

Old Buck's Lieutenant: Glancy Jones, James Buchanan, and the Antebellum Northern Democracy

ABSTRACT: Partisan relationships have always been fundamental to American politics. In antebellum Pennsylvania the personal and political partnership of Democrats James Buchanan and Jehu Glancy Jones was absolutely critical to state and national events. While much scholarship exists on Buchanan, few historians have examined the life of Jones, a man of undeniable importance to Buchanan's rise to the presidency, the passage of now-infamous antebellum legislation, and the fracturing of the Democratic Party. By studying Jones's career, we can better appreciate the role of political underlings, dispel myths about the motives and principles of antebellum Democrats, and clarify the links between state and national politics.

“THE DEMOCRACY OVERTHROWN!” announced the *Milwaukee Sentinel* on October 18, 1858. “The President has suffered a most annihilating defeat.” Not only did Democrats go down to crushing losses across the North in the fall 1858 elections, but President Buchanan's own “lieutenant,” Jehu Glancy Jones of Pennsylvania's Eighth District, was also handily bested by a Republican upstart. The next day, the *Sentinel* explained that Jones had been Buchanan's “right hand man” in Congress, “in consequence of which he suffered a most humiliating defeat at the late election in Pennsylvania, in what has hitherto been looked upon as one of the strongest Democratic Districts in the Northern States.” Even a chaplain of the US Senate was gratified by the returns, denouncing, in a letter to the governor of Virginia, both the Buchanan administration and “that King of *Asses* Jehu Glancy Jones.”¹

¹“The Democracy Overthrown!” *Milwaukee Sentinel*, Oct. 18, 1858; “Appointment of J. Glancy Jones,” *Milwaukee Sentinel*, Oct. 19, 1858; Henry Clay Dean to Henry Wise, Nov. 11, 1858, Henry Clay Dean Letter, single folder, no box, Henry Clay Dean Collection, Chicago Historical Society.

Why such vitriol for Jehu Glancy Jones, a Keystone Democrat largely forgotten by history? The balding and paunchy Jones, known simply as Glancy, was James Buchanan's political underboss of the antebellum Pennsylvania Democratic Party. Not only were Buchanan and Jones close personal friends, but theirs was also an important political partnership. It resulted in Buchanan's rise to the presidency and the passage of disastrously divisive Congressional legislation. Jones assisted Buchanan in running the state machine in the 1840s and 1850s. When Buchanan was appointed minister to the Court of St. James's in 1853, Jones ran the Pennsylvania Democracy in his stead. Buchanan, in turn, orchestrated Jones's election to the House of Representatives, where he acted as Old Buck's most trusted agent. Jones solicited crucial Northern votes for the Kansas-Nebraska Act in 1854; worked with the Southern party bosses to ensure Buchanan's presidential nomination in 1856; and led House Democratic forces in 1858 to achieve passage of the notorious Lecompton Constitution of Kansas, which would force slavery on an unwilling population. Jones paid dearly for his service to the Slave Power, the term used by contemporaries and historians alike to describe the national political domination by Southern enslavers. His defeat in the 1858 elections was widely considered a serious rebuke to the president and a sign that the Northern Democracy was in serious trouble. If President Buchanan's lieutenant was not safe from voter retribution, who was? Democratic electoral defeats in 1858 signaled the rapid decline of the party of Jefferson and Jackson and an electoral crisis for the United States. Within two years an antislavery Republican was elected to the presidency, and the nation was plunged into civil war.

Studying Jones's career serves four purposes. First, we can better appreciate the role of personal relationships in antebellum politics. Jones may seem just one among hundreds of members of Congress in the 1850s, but he was intimately involved in the passage of momentous legislation and the rise of an enormously important president. Jones's ascent was due to his relationship with Buchanan, and Buchanan's success, in turn, was due in large measure to the efforts of Jones. Second, Jones's career reminds us not to be too focused on presidents and famous orators at the expense of the politicians and wire-pullers who made legislation and policy possible. It is easy to attribute political developments to Buchanan or to such towering figures as Stephen Douglas, but they were working with teams of important people. This is not to say, of course, that the "giants" of the antebellum era do not deserve a great deal of attention, but focusing on them oversimpli-

fies the issues and events and obscures the real mechanics of legislation and party operations. Third, Jones's career demonstrates that not all antebellum Democrats were romantic champions of the laboring masses, as some historians have asserted.² Instead, we see careful partisan manipulators and well-financed machines dedicated to maintaining local political elites and national minority rule. Finally, investigating Jones's partisan activities provides much-needed insight into the operations and machinations of the young Democratic Party, as well as the nature of "doughfaceism" (a term used to describe Northerners who supported slavery). Democratic doughfaces like Jones, it will be shown, not only aided and facilitated proslavery policies but also held controversial antidemocratic, minority-rule principles. Understanding doughfaces is critical to understanding the sectional crises that led to disunion.

Nevertheless, few scholars have ever heard of Jehu Glancy Jones, let alone studied his career and his impact on antebellum politics. Often relegated to footnotes or Congressional lists in appendices, Jones gets only passing reference in the grand narrative march to the Civil War. Equally disappointing, his role in the rise of James Buchanan—a man of undeniable importance—has also been overlooked. All the familiar books on the "coming of the Civil War" suffer the same disregard for forgotten "Glancy." Only in studies of local and state politics, such as John Coleman's *The Disruption of the Pennsylvania Democracy* (1975), or of the Democratic Party itself, namely Roy Nichols's *The Disruption of the American Democracy* (1948), does Jones get his due as a shrewd political operator and key party leader. Otherwise, Jones is lost in Buchanan's shadow. There has been only one biography, *The Life and Public Services of J. Glancy Jones*, published by a relative in 1910. The two volumes are a mix of edited letters and apologetics, more concerned with placing blame for "the negro problem" than exploring the nuances of antebellum partisanship.³

In monographs that address the 1850s and the causes of the Civil War, Northern Democrats are often deemed less significant than the rise of the Republican Party, the collapse of the Whigs, or the course of Southern secession. David Potter's *The Impending Crisis, 1848–1861* (1976), is prob-

² See Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., *The Age of Jackson* (New York, 1945); Sean Wilentz, *Chants Democratic: New York City and the Rise of the American Working Class* (New York, 1984); Sean Wilentz, *The Rise of American Democracy: Jefferson to Lincoln* (New York, 2005).

³ John F. Coleman, *The Disruption of the Pennsylvania Democracy, 1848–1860* (Harrisburg, PA, 1975); Roy Franklin Nichols, *The Disruption of American Democracy* (New York, 1948); Charles Henry Jones, *The Life and Public Services of J. Glancy Jones*, 2 vols. (Philadelphia, 1910), 1:ix.

ably the best known and most frequently cited of this genre, but Potter is hopelessly infatuated with Southern grandees and seems bent on justifying secession and placing blame for the war on abolitionists. His work offers a useful starting point in understanding the events of the 1850s, but it in no way provides a fair assessment of the political issues and developments of the decade. William Freehling's masterful two-volume study of secession and antebellum politics, *The Road to Disunion* (1990 and 2007), is crucial to our understanding of the causes of the Civil War, but it is primarily concerned with Southerners. Likewise, *The Political Crisis of the 1850s* (1978), by Michael Holt, is focused on the ethnocultural dynamics of the sectional crisis rather than the centrality of slavery; Northern Democrats play only a supporting role in his controversial interpretation.⁴

In more recent years, attention has begun to shift away from the "crisis" approach to more expansive studies of prewar American politics and political culture. In 1983 Jean Baker published *Affairs of Party: The Political Culture of Northern Democrats in the Mid-Nineteenth Century*. Fascinated by the concept of "political culture," Baker eschews a study of party machinery in favor of investigating the social-cultural links between partisan identity and community. While she makes some interesting observations about Democratic racism and party loyalty, she does not specifically address either the actions of Northern Democrats or their policies. Political history enjoyed a revival in the 2000s, and several important works on antebellum partisanship have been published. These include Leonard Richards's *The Slave Power: The Free North and Southern Domination, 1780–1860* (2000), Jonathan Earle's *Jacksonian Antislavery and the Politics of Free Soil, 1824–1854* (2004), and Nicole Etcheson's *Bleeding Kansas: Contested Liberty in the Civil War Era* (2004). However, there is still much work to be done on Northern Democrats such as Jehu Glancy Jones.⁵

In addition to the historiographic gaps, there are significant interpretative differences over how to treat Northern Democrats. Until recently,

⁴ David M. Potter, *The Impending Crisis, 1848–1861* (New York, 1976); William W. Freehling, *The Road to Disunion*, vol. 1, *Secessionists at Bay, 1776–1854* (New York, 1991), and vol. 2, *Secessionists Triumphant, 1854–1861* (New York, 2007); Michael F. Holt, *The Political Crisis of the 1850s* (Hoboken, NJ, 1978).

⁵ Jean H. Baker, *Affairs of Party: The Political Culture of Northern Democrats in the Mid-Nineteenth Century* (Ithaca, NY, 1983); Leonard L. Richards, *The Slave Power: The Free North and Southern Domination, 1780–1860* (Baton Rouge, LA, 2000); Jonathan H. Earle, *Jacksonian Antislavery and the Politics of Free Soil, 1824–1854* (Chapel Hill, NC, 2004); Nicole Etcheson, *Bleeding Kansas: Contested Liberty in the Civil War Era* (Lawrence, KS, 2004).

historians enamored with compromise have celebrated Northerners, such as Buchanan and Jones, who labored to maintain the Union by appeasing Southern demands. To these historians, the Civil War was a cataclysmic event that could have, and should have, been avoided. Thus, giving in to white Southerners on proslavery legislation was a worthwhile endeavor because it staved off disunion. Moreover, Americans in general seem attached to the notion of compromise as the highest good, since it implies that they can agree on fundamental values and find common ground on all issues. Rejecting the compromise paradigm forces us to acknowledge some very disturbing things about the American past, namely that the Slave Power was real and that the United States was dominated by a powerful minority built on human torture, bondage, and murder. As scholars such as Eric Walther, Manisha Sinha, Walter Johnson, and Ed Baptist have shown, the sheer brutality and monomaniacal mentality of the planter elite rivaled that of the Nazis.⁶ How could there possibly have been compromise with such a monstrous group? To discard the compromise ideal is to confront the fact that the United States was, for a significant part of its history, a minority-rule nation controlled by murderous maniacs. Unsettling indeed.

If, however, we see the Civil War as a glorious moment wherein the majority of Americans rose up to defeat the enslaver elites and set millions of people free, then our understanding of antebellum appeasers changes dramatically. Then, men like Buchanan and Jones appear to be abettors and tools of the Slave Power; their willingness to spread slavery, increase Southern supremacy, and postpone a civil war then seem despicable and shameful. Put another way, the longer the Civil War was delayed, the longer millions of people were kept in torturous bondage, and the longer the United States remained a minority-rule nation. The present essay takes the more critical approach, viewing Northern Democrats who pursued a proslavery agenda as willing, willful agents of the Slave Power. Jehu Glancy Jones was not an enslaver, nor was he a Southerner, but his calculated actions in the interests of slavery and the slave states nevertheless warrants the label “proslavery.”

