Historians and the participants themselves have frequently attempted to reconstruct Andrew Jackson's struggle with the Bank of the United States. Roger B. Taney, Martin Van Buren, William J. Duane, and Amos Kendall each offered his version of Jackson's veto of the recharter bill and of his subsequent withdrawal of federal money deposited in the Bank. These reminiscences, together with the Jackson, Nicholas Biddle, and Van Buren correspondence, are the most significant original sources upon which study of the Jackson administration is based. To these accounts, a new source has been added, a group of confidential notes kept by Levi Woodbury during 1833 and 1834 when he was Secretary of the Navy. A power in the New Hampshire Democratic Party, Woodbury had been both Governor and United States Senator before Jackson appointed him to the Navy Department in May, 1831. In these jottings, found buried in a notebook of his moral reflections, Woodbury candidly reveals relations within Jackson's administration during this period. Inimical to the Bank of the

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United States, and unfriendly to Van Buren, Louis McLane, and Lewis Cass, Woodbury even hits Jackson with some of his barbs. These comments, made when significant events were occurring, serve as a valuable refinement for the Van Buren, Kendall, and Taney memoirs.

The Woodbury manuscript deals primarily with the impact of the bank struggle upon Jackson’s cabinet. Few Presidents have had more difficulty in finding, appointing, and retaining official advisers than Jackson, who was driven to unusual devices to recruit and retain loyal secretaries. After his first cabinet disbanded because of the Peggy Eaton affair and his dispute with Vice-President Calhoun, Jackson made every effort to keep his second cabinet intact. As only Attorney General Roger B. Taney consistently supported his attacks on the Bank, Jackson dealt cautiously with his other subordinates, allowing them to dissent from his policies. Although reluctant to support the President, the executive officers strove to influence him. Jackson’s greatest difficulties came from his Secretaries of the Treasury, on whom he relied for assistance in the Bank War. During his term of office Jackson appointed five men to this position—Samuel D. Ingham, Louis McLane, William J. Duane, Roger B. Taney, and Levi Woodbury. As Secretary of the Treasury during the remainder of Jackson’s presidency and for all of Van Buren’s administration, Woodbury harassed the Bank of the United States, favored the independent treasury plan, supported hard money, and opposed distribution of the surplus. In 1841 he returned to the Senate, and four years later James K. Polk appointed him to the Supreme Court. A contender for the Democratic nomination in 1848 and considered a strong possibility for 1852, Woodbury died in 1851.

4 John Spencer Bassett, ed., Correspondence of Andrew Jackson (Washington, 1926–1935), IV, V, passim. During his eight years in office, Jackson had five Secretaries of the Treasury, four Secretaries of State, three Secretaries of War, three Secretaries of the Navy, three Attorneys Generals, and two Postmaster Generals.

5 Ibid., V, 143, 186, 212, 272.

6 Other members of the cabinet in 1833 were Louis McLane, Secretary of State; William J. Duane, Secretary of the Treasury; Lewis Cass, Secretary of War; Levi Woodbury, Secretary of the Navy; and William T. Barry, Postmaster General.

Illuminating the inner workings of the cabinet, especially the role played by Van Buren and such controversial figures as Taney, Duane, and McLane, Woodbury's comments give further insight into the motives of the men who destroyed the Bank of the United States and founded the Democratic Party.

Brooklyn College
Ari Hoogenboom
Temple University
Herbert Ershkowitz

Sunday 22d. Sept [ember] 1833

Have improved health by much travel the last 6 months—having been in every state of the union except Vermont & in all those North of the Potomac & East of Alleghanies 2 times with above exception—making over 6000 miles.

Have been more temperate in food & drink. Have conformed in clothing more to feelings—room in these respects for further improvement.

Find my pecuniary concerns in better condition than expected.

The most essential changes now are more abstinence in food—more attention to warmth, more kindness in manner to all—less anger & quickness on any occasion—less vexation at any disappointment—more regard in all things to goodness & usefulness—less anxious as to fortune here below.

How much Duane has suffered by closeness & vexness & haste in answers! My comfort & opinions prevented President from selecting me as Sec[re]t[ar]y of Treas[ur]y & Taney's ambition to go into office, though he professed at first to hold it only for me after Cong[ress] met & deposits removed.¹⁰

William John Duane (1780–1865), son of William Duane, ardent Jeffersonian and editor of the Philadelphia Aurora, was a prominent Pennsylvania Democrat whom Jackson appointed Secretary of the Treasury in May, 1833, upon the assumption Duane would agree to withdraw federal deposits from the Bank of the United States.

