravenous and corrupt of the factions is Douglas and his followers, who have been deprived of their share of plunder under Mr. Buchanan's administration. Under which King do Pennsylvania Democrats expect to serve, Douglas or Breckinridge.\textsuperscript{105}
\end{quote}

As the campaign progressed, the Kansas question was subordinated to that of slavery anywhere and the protective tariff. Disunion, sectionalism, and secession became the topics for editorial debate, along with "protectionism." But the first three were the offspring of the original dispute over Kansas and popular sovereignty.

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\textsuperscript{101} Pittsburgh \textit{Evening Chronicle}, February 7, 1860. \\
\textsuperscript{102} Philadelphia \textit{Press}, October 26, 1859; Pittsburgh \textit{Daily Post}, February 28, 1860, March 21, 1860. \\
\textsuperscript{104} Lebanon \textit{Advertiser}, May 23, 1860. \\
\textsuperscript{105} June 27, 1860.
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