Jones’s rise to political power was unusual, to say the least. Many Northern Democrats, such as Jesse Bright of Indiana, Daniel Dickinson

⁶ Eric Walther, *The Fire-Eaters* (Baton Rouge, 1992); Manisha Sinha, *The Counterrevolution of Slavery: Politics and Ideology in Antebellum South Carolina* (Chapel Hill, 2000); Walter Johnson, *River of Dark Dreams: Slavery and Empire in the Cotton Kingdom* (Cambridge, MA, 2013); Edward Baptist, *The Half Has Never Been Told: Slavery and the Making of American Capitalism* (New York, 2014).

of New York, and William Richardson of Illinois, were born to hardscrabble families and advanced themselves through determination, merit, ruthlessness, and chicanery. Jones, on the other hand, was privileged, reticent, and devout. Born in 1811 to a family of wealthy Pennsylvania landowners and Episcopal ministers, he grew up not on the rough-and-tumble frontier but in the beautiful Conestoga Valley. Studious and intelligent, he rose quickly in his chosen profession, the clergy. In 1831, at age twenty, he completed his theology training in Cincinnati; he returned to the Keystone State the following year to marry the daughter of a prominent family. His first assignments were to small congregations in southern New Jersey, then, in 1838, to the wilds of north Florida. He rose to prominence in the diocese but grew tired of his duties and decided that law was more to his liking. Early in 1841, Jones withdrew from the ministry, moved to neighboring Georgia, and joined the bar at twenty-nine years old. He worked for a time in the Peach Tree State, then in Elkton, Maryland, before settling in Easton, Pennsylvania, where he quickly became involved in local Democratic politics.⁷

Absent definitive primary evidence, we can only surmise that it was during the Pennsylvanian's extended stay in the slave states of Florida, Georgia, and Maryland that he developed his proslavery principles and devotion to the Democratic Party. Jones exhibited no qualms about ministering to his slave-owning congregations, and, like most white Northerners, he may have held white supremacist values long before his trek southward. More importantly, his decision to become active in the party of Andrew Jackson and Martin Van Buren in the midst of Indian removal, the gag rule debates, the burning of antislavery petitions by Democratic postmasters, mob violence by Democratic partisans, the Seminole Wars, and the *Amistad* trial is telling. Whether in Pennsylvania or Georgia, Jones did not live in a vacuum. Even if he personally was not a supporter of black slavery, his actions on behalf of a proslavery Democratic Party signal that he was at least tolerant of such views, and his contemporaries recognized him as such. His "sound constitutional views on the sectional question," for instance, were celebrated by leading enslavers such as Howell Cobb and Alexander Stephens. "When you remember that it is in the support and defence of the constitutional rights of our section of the country that Mr. Jones will be engaged," wrote Cobb and Stephens to Georgia Democrats, "we feel assured that you will concur with us, not only in approving his course, but in the expression of our appreciation."⁸ We may not have all

⁷ C. H. Jones, *Life of Jones*, 1:1, 10, 50–51, 54–55, 58–59, 62–67, 71, 76–107.

⁸ J. F. Dowdell et al. to Georgia Democrats, July 2, 1856, in C. H. Jones, *Life of Jones*, 1:343–44.

of Jones's words, but we do have most of his actions. He chose to dedicate himself to proslavery politicians and proslavery legislation; thus, we can effectively label him proslavery. In short, actions speak louder than words.

Soon after his return to Pennsylvania, Jones became Buchanan's protégé. By 1844 Old Buck could call him one of his "true-hearted and faithful friends," and the two worked closely together in that year's elections—both supporting the slave-owning expansionist James Polk of Tennessee for president. In 1845, when Buchanan moved to Washington City to become secretary of state in the Polk administration, Jones moved to Reading, in Berks County, which was thoroughly Democratic and thus offered more political opportunities. Buchanan watched his friend's rise with pleasure and paved the way for his entry into public office. "With the support of the Democracy of old Berks, and with your ability and energy," he penned to Jones in March 1847, "you can choose your time for coming to Congress which would open to you the appropriate field for distinction and future honors."⁹ Though he was an enthusiastic supporter of the invasion of Mexico, Jones did not join the army, accepting instead a plum patronage appointment as district attorney. By 1849 he was chairman of the state Democratic convention, and in October 1850 he was elected to the US House of Representatives, a remarkable achievement for one who had lived in the area less than six years. During the crises of 1850, Buchanan used the opportunity to school young Jones on Congressional activity and pro-Southern Democratic doctrine.¹⁰

In Congress, Jones was a dutiful doughface. He shied away from debate and oratory, content to observe proceedings and work behind the scenes. In his entire first session of Congress, he did little more than present petitions and quarrel with the speaker over parliamentary procedure. Nevertheless, he followed instructions from Southern party bosses and provided precious votes in support of various proslavery measures. For his loyalty he was rewarded with a seat on the powerful Ways and Means Committee. He also continued to serve as Buchanan's protégé, providing his mentor with valuable insider information and seeing to his interests in Congress. "My most important business is with you," wrote Buchanan to Jones in

⁹ Buchanan to J. G. Jones, May 21, 1842, Jan. 2, 1844 (quoted), Mar. 30, 1847 (quoted), and Mar. 8, 1850, box 5, James Buchanan and Harriet Lane Johnston Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, DC (hereafter Buchanan and Johnston Papers, LOC). See also *ibid.*

¹⁰ C. H. Jones, *Life of Jones*, 1:138–39, 141, 144–50, 155–57; Buchanan to J. G. Jones, Mar. 8, 1850, box 5, Buchanan and Johnston Papers, LOC; "Pennsylvania Election Legislature," *Trenton (NJ) State Gazette*, Oct. 11, 1850.

November 1851, “& of all things I desire to pass part of a day without interruption in your company. I have much very much to say to you.”¹¹ The two became political partners, so much so that Jones declined to run for reelection in 1852, preferring instead to return to Pennsylvania to manage campaigns and to handle Buchanan’s affairs while he was away in London as minister to the Court of St. James’s. “I had determined to visit you at Wheatland today with the view of having a private & uninterrupted interview,” Jones penned in a typical letter in November 1851. “I am perfectly at your command,” was Buchanan’s usual reply. “You are on the spot & you can best inform me when & how to act.”¹²

Jones’s assistance in the 1852 state elections—in which Buchanan battled partisan rival Simon Cameron for control of the state machine—was especially critical. While lifelong politician Buchanan aimed to please the Southern bosses by defending slavery and opposing tariffs, businessman Cameron demanded tariff protection for Keystone industries and leaned toward an antislavery position. Cameron gauged public opinion and saw the marked shift against the Slave Power. “The [fight] against slavery is yearly becoming stronger in this state,” he observed in 1849, “and the more the question is agitated the stronger will become the sentiment.”¹³ To combat the Cameron threat, Buchanan and his supporters draped

¹¹ Cong. Globe, 32nd Cong., 1st Sess. 438, 671, 685, 859, 1051, 1362 (1851–52); C. H. Jones, *Life of Jones*, 1:157–59, 163; “Thirty-Second Congress—First Session,” *Washington National Era*, Dec. 18, 1851; “Movement in the House on the Compromise Measures,” *Washington National Era*, Mar. 4, 1852; Buchanan to J. G. Jones, May 14, June 1, June 12, Sept. 10, Oct. 18, Nov. 11, and Nov. 17 (quoted), 1851, Apr. 3, 1852, box 5, Buchanan and Johnston Papers, LOC.

¹² J. G. Jones to J. Lawrence Getz, June 10, 1852, in C. H. Jones, *Life of Jones*, 1:200–201; J. G. Jones to Buchanan, Nov. 19, 1851 (quoted), box 21, folder 25, James Buchanan Papers (Collection 91), Historical Society of Pennsylvania (hereafter Buchanan Papers, HSP); Buchanan to J. G. Jones, Sept. 10, Nov. 15, Nov. 19, Dec. 7, Dec. 13, Dec. 15, and Dec. 21, 1852, Jan. 31, Feb. 18, Feb. 21, Mar. 4 (quoted), Mar. 12, Apr. 26, 1853, box 5, Buchanan and Johnston Papers, LOC; “Hon. J. Glancy Jones,” June 21, 1852, *Baltimore Sun*.

¹³ Roy Franklin Nichols, *The Democratic Machine: 1850–1854* (New York, 1923, repr. 1967), 59; Henry Walsh to Buchanan, Dec. 28, 1850, box 20, folder 31, William Bigler to Buchanan, Mar. 29, 1851, box 21, folder 6, James Campbell to Buchanan, May 11, 1851, box 21, folder 11, Alfred Gilmore to Buchanan, Sept. 26, 1851, box 21, folder 20, Buchanan Papers, HSP; Buchanan to J. S. York, Mar. 6, 1851, James Buchanan (1791–1868) collection, 1829–1865, New-York Historical Society (hereafter Buchanan Collection, N-YHS); J. G. Jones to Bigler, June 24, 1850, box 1, folder 12, and Aug. 21, 1850, box 1, folder 14, George Sanderson to Bigler, Aug. 20, 1850, box 1, folder 14, William Bigler Papers (Collection 51), Historical Society of Pennsylvania (hereafter Bigler Papers, HSP); Buchanan to J. G. Jones, June 1 and June 12, 1851, and George Plitt to Buchanan, June 13, 1851, box 5, Buchanan and Johnston Papers, LOC; John Savage, *Our Living Representative Men. From Official and Original Sources* (Philadelphia, 1860), 93–94; Simon Cameron to Burke, June 15, 1849 (quoted), container 3, Edmund Burke Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, DC (hereafter Burke Papers, LOC).

themselves in the “Compromise of 1850” and punished dissent. Support for the South, the Democracy, and the compromise was the only way to preserve the Union, they argued. But rhetoric was not enough to maintain hegemony in the state, especially because the Cameron faction controlled much of the state patronage, and Cameron himself was determined to both regain his old seat in the US Senate and thwart Buchanan’s presidential run in 1852.¹⁴

In February 1850 Cameron took the offensive and launched a press war again Buchanan and his doughface machine. He enlisted the help of senator-elect Richard Brodhead, who believed that Buchanan had opposed his election. Their object was to undermine Buchanan’s influence in Pennsylvania and erode his Southern support by making it appear that Buchanan could not unite and carry the state in a national election.¹⁵ With this in mind, Cameron early threw his support behind Lewis Cass for the 1852 presidential nomination, dividing Pennsylvania Democrats and embarrassing Buchanan. “I am well aware,” fumed Buchanan agent Alfred Gilmore, “that Cameron & that rotten part of the democracy of our State that adheres to him will endeavor to cripple you in this State, through the instrumentality of Genl. Cass.” Cass was only too willing to have a friend in Pennsylvania, since a wounded Buchanan would increase Cass’s chances at another nomination. Buchanan and his supporters, on the other hand, had no respect for the Cameron upstarts and openly labeled the Cass-Cameron alliance “the plunderers.”¹⁶

¹⁴ Coleman, *Disruption of the Pennsylvania Democracy*, 42; Bigler to Committee of Invitation, June 26, 1851, William Bigler Collection, MG-22, Pennsylvania State Archives, Harrisburg, PA; Nichols, *Democratic Machine*, 59–60; Walsh to Buchanan, Aug. 25, 1850, Buchanan Papers, HSP; Buchanan to William L. Marcy, Nov. 21, 1850, book 18, William L. Marcy Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, DC (hereafter Marcy Papers, LOC).