Roger Brooke Taney (1777–1864) of Maryland, Jackson's Attorney General from July, 1831, until September, 1833, when he succeeded Duane in the Treasury Department, was the most formidable opponent of the Bank of the United States in the cabinet.

On Sept. 21 and 22, 1833, Duane wrote Jackson four letters, which Jackson considered "equally offensive, containing palpable untruths and misrepresentations," in which Duane refused both to remove the federal deposits from the Bank and to resign. Jackson removed him on Sept. 23 and on the same day appointed Taney Secretary of the Treasury. Bassett, V, 204–207. On Oct. 1 Taney commenced removing federal money from the Bank of the United States.
Must be more literary in taste—& less thoughtful of society & fashion.

Friday—10th—January 1834.

It has become quite manifest, that Duane's appointment was brought about by McLane's recommendation to President early as December 1832 & I think he consulted Van Buren & that both combined to set me aside & select him lest advance me to more power & popularity without promoting the political or personal projects of either: but would secure Pennsylvania to Van Buren as he thought & secure influence of 2 Departments to McLane as he thought—& prevent removal of deposits or a change of his own policy in Treasury. McLane & Van Buren cheated each other.

When last Summer I told McLane that the President apologized for not promoting me to the Treasury as so popular in present place &c., McLane looked & expressed doubt & wonder. He implied, that the President had no such intent, which was true or meant to prejudice me regarding President. He said Van Buren had no concern in Duane's appointment—but came from President himself. This was to hold me to Van Buren. The President has since said it was McLane's recommendation of Duane that caused his selection. When Duane retired & Cass & McLane were inclined to follow him or to pretend they would, the President consulted me as to filling their places: but afterwards rather conceded to retain them by letting Blair say he tolerated a difference of opinion on this point. Since that he feels not inclined to tolerate it longer, and Cass

11 Louis McLane (1786-1857) of Delaware was Jackson's Minister to Great Britain, Secretary of the Treasury from 1831 until May, 1833, and then Secretary of State, in which capacity he served until June, 1834. McLane was the most conspicuous cabinet champion of the Bank.

12 Vice-President Martin Van Buren (1782-1862), amiable, shrewd, and cautious, and with what J. Franklin Jameson calls a "perfect bedside manner" toward his chief, never lost Jackson's confidence.

13 Lewis Cass (1782-1866) of Michigan, a powerful political figure in the Old Northwest, was Jackson's Secretary of War from 1831-1836.

14 Francis Preston Blair (1791-1876), a Kentucky journalist, moved to Washington at Jackson's behest and in 1830 began publishing the Globe, an administration organ. He was an ardent and effective opponent of the Bank and of nullification.
has come in fully in profession, but McL[ane] not. The last has influence to postpone thro[ugh] Donaldson15 & Van Buren an expose in Globe of their differences and a committal of Van B[uren]. Been printed a week & yet delayed. I am convinced, that Van B[uren] is playing double, either to promote own views hereafter or from personal regard to McL[ane].

Been a game all Winter in which McL[ane] & Cass are Van Buren's confidants & not Tan[e]y or me. I can see that Butler16 has his confidence—also—but is timid & inefficient as a politician. Van B[uren] on eve[nin]g of 8th Janua[ry] wished me to consult with Cass & B[utler] to delay that public[ation] & s[ai]d he had seen them about it.

Donaldson [Donelson] & Lewis17 are with McL[ane] & here[,] last not now called of the Kitchen Cabinet. He [McLane] aids old Fed[eralist]s in all things where he dares.