¹⁵ George Plitt to Buchanan, Oct. 27, 1851, box 5, Buchanan and Johnston Papers, LOC; Richard Brodhead to John Forney, Jan. 20, 1851, box 21, folder 1, G. H. Goundie to Forney, Jan. 22, 1851, box 56, folder 7, Richard Brodhead to Buchanan, Jan. 27, 1851, box 21, folder 2, A. H. Reeder to Buchanan, Sept. 10, 1851, box 21, folder 19, and J. G. Jones to Buchanan, Sept. 12, 1851, box 21, folder 19, Buchanan Papers, HSP; Brodhead to Coryell, Sept. 28, 1851, box 4, folder 9, Lewis S. Coryell Papers (Collection 151), Historical Society of Pennsylvania (hereafter Coryell Papers, HSP); E. A. Penniman to Bigler, Jan. 11, 1851, box 1, folder 19, Bigler Papers, HSP; Marcy to James Berret, Dec. 14, 1851, book 21, W. W. Snow to Marcy, Dec. 27, 1851, book 22, Marcy Papers, LOC; Coleman, *Disruption of the Pennsylvania Democracy*, 41–42.

¹⁶ Alfred Gilmore to Buchanan, Sept. 9, 1850, box 20, folder 24, Nov. 3, 1850 (quoted), box 20, folder 27, (quoted), Dec. 24, 1850, box 20, folder 31, Henry Walsh to Buchanan, Aug. 25, 1850, Dec. 28, 1850, Charles Brown to Buchanan, Feb. 14, 1851, box 21, folder 3, Buchanan Papers, HSP; Sanderson to Bigler, Aug. 20, 1850, J. G. Jones to Bigler, Aug. 21, 1850, John Forney to Bigler, Aug. 23, 1850, box 1, folder 14, Bigler Papers, HSP; Charles Eames to Marcy, Sept. 14, 1851, book 20, Marcy Papers, LOC; Buchanan to York, Mar. 6, 1851 (quoted), Buchanan Collection, N-YHS; Coleman, *Disruption of the Pennsylvania Democracy*, 51.

In December, Cass and Cameron met in New York City to coordinate against Old Buck. Cameron's plan was to introduce and push through pro-Cass resolutions at the various county and district conventions, which would weaken Buchanan's claims to control the Keystone State. The plan was largely successful. "The opposition here have kept up a Cass feeling," reported Jones from Reading on September 12, 1851. With Buchanan playing the above-the-fray statesman, Jones had to manage his boss's interests both at home and in Washington. "The coolness of the Cass interest in the state is draining," he wrote with optimism in November, "the whole body of delegates & leaders on the Tariff question, to yourself—I intend at Washington to refer to these men as Cass men & your policy & that of Penna. is to ratify & sustain at the proper time." Though Cameron's men were able to frustrate Buchananites at conventions, Cameron was unable to prevent the nomination and election of William Bigler, another Buchanan loyalist, as governor. Many Keystone Democrats distrusted Bigler, but Jones saw promise in his colleague and was eager to recruit as many potential partisans as possible. Meanwhile, Brodhead used his franking privilege as senator to send copies of anti-Buchanan pamphlets to the South. Brodhead also reached out to both William Marcy and Daniel Dickinson of New York to create political confusion and cast doubts about Buchanan's strength. Buchanan men came to hate Brodhead almost as much as they hated Cameron. "He is corrupt and selfish," wrote an angry A. H. Reeder to Buchanan, "but has a sort of foxiness which has enabled him thus far to conceal it from the democracy abroad. At home he is well known, and among other things is noted for treachery to and desertion of his friends."¹⁷

Bigler's victory over antislavery Whig governor William Johnston in November 1851 boded well for the Buchanan machine and was generally seen as an indication of his continued strength within the state, despite the machinations of his enemies. From Washington, Jones wrote, "It would do

¹⁷ Coleman, *Disruption of the Pennsylvania Democracy*, 41, 51–52; Buchanan to J. G. Jones, Sept. 10, 1851, box 5, Buchanan and Johnston Papers, LOC; Buchanan to York, Mar. 6, Aug. 30, 1851, Buchanan Collection, N-YHS; J. G. Jones to Bigler, May 22, 1850, box 1, folder 11, June 10, 1850, box 1, folder 12, Aug. 21, 1850, Oct. 18, Oct. 31, 1851, Buchanan to Bigler, Mar. 24, 1851, Bigler Papers, HSP; Bigler to Buchanan, Mar. 29, 1851, Reeder to Buchanan, Sept. 10, 1851 (quoted), J. G. Jones to Buchanan, Sept. 12, 1851 (quoted), Nov. 19, 1851 (quoted), Buchanan Papers, HSP; "Democratic State Convention—Bigler Nominated," *Philadelphia North American and United States Gazette*, June 6, 1851; "Governor Bigler," *Philadelphia North American and United States Gazette*; "Hon. Wm. Bigler," *Columbia Daily South Carolinian*, Jan. 25, 1856. Franking privilege allowed members of Congress to send mail without paying for postage.

your heart good to see the feeling that exists here in your behalf.” In the governor’s chair, Bigler oversaw the partial repeal of the state’s 1847 personal liberty law and pardoned a notorious kidnapper who had been convicted under it. Bigler’s rise was regarded as a solid win for conservatives, with implications for the 1852 races. “The result is deeply felt through all parts of the Union,” wrote Isaac Toucey of Connecticut, “& will exert a controlling influence upon the events of ’52.”¹⁸

In that year’s presidential contest, populous Pennsylvania was more important than ever. If Buchanan could not deliver his own home state, then the Northern wing of the party was in far more danger than anticipated. Old Buck, however, was in no mood to help Franklin Pierce, who had unexpectedly snatched the nomination from Buchanan’s hands, and did not take an active role in the campaign until his political machine was seriously threatened by the increasingly potent antislavery movement. For much of the summer, he sat on his hands at his estate fighting bilious attacks and bad teeth. Antislavery sentiment had spread noticeably in the Keystone State, and voters were angry over Buchanan’s open pandering to the South. In addition, since Buchanan’s failure at the Baltimore convention, challengers like Cameron were emboldened to make more aggressive attacks on the traditional party apparatus.¹⁹

Once Buchanan grasped the antislavery threat to his personal base, he mobilized his supporters and got to work. On the stump, though, he displayed questionable political judgment when he defended the odious Fugitive Slave Law of 1850 and hailed Pierce’s pro-Southern credentials.

¹⁸ Coleman, *Disruption of the Pennsylvania Democracy*, 42; Thomas D. Morris, *Free Men All: The Personal Liberty Laws of the North, 1780–1861* (Baltimore, 1974), 154–56; Seth Salisbury to Bigler, July 14, 1851, box 1, folder 26, Buchanan to Bigler, Oct. 18, 1851, box 1, folder 30, J. G. Jones to Bigler, Oct. 18, 1851, box 1, folder 30, Oct. 31, 1851, box 1, folder 32, Andrew Beaumont to Bigler, Oct. 21, 1851, box 1, folder 31, T. M. Pettit to Bigler, Oct. 22, 1851, box 1, folder 31, Bigler to Buchanan, Oct. 28, 1851, box 1, folder 32, Bigler Papers, HSP; H. K. Smith to Marcy, Nov. 5, 1851, book 20, Marcy Papers, LOC; D. B. Taylor to Buchanan, July 25, 1851, box 21, folder 16, John Houston to Buchanan, Sept. 4, 1851, box 21, folder 19, Cave Johnson to Buchanan, Sept. 15, 1851, box 21, folder 20, William King to Buchanan, Oct. 14, 1851, box 21, folder 21, J. D. Hoover to Buchanan, Oct. 17, 1851, box 21, folder 21, John Parker to Buchanan, Oct. 31, 1851, box 21, folder 22, Isaac Toucey to Buchanan, Nov. 13, 1851 (quoted), box 21, folder 24, J. G. Jones to Buchanan, Dec. 1, 1851 (quoted), box 21, folder 27, Buchanan Papers, HSP.

¹⁹ John Slidell to Buchanan, Sept. 15, Sept. 27, 1852, box 22, folder 27, Buchanan Papers, HSP; J. S. France to Bigler, Mar. 27, 1852, box 2, folder 4, Joseph Thompson to Bigler, Mar. 29, 1852, box 2, folder 5, David Tucker to Bigler, Sept. 2, 1852, box 2, folder 26, Bigler Papers, HSP; Buchanan to Johnson, June 24, 1852, in George Ticknor Curtis, *Life of James Buchanan: Fifteenth President of the United States*, 2 vols. (New York, 1883), 2:40; Philip S. Klein, *President James Buchanan: A Biography* (University Park, PA, 1962), 221–22.

His more practical subordinates fretted about the large “Catholic vote” of the state, though they were confident they could better court that community than could the Whigs. “There is no doubt about Pennsylvania,” asserted German American Democrat Francis Grund: “the victory is easy.” In Washington, Jones continued to see to Buchanan’s interests, cosigning press releases with other Democrats and employing his growing influence to shore up support for Old Buck. Never, however, did Jones join the partisan choir of Congressmen singing the praises of their chosen candidates. Jones preferred to work in the shadows, eschewing all calls for grand orations or stump speaking. “A number of friends were anxious when the Presidential excitement was up in the House a month ago that a speech should be made in your behalf,” Jones explained to Buchanan. “I was opposed to it . . . I have never favored *noise*; some think they must always be making some public demonstration or organization &c. This very course cost Clay, Calhoun, Cass, Webster & will Douglas the loss of the prize.” Back in Pennsylvania, Cameron and Democratic dissidents were brought in line for the state and presidential elections through patronage promises and power-sharing deals. Thanks to low voter turnout and Whig divisions, Democrats emerged victorious in October, much to the relief of Democrats across the country. “The returns from Pennsylvania seem to have settled the presidential contest,” exclaimed one observer.²⁰

With “Handsome Frank” Pierce now in the White House, the scramble for patronage began in earnest. After the drought of the Taylor and Fillmore years, Democrats looked forward to the fruits of victory. Even Jones caught the patronage bug and requested a foreign assignment to Rio de Janeiro or Honolulu, although in his meetings with Pierce he was clear that he only wanted a two-year stint so as not to miss important political

²⁰ Lynde Eliot to Bigler, Sept. 20, 1852, box 2, folder 29, J. G. Jones to Bigler, Sept. 28, 1852, box 2, folder 31, Kerry Welsh to Bigler, Sept. 28, 1852, box 2, folder 31, Bigler Papers, HSP; Klein, *President James Buchanan*, 221–22; Benjamin Brewster to Burke, Sept. 3, 1852, container 3, Burke Papers, LOC; James Buchanan speech, Greensburgh, PA, Oct. 7, 1852, in Curtis, *Life of Buchanan*, 2:43–67; Francis Grund to Cobb, Oct. 29, 1852 (quoted), in *The Correspondence of Robert Toombs, Alexander Stephens, and Howell Cobb*, ed. Ulrich Bonnell Phillips, vol. 2 (Washington, DC, 1913), 321; Simon Cameron to Coryell, Oct. 7, 1852, box 4, folder 10, John Forney to Coryell, Oct. 22, 1852, box 4, folder 10, Coryell Papers, HSP; Coleman, *Disruption of the Pennsylvania Democracy*, 54–57; Public Statement, Copy, “The undersigned Democratic Representatives in Congress from the State of Pennsylvania,” J. Glancy Jones and Alfred Gilmore et al., likely Mar. 1852, box 22, folder 5, J. G. Jones to Buchanan, Apr. 2, 1852 (quoted), box 22, folder 8, James Van Dyke to Buchanan, July 10, 1852, box 22, folder 25, Gilmore to Buchanan, Aug. 22, 1852, box 22, folder 26, F. Byrdsall to Buchanan, Oct. 21, 1852, box 22, folder 28, Andrew Miller to Buchanan, Oct. 29, 1852 (quoted), box 22, folder 29, Franklin Pierce to Buchanan, Nov. 1, 1852, box 22, folder 29, August Belmont to Buchanan, Nov. 5, 1852, box 22, folder 30, Buchanan Papers, HSP.

events at home. As he reported to Buchanan, "I have just had an interview with the President for an half hour; he is much pressed for all the leading appointments, & said that Governor & others of high standing were seeking these consulates; he thought they were the most valuable men abroad, & said two years ought to be sufficient for any man. . . . I said I wanted to be back at my post politically before any movements of a national character were begun." The appointment never came.²¹

Buchanan, for his part, expected a top cabinet post, preferably secretary of state.²² Instead, he received the mission to Great Britain. From Pierce's point of view, the decision was a wise one. Buchanan had previously served as secretary of state and thus had diplomatic experience; it was the top foreign post and thus would assuage Buchanan's bruised ego; and it would get Pierce's leading rival out of the country. Old Buck, however, was less than thrilled. "I have not the least desire to go abroad as a foreign minister," he confessed to Jones. He did not want to be removed from his base of operations in Wheatland and give up control of his state organization, nor did he relish the idea of being subordinate to rival partisan William Marcy of New York, the new chief at the State Department. "Marcy is not friendly to you, he is not open but he does not conceal it," Jones confided.²³

When Buchanan departed for London in the summer of 1853, he left his state machine in the hands of his capable acolyte Glancy Jones. It was critically important that Buchanan's Pennsylvania affairs be handled by a skilled operator he could trust. Buchanan coveted the presidency and

²¹J. G. Jones to Buchanan, Feb. 11, 1853, box 23, folder 6, Feb. 25, 1853, box 23, folder 8, Mar. 3, 1853 (two letters dated Mar. 3), box 23, folder 10, Mar. 6, 1853, box 23, folder 10, Mar. 9, 1853, box 23, folder 11, Mar. 14, 1853 (quoted), box 23, folder 12, Mar. 28, 1853, box 23, folder 15, May 1, 1853, box 23, folder 26, Buchanan Papers, HSP.

²²Nichols, *Democratic Machine*, 174; David Wagener to Buchanan, Nov. 6, 1852, box 22, folder 30, J. G. Jones to Buchanan, Nov. 22, 1852, box 22, folder 34, Buchanan Papers, HSP; Plitt to Buchanan, Aug. 30, 1852, and Buchanan to J. G. Jones, Dec. 7, 1852, box 5, Buchanan and Johnston Papers, LOC.

²³Klein, *President James Buchanan*, 223, 235; Roy Franklin Nichols, *Franklin Pierce: Young Hickory of the Granite Hills* (Philadelphia, 1931, 1967), 256, 287; J. G. Jones to Buchanan, Feb. 24, 1853 (quoted), Belmont to Buchanan, Mar. 26, Apr. 15, June 18, June 25, 1853, Slidell to Buchanan, Mar. 30, 1853, Van Dyke to Buchanan, Mar. 24, Mar. 31, 1853, Pierce to Buchanan, Mar. 30, June 26, 1853, Bancroft to Buchanan, Apr. 12, 1853, Nahum Capen to Buchanan, Apr. 14, 1853, Wise to Buchanan, Apr. 16, 1853, King to Buchanan, July 15, 1853, Buchanan Papers, HSP; Buchanan to J. G. Jones, Mar. 12 and Mar. 15 (quoted), 1853, box 5, Buchanan to Campbell, Apr. 3, 1853, reel 1, and Buchanan to Harriet Johnston, Apr. 7, 1853, series 1, Buchanan and Johnston Papers, LOC; Frederick Moore Binder, *James Buchanan and the American Empire* (Cranbury, NJ, 1994), 167–68; Coleman, *Disruption of the Pennsylvania Democracy*, 60; Ivor Debenham Spencer, *The Victor and the Spoils: A Life of William L. Marcy* (Providence, RI, 1959), 221; Curtis, *Life of Buchanan*, 2:76.

did not want his political organization to wither in his absence.²⁴ Jones reported regularly to his distant boss, keeping him abreast of partisan news. “Pierce, poor fellow, has no hold on the nation,” Jones penned in October 1853, explaining the new president’s growing unpopularity: “he is the accidental head of an organization, without any cohesive power, individually or upon principle. . . . [N]o one fears him no one [*sic*] feels much interest in his personal welfare.”²⁵

Much to Jones’s and Buchanan’s surprise, Jones was returned to the House in January 1854, following the death of his successor. “Here I am,” he sighed to Buchanan, “notwithstanding all my own plans & arrangements [*sic*] destined to be a member of Congress.” Jones arrived in the Capitol in February, just in time to aid passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Act. “I gave my cordial and hearty support,” he later recounted. He also began building support for Buchanan’s 1856 presidential run. Once again, Jones preferred to work behind the scenes rather than make sensational orations. “On the Nebraska Kansas question I contented myself with *voting*,” he explained to Buchanan. “Mr. Jones,” observed a Florida periodical, “was one of the starting band of the 44 Northern Democrats whose votes carried the Nebraska Bill.” “The bill will pass & become popular,” Jones chirped with optimism.²⁶

Jones and the Northern Democrats were gravely mistaken. The Kansas-Nebraska Act, which nullified the Missouri Compromise line and permitted the spread of slavery into formerly free territory, enraged free state voters. Various anti-Democratic groups, such as the Whigs,

²⁴Buchanan to Harriet Johnston, Mar. 15, Mar. 19, Apr. 7, and Aug. 17, 1853, series 1, Buchanan to James Campbell, Apr. 3, 1853, reel 1, Buchanan to J. G. Jones, Mar. 12, Mar. 15 (quoted), and Apr. 26, 1853, Apr. 26, 1854, Jan. 11, Nov. 30, Dec. 7, and Dec. 18, 1855, and Feb. 19, Mar. 7, Mar. 25, May 1, and June 27, 1856, box 5, Buchanan to Henry Wise, June 1, 1853, reel 2, Buchanan and Johnston Papers, LOC; C. H. Jones, *Life of Jones*, 1:329–43; “Cass and Buchanan,” *New York Tribune*, May 13, 1856, in James Pike, *First Blows of the Civil War: The Ten Years of Preliminary Conflict in the United States, from 1850 to 1860* (New York, 1879), 332–33; Nichols, *Disruption of American Democracy*, 13; J. G. Jones to Buchanan, May 18, Aug. 14, 1854, Daniel Jenks to Buchanan, Dec. 26, 1854, May 14, 1855, Buchanan Papers, HSP.

²⁵J. G. Jones to Buchanan, Oct. 3, 1853 (quoted), box 24, folder 3, Buchanan Papers, HSP.

²⁶“Hon. J. Glancy Jones,” *Baltimore Sun*, Jan. 30, 1854; “Mr. Glancy Jones,” *Baltimore Sun*, Feb. 14, 1854; “J. Glancy Jones,” *Trenton (NJ) State Gazette*, Feb. 1, 1854; “J. Glancy Jones,” *Delaware State Reporter*, Feb. 14, 1854; C. H. Jones, *Life of Jones*, 1:202–3, 209–10, 256–57, 315–22; J. G. Jones to Buchanan, Mar. 29, 1854 (quoted), box 24, folder 24, May 18 (quoted), July 9, 1854 (quoted), box 25, folder 22, Aug. 14, 1854, May 9, 1855, box 26, folder 15, Buchanan Papers, HSP; Address to Columbia County Democrats, Oct. 2, 1857 (quoted), in C. H. Jones, *Life of Jones*, 1:374–88; Buchanan to J. G. Jones, Apr. 26, 1854, and Jan. 11, 1855, box 5, Buchanan and Johnston Papers, LOC; Cong. Globe, 33rd Cong., 1st Sess. 1254 (1854); “A Tempest in a Tea-Pot,” *New Haven Columbian Register*, May 20, 1854; “Nebraska Bill,” *Austin Texas State Gazette*, June 10, 1854; “Hon. J. Glancy,” *Tallahassee Floridian and Journal*, Sept. 9, 1854.