15 Andrew Jackson Donelson (1799-1871) was named for and raised by his uncle, whom he accompanied to Washington and served as private secretary.
16 Benjamin Franklin Butler (1795-1858) of New York was Van Buren's close political associate and former law partner. Jackson appointed him Attorney General in the fall of 1833 on Van Buren's recommendation.
17 William Berkeley Lewis (1784-1866) of Nashville, Tennessee, was a lifelong friend of Jackson, a warm supporter of Van Buren, a member of the "Kitchen Cabinet," and Second Auditor of the Treasury Department. Tactful and conciliatory, he disagreed with Jackson on the Bank issue but never lost his friendship.
18 Probably Benjamin Silliman (1779-1864) who was Professor of Chemistry at Yale and on cordial terms with the Jackson administration. We are indebted to John McDonough, Reference Department, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, for his help in substantiating the identity of Benjamin Silliman, John Robb, and Robert Mills, and for identifying Joseph Sebastian Cabot.
19 Joseph Sebastian Cabot (1796-1874) of Salem, Mass., was a bank commissioner, president of both the Asiatic National Bank and the Salem Savings Bank, ran as a Democratic candidate for Congress, and in 1833 was a member of the board of commissioners "to carry into effect the convention between the U. S. and the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies."
decide between them Cass allowed Robb\textsuperscript{20} instead of Mills\textsuperscript{21} as Superintendent at West Point. Tried to have me not go East\textsuperscript{22} & so did McLane. So as to show off Cass to East & keep me back & down. But President had invited me in March & I reminded him of it & he requested my attendance. On whole route an attempt to put Cass forward—he held out at first not to go beyond New York but went through. Opposition courted him at Norwich, Providence, Boston &c. countenanced by Van [Buren] though remonstrated with—as had another object to give him popularity for Vice President—and held a pledge not to run as President vs. him. In New England or at least New Hampshire I should have rode in carriage with President to show consultation & introduce him &c. &c.

I learned too, that McLane tried probably a year ago to prejudice President vs. Taney & me—as we desired delay in South Carolina till some overt act occurred.\textsuperscript{23} But McLane's federal principles led to [sic] him to quick & strong measures—& he wished the vanity of writing the Message on that point, which was sent after the Proclamation.\textsuperscript{24}

Van Buren though urged has not induced McLane to support removal, but has travelled with him—given him confidence—and now seeks to sustain him. Van [Buren] has a letter urging postponement

\textsuperscript{20} John Robb was appointed Chief Clerk in the War Department in 1831. In the fall of 1833 he was appointed Superintendent of the Springfield Armory, where he remained until the election of William H. Harrison. Robb was born in Baltimore and served under Jackson at New Orleans.

\textsuperscript{21} Probably Robert Mills (1781–1855) who was an architect and engineer, a designer of Washington monuments in both Baltimore and the Capital, an ardent Jacksonian, and a humanitarian reformer. Sylvanus Thayer did resign as Superintendent of the United States Military Academy in early 1833, but his successor was Rene E. DeRussy.

\textsuperscript{22} In June, 1833, Jackson accompanied by some cabinet members and friends journeyed to Philadelphia, New York, and New England.

\textsuperscript{23} This passage refers to the nullification controversy. A South Carolina convention nullified the Tariff Acts of 1828 and 1832 on Nov. 24, 1832. On Dec. 10, 1832, Jackson's Proclamation to the People of South Carolina vigorously attacked nullification.

\textsuperscript{24} The following note in Levi Woodbury's handwriting was found on a loose slip of paper in his "Sundry Exercises," or Moral Self-Examinations, Resolutions, and Intimate Memoranda, January 19, 1823–March 9, 1834," Box 29, Levi Woodbury Papers: "McLane attempts to prejudice President vs. those, who dissuaded going to Congress for a law till new overt act by South Carolina, as McLane knew my views more democratic than his & wanted to get before public his message on that subject."
to January—written after he for 3 months had been trying to have them removed early & got President so excited he would listen to no longer delay. If Van B[uren] in the Spring had been firm vs. an early removal it would have been delayed longer. Tan[e]y once flin[ch]ed & doubted in Summer—the majority vs. him was so strong.

If Van B[uren] urges another appointme[nt] like Butler's from the North he loses the whole South—he has by that appointme[nt] given himself no real strength here, tho[ugh] got a zealous admirer. He is now playing a game for leading men—even for Webster—& not a game for great principles—the mass—& the party. He is too selfish & too timid & too temporizing. President now expects he said today a resolve to restore deposits will pass & Tan[e]y be rejected & if last happens desires me to succeed him. I doubt if he is not wrong in both expectations. Many vote on previous question who dare not vote for resolution unless something more occurs to sustain them. What can Senate gain by rejecting Tan[e]y? Nothing, unless the majority of House of Representatives votes to return deposits, one depends on the other.

No well digested system of operation here by President, Cabinet, or his friends in Congress and no watchful, prompt & plentiful writer or Editor for the Globe to aid Blair & sustain Administration at every point & under all attacks & to return attacks on all vulnerable points. Unless Providence watched over this country & extricated it from troubles the sound policy of those in power would not long preserve it in prosperity.