Know-Nothings, and Free Soilers, combined forces at the polls to express their disapproval. Pennsylvania politics became especially confused and chaotic. Due to the economic prosperity of the early and mid-1850s, nativism and slavery had replaced the perennial Keystone State topic of tariff protection. Moreover, nativism proved especially potent in immigrant-heavy Pennsylvania, and the Know-Nothings had won their first victories there. Two events, in particular, enflamed nativist passions. The first was the elevation of Catholic James Campbell—first to Governor Bigler's cabinet, then to the position of Pierce's postmaster general—after his rejection by Pennsylvania voters in 1850. The second was Monsignor Gaetano Bedini's visit to Pittsburgh in 1853. As a personal agent of the Pope, his presence in the Keystone State stoked nativist fears of a nefarious Catholic plot.²⁷

In addition to these outside forces, Democrats were suffering from serious internal divisions. Twelve Keystone Democrats, including maverick senator Richard Brodhead, had voted for the Kansas-Nebraska bill despite voter opposition. When the March 1854 Democratic state convention in Harrisburg failed to address Kansas-Nebraska, both sides left frustrated. The regular Democrats (supporters of Buchanan and Jones) had demanded a firm endorsement, and anti-Nebraska Democrats (in the majority) had wanted a rejection. The latter subsequently bolted the party for the opposition, simultaneously cleansing Democratic ranks and giving a boost to anti-Democratic forces. The split was made official when the state committee endorsed Kansas-Nebraska and read the bolters out of the party. "We are in a strong mess politically in Pennsylvania," noted Buchanan agent George Sanderson in June.²⁸

²⁷ William E. Gienapp, *The Origins of the Republican Party, 1852–1856* (New York, 1987), 139, 173; "Shipwreck in New Hampshire," *New York Tribune*, Mar. 22, 1855, in Pike, *First Blows of the Civil War*, 292–94; Colfax to Rev. Jackson, Dec. 12, 1854, Colfax Manuscripts, Lilly Library, Indiana University, Bloomington, IN; Coleman, *Disruption of the Pennsylvania Democracy*, 61, 64–66; Tyler G. Anbinder, *Nativism and Slavery: The Northern Know Nothings and the Politics of the 1850s* (New York, 1992), 30, 53–55, 57; John Forney to Breckinridge, Sept. 13, 1854, book 171, Breckinridge Family Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, DC (hereafter Breckinridge Family Papers, LOC); James Reynolds to Buchanan, Oct. 23, 1854, box 25, folder 30, J. G. Jones to Buchanan, July 9, 1854, J. Franklin Reigatt to Buchanan, July 28, 1854, box 25, folder 24, J. S. Black to Buchanan, Feb. 17, 1855, box 26, folder 6, John Forney to Buchanan, July 13, 1855, box 26, folder 32, Buchanan Papers, HSP; Thompson to Bigler, Mar. 29, 1852, Col. Hopkins to Bigler, Sept. 10, 1852, box 2, folder 27, Eliot to Bigler, Sept. 20, 1852, James Campbell to Bigler, Sept. 21, 1852, box 2, folder 29, Peter Wager to Bigler, June 17, 1853, box 4, folder 17, Bigler Papers, HSP.

²⁸ Gienapp, *Origins of the Republican Party*, 139, 143, 173; Coleman, *Disruption of the Pennsylvania Democracy*, 61, 64–66, 68–69; Anbinder, *Nativism and Slavery*, 53–55, 57; Forney to Breckinridge, Sept. 13, 1854; Reynolds to Buchanan, Oct. 23, 1854, J. G. Jones to Buchanan, July 9, 1854, Reigatt to Buchanan, July 28, 1854, Black to Buchanan, Feb. 17, 1855, John Forney to Buchanan, May 25, 1854, box 25, folder 12, July 13, 1855, James Van Dyke to Buchanan, Mar. 22, 1854, box 24, folder

To make matters worse for the Democrats, Governor Bigler had made himself unpopular by his ill-conceived appointments and flip-flopping on temperance. When it came to Kansas-Nebraska, he tried initially to avoid the subject, then finally announced his support months after it had been made party policy. "Bigler has behaved with great weakness and cowardice on the Nebraska question," observed newspaper editor John Forney. His equivocation on slavery deeply frustrated Democrats and further demoralized them before the October elections. Their only chance of success lay with the collapse of the fusion forces arrayed against them, a distinct possibility given the potency of nativist sentiment. "Prospects in Penna. are decidedly gloomy," Jones told Buchanan. "In fact our only hopes are in the want of cordial fusion in the elements of opposition to the democracy." In the end, fusion candidate James Pollock crushed Bigler, and anti-Nebraska candidates carried most of the 1854 Congressional races. "Many prominent men have been swept out of sight by the late Tornado, I will not run over the whole list of the '*dead and wounded*,'" reported Daniel Jenks. But Buchanan's trusted lieutenant survived. Unlike most other Northern Democrats, Jones enjoyed the full support of the party machinery and the significant influence of his mentor.²⁹

Regardless, the Pennsylvania Democracy had been defeated, and Democrats consoled themselves with the thought that their party was now largely free of antislavery sentiment. "It has severed many rotten branches

22, George Sanderson to Buchanan, Mar. 10, 1854, box 24, folder 20, June 22, 1854 (quoted), box 25, folder 20, Wilson Candless to Buchanan, June 12, 1854, box 25, folder 19, Buchanan Papers, HSP.

²⁹ Michael F. Holt, *The Rise and Fall of the American Whig Party: Jacksonian Politics and the Onset of the Civil War* (New York, 1999), 881–86; Gienapp, *Origins of the Republican Party*, 140–42, 145; Forney to Breckinridge, Sept. 13 (quoted), and Oct. 19, 1854, book 171, Breckinridge Family Papers, LOC; John Forney to Buchanan, Mar. 19, May 25, Sept. 25, 1854, box 25, folder 29, Van Dyke to Buchanan, Mar. 22, 1854, John Slidell to Buchanan, Mar. 25, 1854, box 24, folder 23, James Campbell to Buchanan, Mar. 16, 1854, box 24, folder 21, George Plitt to Buchanan, Apr. 8, 1854, box 24, folder 28, Henry Slicer to Buchanan, June 10, 1854, box 25, folder 18, Daniel Jenks to Buchanan, July 7, 1854, box 25, folder 21, Aug. 18, 1854, box 25, folder 26, Oct. 13, 1854, box 25, folder 30, Oct. 17, 1854, box 25, folder 30, Nov. 13, 1854 (quoted), box 25, folder 32, William Hopkins to Buchanan, Sept. 11, 1854, box 25, folder 27, Wilson Candless to Buchanan, June 10, 1854, box 25, folder 18, Lewis Clover to Buchanan, June 15, 1854, box 25, folder 19, George Sanderson to Buchanan, June 22, Oct. 24, 1854, box 25, folder 31, Reigatt to Buchanan, July 28, 1854, J. G. Jones to Buchanan, July 9, 1854 (quoted), Buchanan Papers, HSP; John Forney to Bigler, Aug. 11, 1853, box 4, folder 25, "Extract from letter of Mr. Strong under date of Aug. 23rd 1853," box 4, folder 28, Bigler Papers, HSP; Anbinder, *Nativism and Slavery*, 58–60; G. Bailey to Pike, June 6, 1854, in Pike, *First Blows of the Civil War*, 247; Coleman, *Disruption of the Pennsylvania Democracy*, 68–70, 74–75; C. H. Jones, *Life of Jones*, 1:260; Buchanan to J. G. Jones, Jan. 11, 1855, box 5, Buchanan and Johnston Papers, LOC; "Hon. J. Glancy Jones," *New Haven Columbian Register*, Sept. 2, 1854; "Elections," *Boston Courier*, Oct. 9, 1854; "Pennsylvania Election," *Baltimore Sun*, Oct. 12, 1854.

from the tree of Democracy, whose places will be more than supplied by fresh . . . & vigorous branches,” wrote Buchanan. The Democracy, agreed Sanderson, had been “purified in the furnace of affliction.” “Recently our party has met with some reverses,” Jones told disgruntled Democrats at the July 1855 state convention, “the courage of some began to fail. . . . But truth is mighty and will prevail. This freshet has carried off the driftwood of the party. What some feared was going to be a permanent disease has only proved to be a slight epidemic, and our party now rises prouder, nobler, and higher than ever.” As in Indiana, the Pennsylvania state legislature, now controlled by the anti-Democratic fusionists, was unable to elect a new US Senator. Simon Cameron, now firmly in anti-Democratic ranks and soon to become a Republican, had received the most votes, but fell short of a majority. Instead of pushing through the deadlock, the legislature postponed the election until 1856. Brodhead would serve as the only senator from Pennsylvania for the next year.³⁰

As the sectional crisis deepened and the ranks of Northern Democrats dwindled, Jones became increasingly important to the party. In the December 1855 caucus, he was elevated to leader of the Democratic House, and he commanded attention as one of the most reliable dough-faces in Congress. “My position at present in Congress is made personally very agreeable, as you will see by the papers,” he wrote to Buchanan with pride. Just two days later, Jones overcame his distaste for House dramatics to make a remarkable defense of Northern Democrats and Democratic policy. Assailed by his colleagues for doughfacism, Jones stood defiant: “I have never cast a southern vote in my life. The only thing that has ever been asked of me (and I have always given it to the best of my humble ability) was to cast my vote for the South as far as she had rights guaranteed by

³⁰ Buchanan to J. G. Jones, Jan. 11 and May 4 (quoted), 1855, box 5, Buchanan and Johnston Papers, LOC; Gienapp, *Origins of the Republican Party*, 140–42, 145, 173, 208–9; John Forney to Buchanan, Mar. 19, 1854, box 24, folder 21, May 25, Sept. 25, 1854, Van Dyke to Buchanan, Mar. 22, 1854, Slidell to Buchanan, Mar. 25, 1854, Campbell to Buchanan, Mar. 16, 1854, Plitt to Buchanan, Apr. 8, 1854, Slicer to Buchanan, June 10, 1854, Daniel Jenks to Buchanan, Mar. 17, 1854, box 24, folder 21, July 7, Aug. 18, Oct. 13, Oct. 17, Nov. 13, 1854, Mar. 6, 1855, box 26, folder 8, Oct. 15, 1855, box 27, folder 18, Hopkins to Buchanan, Sept. 11, 1854, Candless to Buchanan, June 10, June 12, 1854, Clover to Buchanan, June 15, 1854, George Sanderson to Buchanan, June 22, Oct. 24, 1854, May 2, 1855 (quoted), box 26, folder 14, Reigatt to Buchanan, July 28, 1854, J. G. Jones to Buchanan, July 9, 1854, Reynolds to Buchanan, Oct. 23, 1854, Black to Buchanan, Feb. 17, 1855, Buchanan Papers, HSP; Address to Democratic State Convention, July 1855 (quoted), in C. H. Jones, *Life of Jones*, 1:251–55; Forney to Breckinridge, Sept. 13 and Oct. 19, 1854, Breckinridge Family Papers, LOC; Anbinder, *Nativism and Slavery*, 58–60, 127, 150–54; Coleman, *Disruption of the Pennsylvania Democracy*, 68–70, 74–75, 77–78; Savage, *Living Representative Men*, 94–95.

the Constitution; and I have made up my mind long ago that I will stand by those rights, if I stand alone." Concerning the Kansas Territory, Jones defended the corrupt, proslavery, Democratic governor Andrew Reeder, and when Jones witnessed the vicious beating of Senator Charles Sumner of Massachusetts by Representative Preston Brooks of South Carolina in May 1856, he did not intervene.³¹

Jones was Buchanan's voice in Congress and a power broker who avoided the spotlight; politicians high and low understood that Jones was the voice of the likely future president. The *New York Tribune*, for instance, labeled Representative Jones "the immediate friend and champion of Mr. Buchanan in the House." When President Pierce sought a rapprochement with the Buchanan camp in November 1855, he reached out to Jones.³² When Buchanan critics mobilized in the House in May 1856, it was Jones who delivered a rousing speech in Old Buck's defense and charged his detractors with "false and spurious" allegations. "All such accusations as these against Mr. Buchanan," exclaimed Jones with unusual passion, "are answered by thirty-six years of devotion to the Constitution of the United States." Early opposition to abolitionism, burning of anti-slavery mail, favoring the admission of new slave states, support for the annexation of Texas, endorsing the Fugitive Slave Law, hostility to personal liberty laws, "unyielding opposition" to the Wilmot Proviso—these actions, all proslavery, were cited by Jones to prove Buchanan's dedication to the nation.³³ At the 1856 national convention, Jones both advised Buchanan and carried out his instructions. In fact it is safe to say that without Jones's exertions, Old Buck's nomination would not have been secured. On the resolutions and platform committees, Jones guaranteed that the party would extol proslavery principles, and, in league with other

³¹"Democratic Congressional," *Boston Daily Atlas*, Dec. 4, 1855; Alexander Stephens to Unknown, Dec. 2, 1855, in *Life of Alexander H. Stephens*, by Richard Malcolm Johnson and William Hand Browne (Philadelphia, 1883), 299; A. Gallatin Talbott to John Breckinridge, Dec. 2, 1855, book 180, Breckinridge Family Papers, LOC; C. H. Jones, *Life of Jones*, 1:265–66; Etcheson, *Bleeding Kansas*, 67; J. G. Jones to Buchanan, May 9, Dec. 16, 1855 (quoted), box 27, folder 33, William Marcy to Buchanan, June 18, 1855, box 26, folder 27, Daniel Jenks to Buchanan, Dec. 10, 1855, box 27, folder 31, Buchanan Papers, HSP; Cong. Globe, 34th Cong., 1st Sess. 39 (1855) (quoted); Robert W. Johannsen, *Stephen A. Douglas* (New York, 1973), 504; "The Outrage on Mr. Sumner," *New York Tribune*, May 22, 1856, in Pike, *First Blows of the Civil War*, 338–39; "And Still Another," *St. Paul Daily Pioneer*, June 6, 1856.

³²"The Administration vs. James Buchanan," *New York Weekly Herald*, Apr. 5, 1856; "Black Republicans," *New York Tribune*, Aug. 12, 1856 (quoted); Nichols, *Franklin Pierce*, 426–27; J. G. Jones to Buchanan, Nov. 18, 1855, box 27, folder 26, Buchanan Papers, HSP; J. G. Jones to A. O. P. Nicholson, Nov. 18, 1855, American Historical Manuscripts Collection—Jones, J. Glancy, New-York Historical Society.

³³Cong. Globe, 34th Cong., 1st Sess. 1194–95 (1856) (quoted).

“Buchaneers,” he handed out cash and threats to ensure that state delegations would cast votes for Old Buck.³⁴

Though Buchanan was the favorite of both the slave states and Northern conservatives, his election was far from certain. The antislavery tide was sweeping the free states, and anti-Democratic forces were uniting into the new antislavery, entirely Northern Republican Party. Buchanan faced a three-way race with former president Millard Fillmore of New York, nominated by the nativist Know-Nothings, and the dashing adventurer John Frémont, put forth by Republicans. To complicate matters, the American Party (the political vehicle of the Know-Nothings) split over slavery in early 1856. “North Americans,” as the Northern wing was called, opposed the expansion of slavery and rejected Fillmore, while “South Americans” were proslavery and supported him. This unusual partisan situation made for an exciting political environment, with voter enthusiasm unmatched since the hard-cider and log-cabin campaigns of 1840. “The canvass had no parallel in the history of American politics,” recalled politician and lawyer George Julian.³⁵

In the ensuing campaigns, Jones led the state effort and was invited to speak across the South. He worked closely with Buchanan to craft an effective national strategy based on white supremacist fears and threats of Southern secession. Buchanan, Democrats claimed, was the only candidate whose election would not result in disunion and race war; a vote for Fillmore or Frémont, conversely, would rend the Union and imperil whites. “*The union is in danger & the people every where begin to know it,*” was the motto given by Buchanan to Jones. To pay for the massive national effort, a special committee was created in Washington to direct pamphlets, speaking tours, and letters. Jones labored alongside party titans Jesse Bright of Indiana, John Slidell of Louisiana, Howell Cobb of Georgia, and Washington, DC, banker William Corcoran to pull the wires, force state organizations into line, and raise as much money as possible.

³⁴J. G. Jones to Buchanan, Mar. 7, 1856, box 28, folder 5, Buchanan Papers, HSP; J. G. Jones to Buchanan, May 30, 1856, in C. H. Jones, *Life of Jones*, 1:345–46; Democratic Party, *Official Proceedings of the National Democratic Convention, Held in Cincinnati, June 2–6, 1856* (Cincinnati, OH, 1856), 15; C. H. Jones, *Life of Jones*, 1:347; Nichols, *Disruption of American Democracy*, 42; “The Political Thermometer,” *Columbus Daily Ohio Statesman*, June 1, 1856; “Democratic National Convention,” *Boston Daily Atlas*, June 3, 1856; “Mr. Buchanan on Squatter Sovereignty,” *Macon (GA) Weekly Telegraph*, Jan. 6, 1857.

³⁵Archibald Dixon to Breckinridge, June 9, 1856, book 183, Breckinridge Family Papers, LOC; Anbinder, *Nativism and Slavery*, 202–9; Paul Finkelman, *Millard Fillmore* (New York, 2011), 133–34; Nichols, *Disruption of American Democracy*, 19–20, 41; George W. Julian, *Political Recollections, 1840 to 1872* (Chicago, 1884), 145, 152–54, 153 (quoted).

The Keystone State was a must-win for Buchanan. Democrats knew they could carry the solid South, but they still needed populous Pennsylvania. Further, it was Old Buck's home state, and it would be an embarrassment if he could not deliver it. All eyes turned to state elections in October to see how the state would go in November. "If we can carry Pa. for our state ticket every thing is safe—if we lose that election I fear that all is lost," wrote Cobb to Buchanan. "Too much importance cannot be attached to the result of your state elections," he added. The challenges faced by Keystone Democrats were similar to those confronting their associates in other states in 1856: Democrats were unpopular, but the opposition was fragmented. Fusion among Know-Nothings and Republicans had gone poorly, and nativist sentiment continued to be a powerful force, distracting from the central issue of slavery. In addition, Democrat-turned-Republican Simon Cameron maintained his own political organization separate from Republicans, hampering fusion. While Buchanan sat at Wheatland spreading fears of the "imminent danger of disunion, should Fremont [*sic*] be elected," as he phrased it in several letters, Jones took command of the state canvass, aided by Philadelphia newspaper editor John Forney. As chairman of the Pennsylvania State Central Committee, Forney flooded the state with speakers and pamphlets and saw to the mobilization of the immigrant vote through hasty and sometimes fraudulent naturalization proceedings.³⁶

Unlike in neighboring New York, Pennsylvania Democrats were firmly united behind skilled, energetic leadership. Money, primarily from Wall Street, poured into the state, allowing Jones and Forney to counter

³⁶A. Birdsall to Breckinridge, Aug. 19, 1856, book 186, and James Buchanan to Breckinridge, Sept. 2 and Sept. 25, 1856, book 186, Breckinridge Family Papers, LOC; Klein, *President James Buchanan*, 259; Curtis, *Life of Buchanan*, 2:174; "The Canvass in Pennsylvania," *Boston Daily Atlas*, Sept. 13, 1856; Howell Cobb to Buchanan, July 27, 1856 (quoted), in Phillips, *Correspondence of Toombs, Stephens, and Cobb*, 377–78; Anbinder, *Nativism and Slavery*, 238–39, 242; Richard Brodhead to Coryell, Sept. 24, 1856, box 5, folder 5, Coryell Papers, HSP; Coleman, *Disruption of the Pennsylvania Democracy*, 88–89, 92, 95–96; Buchanan to Capen, Aug. 27, 1856, in Curtis, *Life of Buchanan*, 2:180; Buchanan to J. G. Jones, June 29 (quoted), July 6, July 11, July 24, and July 29, 1856, box 5, Buchanan and Johnston Papers, LOC; J. G. Jones to A. O. P. Nicholson, Nov. 18, 1855, American Historical Manuscripts Collection—Jones, J. Glancy, New-York Historical Society; C. H. Jones, *Life of Jones*, 1:344–45, 347; John Forney, *Anecdotes of Public Men*, 2 vols. (New York, 1873–81), 2:237–40; Nichols, *Disruption of American Democracy*, 47; William Dusinger, *Civil War Issues in Philadelphia, 1856–1865* (Philadelphia, 1965), 27–28, 30; David Edward Meerse, "James Buchanan, the Patronage, and the Northern Democratic Party, 1857–1858" (PhD diss., University of Illinois, 1969), 99; Forney to John Dix, Sept. 11, 1856, Dix to Forney, Sept. 15, 1856 in Dix, *Memoirs*, 1:321; Mark W. Summers, *The Plundering Generation: Corruption and the Crisis of the Union, 1849–1861* (New York, 1987), 241; Buchanan to William Reed, Sept. 14, 1856, in Curtis, *Life of Buchanan*, 2:182.

the opposition at every move. "We spent a great deal of money," recalled Forney years later. Fear continued to be the best weapon, and newspapers and traveling orators filled the heads of Pennsylvanians with images of bloody disunion and gruesome race war. African Americans, claimed the *Pennsylvanian*, were so dangerous that they must be kept in bondage to protect whites. Cobb and Herschel Johnson of Georgia were brought in for a whirlwind proslavery speaking tour. "The state has been canvassed with extraordinary zeal & energy by the ablest Democrats of the party," assured William Preston to Democratic vice-presidential nominee John Breckinridge. Charges that Frémont was a Catholic were especially potent in Pennsylvania, and many conservative Whigs preferred the Democracy to the Republicans. These small advantages gave narrow victories to the Democrats, including the reelection of Jones to Congress in a hard-fought, bitter contest in the former Democratic stronghold of Berks County. "The glorious results of the elections of the 14th Inst in Pennsylvania, Indiana . . . have made the calling and election of *B[uchanan]* and *B[reckinridge]* by the people next month 'a fixed fact!'" exclaimed Democrat W. Grandin to Senator Robert Hunter of Virginia.³⁷

As one of the relatively few Northern Democrats who achieved reelection and with his mentor now president-elect, Jones's position within the party was stronger than ever. Compare him to another Northern Democrat in 1857, Stephen Douglas: Douglas is well known and features prominently in studies on antebellum politics, but in 1857 he was alienated from the new administration, and his reelection was uncertain. Jones, on the other hand, who is virtually unknown to us today, was one of the new president's closest advisers, the Democratic House leader, and chairman of the Ways and Means Committee (of the Thirty-Fifth Congress). Despite the wave of antislavery sentiment sweeping the North, he had just been reelected. He was, arguably, in a much better position to shape policy and partisanship than the famed Little Giant.³⁸

³⁷ Forney, *Anecdotes*, 2:240 (quoted); Buchanan to Breckinridge, Sept. 25, 1856, William Preston to Breckinridge, Oct. 11, 1856 (quoted), book 188, and J. G. Jones to Breckinridge, Nov. 17, 1856, book 189, Breckinridge Family Papers, LOC; Nichols, *Disruption of American Democracy*, 46–47; Coleman, *Disruption of the Pennsylvania Democracy*, 90–101; Meerse, "Patronage," 21; Dusinger, *Civil War Issues in Philadelphia*, 31–32, 41–42; Curtis, *Life of Buchanan*, 2:175; C. H. Jones, *Life of Jones*, 1:345, 347; "A Base Fraud Somewhere," *Washington National Era*, Sept. 25, 1856; J. G. Jones to W. Grandin, Oct. 31, 1856, box 28, Papers of RMT Hunter, Hunter-Garnett Collection, Special Collections Library, University of Virginia, Charlottesville, VA; "The News," *Washington Daily Globe*, Oct. 16, 1856; W. Grandin to Hunter, Oct. 18, 1856 (quoted), in *Correspondence of Robert M. T. Hunter, 1826–1867*, ed. Charles Henry Ambler (New York, 1971), 199–200.