Van B[uren] is either too confident in own strength or wishes to direct all or be thought to do it; & hence no arrangements made or if made, imparted to all.

President shuns consulting all, as he is so military & dislikes councils of War & Cabinets. Never adopted last for advice till broke up first Cabinet & public opinion favor[ed] Cabinet meetings & urged on him by us.

25 Daniel Webster (1782-1852), Whig Senator from Massachusetts, was a champion of the Bank.

26 Jackson was right. Senate resolutions censuring the Treasury Department and Jackson for removing the deposits passed on Mar. 28, 1834; the Senate on June 24, 1834, rejected Taney as Secretary of the Treasury, and Jackson appointed Woodbury to his place.
Van B[uren] and McLane are both so Aristocratic in habits & in social intercourse, as not to be personally popular beyond their little click, or set, or circle & both shun general conferences for advice &c.


I do not see how he is to be beaten unless Ph[ilip P.] Barbour27 is brought out & carries South with some of North. J[ohn] McLean28 cannot or Clay,29 or Leigh30 or Webster or Calhoun31 or Johnson.32 The last has popularity enough but not principles fixed or elevated intellect & acquirements enough.

Saturday, 11th. [January] 1834

I called on Tan[e]ly & found Forsyth33 with him & T[aney] s[aid] before exchanging a word with him he was engaged to see Mr. V[an Buren] at 4—and it was 4 now, (tho[ugh] in fact only ½ past 3) & must excuse him & I s[aid] yes & walked off & he entered carr[iage] & drove off without asking my business or inviting me to call again. He blushed some & I called at once on Blair & found that Tan[e]ly had got alarmed that publishing the article as to Cabinet would defeat his ulterior views as to drive McL[ane] out of Cabinet & cause restoration of deposits & his own rejection. That he T[aney] had flinched & wished article postponed, tho[ugh] got up by him to

27 Philip Pendleton Barbour (1783–1841) of Virginia was a states rights advocate who, though opposed to nullification, conceded the right of secession. Jackson appointed him United States District Judge for Eastern Virginia in 1830 and to the Supreme Court in 1836.

28 John McLean (1785–1861) of Ohio, an efficient Postmaster General under James Monroe and John Quincy Adams, was appointed by Jackson to the Supreme Court in 1829 and is chiefly renowned for his dissent in the Dred Scott case.

29 Henry Clay (1777–1852), Senator from Kentucky and champion of both the Bank and protection.

30 Benjamin Watkins Leigh (1781–1849) was sent by Virginia in 1833 to persuade South Carolina to abandon nullification. In February, 1834, he became a Senator, opposed Jackson, and advocated the restoration of federal deposits in the Bank.

31 John C. Calhoun (1782–1850), Senator from South Carolina.

32 Richard Mentor Johnson (1780–1850) was a Congressman from Kentucky from 1829–1837 and Vice-President from 1837–1841.

33 John Forsyth (1780–1841), Senator from Georgia (1829–1834), strongly supported Jackson in both the Bank war and the nullification controversy. In July, 1834, Forsyth became Jackson's Secretary of State, and he served Van Buren in the same capacity.
drive McLane out or bring him into support, which last was un-
likely.

Van Buren professes to be in favor of publication to Blair; but in
truth thro’ T[aney] & Pre[side]nt & me is trying to defeat it. 
Wants every thing non committal till he sees how majority is. 

Election of Tazewell in Virginia has frightened both. Pre[side]nt says Southard’s Speech has offended nullifiers & money pres-
sure so relieved that things look better.

I am almost convinced Van Buren & McLane mean in some
way to sacrifice me, & have from the first, unless I am wholly 
tributary to them.

I will stick to principles & to party, civility, resignation, duty.

34 Littleton Waller Tazewell (1774–1860) had supported Jackson for President in 1828
and opposed nullification. He was, however, a states rights man, opposed coercion of South
Carolina, and attacked Jackson’s Proclamation on Nullification. He was elected Governor of
Virginia on Jan. 7, 1834.

35 Samuel Lewis Southard (1787–1842) was Secretary of the Navy under Monroe and
John Quincy Adams and in 1832 served as Whig Governor of New Jersey. While Governor
he vigorously attacked nullification. He was elected to the United States Senate in February,
1833, and on Jan. 8 and 10, 1834, he made a long anti-Jackson speech opposing removal of the
deposits.