³⁸ Nichols, *Disruption of American Democracy*, 54–55, 66; Klein, *President James Buchanan*, 264.

Nevertheless, Buchanan knew his “right hand man,” as the *New Orleans Daily Creole* called Jones, could not survive long in the face of the antislavery onslaught, even in the “Gibraltar of the Democracy,” Berks County. Old Buck wanted to reward Jones with a cabinet position, but by 1857 Jones had enemies at home in Pennsylvania (“shafts of envy,” as Jones described it). John Forney had grown jealous of Jones’s power and prestige and threatened to divide and disrupt Buchanan’s state machine if Jones was appointed. This was more than Buchanan was willing to risk. As distasteful as it must have been, Old Buck gave in to the undisciplined editor, dumped Jones, and selected the humorless Jeremiah Black as attorney general. “I have arrived at the conclusion,” Buchanan penned to his protégé, “that the interest of my administration, in this State, as well as your own interest & comfort . . . will deprive me of your valuable services in the Cabinet.” “You are to be the judge of all this,” replied Jones, “& to you I leave it.” To his niece Harriet, Buchanan confided: “The conspirators against poor Jones have at length succeeded in hunting him down. Ever since my election the hounds have been in pursuit of him. I now deeply regret;—but I shall say no more.”³⁹

Jones’s failure to gain a cabinet appointment was indicative of Buchanan’s mounting patronage problem. Once installed in office, the new president faced a rather unusual situation: this was the first Democratic administration to follow a Democratic administration since Van Buren succeeded Jackson in 1837. Democrats were already in patronage positions in 1857, and Buchanan had to be careful choosing whom to replace and why. In the end, the new president decided to purge the government of all but the most dedicated doughfaces and proslavery

³⁹Nichols, *Disruption of American Democracy*, 67, 72, 220; Klein, *President James Buchanan*, 266; C. H. Jones, *Life of Jones*, 1:348–72; “Buchanan Not In Favor of Slavery,” *New Orleans Daily Creole*, Nov. 4, 1856; “Hon. J. Glancy Jones,” *New Haven Columbian Register*, Sept. 2, 1854; “Cabinet Making,” *New York Herald*, Dec. 16, 1856; “War Among the Democratic Cliques For The Spoils,” *New York Herald*, Dec. 20, 1856; “From Washington,” *Baltimore Sun*, Feb. 21, 1857; “J. Glancy Jones and the Cabinet,” *Philadelphia North American*, Feb. 27, 1857; J. G. Jones to Buchanan, Mar. 9, 1856 (quoted), box 28, folder 6, Buchanan Papers, HSP; William Bigler to Buchanan, Feb. 17, 1857, John Cochrane to J. G. Jones, Feb. 18, 1857, Henry May to J. G. Jones, Feb. 25, 1857, and J. G. Jones to Buchanan, Feb. 20, 1857 (quoted), in C. H. Jones, *Life of Jones*, 1:349, 357, 360–62; Buchanan to Jeremiah Black, Mar. 6, 1857, in *The Works of James Buchanan, Comprising His Speeches, State Papers, and Private Correspondence*, ed. John Bassett Moore, 12 vols. (Philadelphia, 1908–11), 10:114; Buchanan to J. G. Jones, Nov. 29, 1856, Feb. 17 (quoted), Feb. 22, Feb. 28, and July 28, 1857, box 5, Buchanan to Harriet Johnston, Oct. 15, 1858 (quoted), series 1, Buchanan and Johnston Papers, LOC; Robert Toombs to Alexander Stephens, Feb. 24, 1857, in Phillips, *Correspondence of Toombs, Stephens, and Cobb*, 397–98; Wm Ludlow to Sam Tilden, July 1857, box 16, folder 51, Samuel J. Tilden Papers, Manuscripts and Archives Division, New York Public Library.

politicos. "Pierce men are hunted down like beasts," cried one correspondent to William Marcy.⁴⁰

Buchanan used his "rotatory rule" selectively. To reduce disruption to government business, for instance, he allowed more capable Pierce appointees, such as Minister to France John Y. Mason of Virginia, to complete their diplomatic assignments before being replaced. There was also a distinct sectional bias in his application of the rule—it was only applied in the free states. Buchanan allowed the Southern bosses to make their own decisions and did not interfere with their plans. "Southern men very generally denounced it [rotation] and claimed—nay more—demanded—that their section of the country should be exempt from its operation," wrote Marcy with disgust. "This demand has been complied with." Such patronage decisions, politically motivated and sectionally charged, produced the desired partisan discipline but resulted in staggering corruption. Ideological purity was valued above all else, and party hacks were sometimes chosen above qualified professionals.

Buchanan's doughface appointees in the free states were unpopular with voters, who depended on them for public services. "The offices were made the sport of sheer [*sic*] personal caprice," groaned Marcy. Within just two years, Buchanan's patronage decisions produced unprecedented levels of corruption at the local level, when wielded by machines such as Tammany Hall in New York, as well as in the federal government, such as Secretary of War John Floyd's pilfering of the War Department through land-selling schemes and no-bid contracts. "You have systematized corruption," complained a correspondent of Secretary of the Treasury Howell Cobb in June 1858. An acquaintance of Senator James Henry Hammond complained of the "branded, corrupt few of the worst desperados in policies, [who] trade off for pay and promises by wholesale the Peoples' Highest Office to some of the vilest of mankind." Congressional inquiries and investigations later revealed the depths of corruption—everything from secret slush funds to

⁴⁰ Klein, *President James Buchanan*, 278–80; Meerse, "Patronage," 22, 55–63, 78, 180; Van Dyke to Buchanan, Feb. 23, 1855; Buchanan to John Y. Mason, Dec. 29, 1856, in Moore, *Works of James Buchanan*, 10:100–101; F. Bigger to English, Mar. 30, 1857, box 2, William Hayden English Family Papers, Indiana Historical Society (hereafter English Family Papers); J. G. Jones to Burke, Feb. 9, 1857, container 4, Burke Papers, LOC; J. S. Black to Breese, Aug. 7, 1858, J. Cook to Breese, Sept. 21, 1858, Sidney Breese Papers, Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum, Springfield, IL; Summers, *Plundering Generation*, 27–28; Diary Entries, Mar. 17, Mar. 24, Mar. 25, and Apr. 4, 1857, Marcy to McClelland, Apr. 6, 1857, Unknown to Marcy, Mar. 27, 1857 (quoted), in Thomas M. Marshall, "Diary and Memoranda of William L. Marcy, 1857," *American Historical Review* 25 (1919): 642–43, 645–46, 646–47, 647, 648–49, 649–50.

buy votes in Congress to exorbitant printing contracts given to cronies. The “Buchaneers” were indeed ruthless political pirates.⁴¹

Though he failed to win the attorney generalship, Glancy Jones remained a powerful member of the House of Representatives and an influential partisan. “For all the public men living on this side of Mason and Dixon’s Line,” commented the *New York Tribune*, “Mr. Jones is most thoroughly Southern in his political complexion.” His final service to both his party and his beleaguered boss came in the monumental Congressional debates over the Lecompton Constitution of Kansas. When the Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854 removed the Missouri Compromise line of 1820, white Southerners, primarily from neighboring Missouri, rushed into the new Kansas Territory to plant their “peculiar institution.” Antislavery, free-state Northerners, too, migrated to Kansas, and in far larger numbers. Moreover, while the Missouri “border ruffians” were only temporary interlopers with the single goal of expanding slavery and Southern political power, Northern settlers, constituting the vast majority of the fast-growing Kansas population, intended to start new lives and stay for the long term. Nevertheless, the proslavery minority used violence and terrorism to manipulate elections, intimidate voters, and gain control of the fledgling territorial government.⁴²

On February 19, 1857, the proslavery territorial legislature called for a constitutional convention to be held in Lecompton on September

⁴¹ Meerse, “Patronage,” 56–63, 65–67, 122–38; Summers, *Plundering Generation*, 27–28, 239, 242–48; Buchanan to John Y. Mason, Dec. 29, 1856, in Moore, *Works of James Buchanan*, 10:100–101; F. Bigger to English, Mar. 30, 1857; Klein, *President James Buchanan*, 280–81, 284; Diary Entries, Mar. 17, Mar. 24 (quoted), 1857, Unknown to Marcy, Mar. 27, 1857, in Marshall, “Diary of Marcy,” 646–47; Nichols, *Disruption of American Democracy*, 83–85, 91; Johannsen, *Stephen A. Douglas*, 550, 554–55; Douglas to Treat, Feb. 5, 1857, in *The Letters of Stephen A. Douglas*, ed. Robert W. Johannsen (Urbana, IL, 1961), 372; Buchanan to Wise, Dec. 26, 1856, reel 2, Buchanan and Johnston Papers, LOC; Dix, *Memoirs*, 2:327; W. B. Maclay to Burke, Dec. 16, 1856, container 4, Burke Papers, LOC; William E. Gienapp, “‘No Bed of Roses’: James Buchanan, Abraham Lincoln, and Presidential Leadership in the Civil War Era,” in *James Buchanan and the Political Crisis of the 1850s*, ed. Michael Birkner (Selinsgrove, PA, 1996), 102–3; Stephen Dillaye to Cobb, June 8, 1858 (quoted), in Phillips, *Correspondence of Toombs, Stephens, and Cobb*, 439; W. M. Corry to Hammond, Nov. 11, 1858 (quoted), box 25, James Henry Hammond Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, DC; Republican Congressional Committee, “The Ruin of the Democratic Party: Reports of the Covode and Other Committees,” accessed Mar. 14, 2016, <https://archive.org/details/ruinofdemocratic01repu>.

⁴² For detailed treatments of the Kansas-Nebraska Act and the subsequent territorial violence, see Etcheson, *Bleeding Kansas*, and Michael Todd Landis, *Northern Men with Southern Loyalties: The Democratic Party and the Sectional Crisis* (Ithaca, NY, 2014). “J. Glancy Jones,” *New York Tribune*, Feb. 26, 1857. The Missouri Compromise had prohibited the spread of slavery in the former Louisiana Territory north of the parallel 36°30′ except within the boundaries of the proposed state of Missouri.

7. The legislature planned to ignore the free-state majority and craft a proslavery, minority-rule document that would preserve slavery and enthrone the Democratic Party. Despite President Buchanan's guarantees to Governor Robert Walker that under no circumstances would Kansas be admitted to the Union without a popular ratification of the constitution, the legislature had no intention of submitting the final product to a vote. To make matters worse, the election of convention delegates, scheduled for June, would be based on an old, unrepresentative census conducted by proslavery commissioners. The free-state majority, rightly incensed, boycotted the June election, thereby guaranteeing that the September convention would be unrepresentative; roughly 10 percent of the territorial population, mainly from proslavery areas, elected the sixty total delegates. The resulting document—the Lecompton Constitution—was both baldly proslavery and blatantly unrepresentative.⁴³

From December 1857 to March 1858, Congress wrestled with the Lecompton Constitution. Southerners demanded that it be ratified immediately and that slavery be forced on unwilling Kansans, and Northerners fought to kill the constitution and defend majority rule. Jones belonged to the small band of Northern Democrats who endorsed the Lecompton Constitution and supported Buchanan's attempts to force it through Congress. As chairman of the Ways and Means Committee and confidant of the president, he had enormous influence over the direction of legislation. Jones joined his fellow Democrats in enunciating a stunningly conservative, antidemocratic creed in defense of Lecompton. "Non-intervention," he asserted, should be the watchword of Congress. The violence and fraud in the Kansas Territory, he maintained, were none of Congress's business; they were purely under the purview of the territorial legislature. Furthermore, majority rule was less important than "law and order." Of paramount importance was not that the territorial government had been usurped by proslavery terrorists representing a tiny minority but that the territorial government be obeyed and its dictates followed at all costs. Congress, he concluded, could deal only with the territorial government, regardless of its mani-

⁴³ For the extent of proslavery voter fraud in Kansas, see Summers, *Plundering Generation*, 248–51; Etcheson, *Bleeding Kansas*, 141–58; Klein, *President James Buchanan*, 291, 296–97; Republican Congressional Committee, 1857–59, "The Ruin of the Democratic Party: Reports of the Covode and Other Committees," 6–7.

festation, for the territorial government was the only *legal* expression of the people of Kansas.⁴⁴

This troubling doctrine was the script President Buchanan determined for Northern Democrats in his December 8, 1857, message to Congress. Downplaying electoral fraud in Kansas, Buchanan declared that because the elections that produced the constitutional convention in Lecompton appeared legal, the results must be binding, regardless of the will of the majority. The free-state majority that boycotted the elections, he reasoned, had been given every opportunity to exercise its voting rights and had chosen not to do so, thus forfeiting its right to oppose the outcome. “A large portion of the citizens of Kansas,” he explained, “did not think proper to register their names and to vote at the election for delegates; but an opportunity to do this having been fairly afforded, their refusal to avail themselves of their right could in no manner affect the legality of the convention.” Or, as Senator Graham Fitch of Indiana later stated, “That many, and perhaps a majority of the citizens of Kansas did not vote either at the election of representatives to the Territorial Legislature, or delegates to the convention, may be true. Where is your remedy? You cannot compel men to vote. They can only be permitted and invited to do so.” Buchanan concluded his message by implying that the entire discussion of majority will in Kansas was pointless, given that the Supreme Court had recently ruled in the *Dred Scott* decision (March 1857) that slaves were property protected by the US Constitution. Many free-state voters were appalled that the president ignored the glaring fraud and violent intimidation in Kansas elections. Republicans, in particular, insisted that a new round of elections be held, and that the territorial constitution be placed before the public for an authentic, legitimate vote.⁴⁵

In the end Buchanan, Jones, and the Democrats were successful: Lecompton passed both houses of Congress on April 30, 1858. When exuberant Democrats arrived at his Washington residence to sing his praises, Jones offered only a few remarks. Lecompton, he assured them, was “a good cause” worth “a good deal of intense labor.” Its passage was a testament to American government and a victory over nefarious ne’er-do-wells who hated freedom and liberty. “It was the sublime spectacle,” he explained:

⁴⁴C. H. Jones, *Life of Jones*, 2:2–3, 15–16; J. G. Jones to Democrats of Philadelphia, Dec. 26, 1857 (quoted), in *ibid.*, 2:5–7; “Powers of the Kansas Constitutional Convention,” *Macon (GA) Weekly Telegraph*, Nov. 3, 1857; “Hon. J. Glancy Jones on the Kansas Question,” *Harrisburg (PA) Weekly Patriot and Union*, May 20, 1858.

⁴⁵Cong. Globe, 35th Cong., 1st Sess. 4–5, 138 (1857); Cong. Globe, 35th Cong., 1st Sess. appendix 1–5 (1857); Etcheson, *Bleeding Kansas*, 141–52.

after months of painful suspense, exhibited in the halls of Congress by the representatives of the true patriots of our common glorious country, in yielding up their personal and peculiar views, but not principles, to offer on the common altar of their country their devotion to that Union which their patriotic sires had founded in this heaven-born spirit of mutual concession for the welfare of the common brotherhood.⁴⁶

All the rhetoric, however, could not mask that the Democratic Party was trying to force slavery on an unwilling populace. Free-state voters were irate, and Northern Democrats were cut down at the polls. Even Jones's Berks County ("the very back bone of democracy," as the *Macon Weekly Telegraph* described it) turned against the Democracy. The new Republican opposition had an easy time painting Jones as a tool of the Slave Power and a minion of the unpopular president, accusations which, of course, were both true. "He only secured his renomination," noted the *New York Tribune*, "by making Buchanan conciliate his leading foes with fat contracts, and the revolt against him will go even beyond the Anti-Lecompton men." Jones, for his part, denied that a sectional crisis even existed and refused to acknowledge the severe economic downturn that struck the nation in 1857. "There are no questions that are agitating the country now," he insisted: "[W]e are now in the midst of peace and prosperity." Such platitudes were laughable, and in 1858 the "King of *Asses* Jehu Glancy Jones" went down to defeat. Given his high-profile relationship with the president and his leadership on Lecompton, Jones's downfall garnered national attention and indicated that the Democratic Party was in serious trouble. Buchanan rightly viewed the defeat as a personal rebuke and vowed to spare his friend further humiliation. "With the blessing of Providence," Buchanan confided to his niece, "I shall endeavor to raise him up & place him in some position where they cannot reach him." With that in mind, Old Buck appointed Jones Minister to Austria. "He is thus rewarded by the President for betraying the People," concluded the *Milwaukee Sentinel*, while the *Charleston Mercury* gushed, "This compliment to a distinguished Pennsylvanian will be gratifying to the great majority of our citizens."⁴⁷

⁴⁶ Cong. Globe, 35th Cong., 1st Sess. 1892–99, 1900–1906 (1858); "Washington, May 2," *Pittsfield (MA) Sun*, May 6, 1858; C. H. Jones, *Life of Jones*, 2:15, 18–21, 19 (quoted).

⁴⁷ Nichols, *Disruption of American Democracy*, 220, 223; Klein, *President James Buchanan*, 330; Coleman, *Disruption of the Pennsylvania Democracy*, 117; Forney, *Anecdotes of Public Men*, 1:120; "Hon. J. Glancy Jones," *Macon (GA) Weekly Telegraph*, Sept. 7, 1858 (quoted); "The Washington District," *Harrisburg (PA) Patriot*, July 1, 1858; "Pennsylvania Politics," *New York Tribune*, June 19, 1858 (quoted); "Glancy Jones," *New York Tribune*, Oct. 14, 1858; "Pennsylvania," *New York Tribune*, Oct. 14, 1858; C. H. Jones, *Life of Jones*, 2:79–80, 81–82 (J. G. Jones campaign speech, quoted), 86, 88, 91; "Reading,

And that is where the tale of Jehu Glancy Jones essentially ends. He was removed from his diplomatic post by the Lincoln administration, returned to Reading, Pennsylvania, to resume his law practice, and never held office again. Politically conservative, he sympathized with the Southern rebellion, publicly condemned Lincoln as a “despot,” authored and published essays critical of Republican policy, defended clients who were active in the antiwar movement, and vigorously opposed civil rights for African Americans.⁴⁸

Despite its inauspicious end, Jones’s career is instructive to historians. It reveals a great deal about Northern proslavery sentiment and the nature of the Northern Democracy. Leading Northern Democrats such as Jones and Buchanan were not romantic defenders of working men, as some scholars have claimed; nor were they moderates striving to save the Union from extreme sectionalism. Rather, they were proslavery activists whose willful actions had direct and disastrous effects on the nation. Their policies enraged free-state voters and caused the fatal split in the Democratic Party that resulted in Lincoln’s election, which, in turn, triggered disunion. They were culpable and responsible—a fact that should not be forgotten or overlooked.

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Pa.,” *Lowell (MA) Daily Citizen and News*, Oct. 20, 1858; “Hon. J. Glancy Jones,” *Philadelphia Public Ledger*, Oct. 22, 1858; Dean to Wise, Nov. 11, 1858; Buchanan to Harriet Lane, Oct. 15, 1858 (quoted), in Moore, *Works of James Buchanan*, 10:229–30; “Latest News,” *Milwaukee Sentinel*, Oct. 18, 1858; “The Democracy Overthrown!” *Milwaukee Sentinel*, Oct. 18, 1858; “Appointment of J. Glancy Jones,” *Milwaukee Sentinel*, Oct. 19, 1858; “The Appointment of J. Glancy Jones,” *Milwaukee Sentinel*, Oct. 23, 1858 (quoted); “Hon. J. Glancy Jones,” *Charleston Mercury*, Oct. 23, 1858 (quoted).

⁴⁸ C. H. Jones, *Life of Jones*, 2:131, 135–38, 139–49; “The News in Brief,” *Lowell (MA) Daily Citizen and News*, Dec. 27, 1861; “Political News,” *New York Tribune*, Oct. 31, 1861; “Berks County,” *Harrisburg (PA) Patriot*, Apr. 30, 1863; “A Scheme,” *Windsor Vermont Journal*, June 6, 1863; “From Old Berks,” *Philadelphia Age*, Oct. 2, 1863; “Pennsylvania,” *Philadelphia Age*, July 6, 1864; “J. Glancy Jones,” *New Haven (CT) Palladium*, Oct. 12, 1863.