POLITICAL CAMPAIGNS OF THE EIGHTEEN FORTIES

FRANK W. STONECIPHER

The history of American politics is replete with examples of the unexpected. Many a leader, riding on the waves of public acclaim, has been caught by the undertow of violent reaction and disgust through a single misstep in his career as an officeholder. Public opinion is a powerful force in politics. Andrew Jackson was the idol of America after his courageous and effective proclamation against the South Carolina Nullification Act, but his determination to remove federal funds from the Second Bank of the United States, notwithstanding the fact that the law made the bank the custodian of public funds, and the methods he adopted to accomplish this purpose turned many voters throughout the country violently against him. When Secretary of the Treasury Louis McLane opposed the removal of the deposits, he was removed by Jackson. His successor, William J. Duane, refused to do his master’s bidding and was likewise removed, whereupon Roger B. Taney, later the chief justice, was transferred from the attorney-general’s office to be secretary of the treasury, and he promptly did the President’s bidding.

The Senate refused to confirm Taney’s appointment and passed a

1 An address delivered at a meeting of the Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania, October 26, 1948, on the eve of a presidential election, and now again of timely interest. Unfortunately, the speaker did not live to see his address in print, for he passed away during the initial stages of its publication.—Ed.
resolution that the President, by his removal of the deposits "had assumed upon himself authority and power not conferred by the Constitution and laws, but in derogation of both." It required three years to persuade the Senate to expunge the resolution from the journal.

This opposition to Jackson in a large measure strengthened and united the Whig party. Jackson chose as his successor, in the campaign of 1836, the then vice president, Martin Van Buren. This campaign was bitterly fought, and the plans of the opposition to throw the election into the House of Representatives almost prevailed. The popular vote for Van Buren was 762,978, and for the Whig candidates 736,250. In the electoral vote, Van Buren received 170, while his opponent received only 73 votes. In this election the Senate had to elect the vice president, the only such occasion in our political history.

The era of Van Buren was filled with political intrigue, treachery, and confusion. Jackson was of the rough-and-ready type, while Van Buren was a polished gentleman who simply could not follow in the footsteps of his predecessor. Jackson had sown the wind; Van Buren reaped the whirlwind. The margin of his election was so narrow that a change of 2,183 votes in Pennsylvania would have thrown the election into the House of Representatives. The Panic of 1837, a direct result of Jackson's fight against the Bank, came within sixty days after the commencement of the new administration. Although he had a Democratic majority in the House, the President suffered repeated defeats. The Jackson influence had vanished.

The Whigs took advantage of the Jackson-VanBuren fiscal platform, and without declaring themselves in favor of restoring what had been destroyed, they placated the South by hostility to the administration without even promising to modify the policy of the government on the subject of states' rights. In short, the decadence of the spirit of Jackson, and the inability of his successor appointee to carry on the methods and policies of the Hero, proved to the Whigs that the time for a change had come.

At the convention of the Whigs in Harrisburg, on December 4, 1839, Henry Clay was the party leader who had served the public for thirty years, but he labored under the two-fold disadvantage of being a Free Mason and an advocate of the protective tariff, known as the American System, whose creator and strongest advocate was Pittsburgh's own Henry Baldwin. As a result of this situation, General William
Henry Harrison became the choice of those who believed that he alone could unite the anti-Van Buren group. The vote for President at the convention was 148 for Harrison, 90 for Clay, and 16 for General Winfield Scott. On the second day of the convention, the friends of Clay moved to declare General Harrison the nominee for President, and John Tyler was the nominee for Vice President.

There was no distinct party platform—everything was hatred and opposition to Van Buren and the locofocos. This was the name of a group which called itself the Equal Rights party, but which the opposition called the locofoco party. In New York just before the election of 1835, this group undertook to oppose the Tammany crowd. At a public meeting the Tammany group suddenly withdrew and as they went, extinguished all the gas lights. The Equal Rights group anticipated this move and provided themselves with candles and the then new locofoco matches, whereby the hall was sufficiently lighted to proceed with the meeting. The Whigs shortly thereafter called all Democrats locofocos.

Thus was ushered in the initial political campaign of the forties. This was the first political campaign in the history of this country which was marked by great excitement. Perhaps the basic cause of unusual interest was the hard times. All industries were depressed; the heavy hand of gloom touched all classes because of the conditions then prevailing. The feeling was almost universal that the time had come for a change, and this could only be accomplished by a real landslide against Van Buren. As election time approached, the people had plenty of opportunity to know and feel the general conditions everywhere.

The young men of the country were enthusiastic in their support, not of a young man, but of one who had reached his three score and ten years. The “log cabin, coonskins and hard cider” campaign was unique. The Whigs adopted these emblems as illustrative of frontier life. The campaign orators frequently referred to the primitive life of General Harrison, who had lived in a rude log cabin, hung about with coonskins, the door having a wooden latch operated by a string that always hung on the outside, which, in the words of the popular song,

\[
\text{Was never pulled through,} \\
\text{For it never was the custom of} \\
\text{Old Tippecanoe and Tyler too.}
\]

The spellbinders usually referred to the fact that outside the door was a
barrel of cider, always on tap, with a gourd hanging by its side, a welcome to everybody.

These symbols were used in every procession and at every mass meeting. Log cabins were actually mounted on wheels, adorned with rifles, coonskin caps and deerskin jackets. Often a live coon was seen on the roof of the cabin in the passing parade, and this coon soon became the special party emblem, which in the early days descended to the Republicans. The "hard cider" emblem was mentioned by Daniel Webster in a campaign speech in Baltimore. He dwelt upon the present trying times when the people thought everything was topsy turvy, but from which there must be some way out, and then he said: "All agree that we have had hard times, and there are many who think that the remedy for this is hard cider." From the start of this campaign the spirit of enthusiasm spread throughout the nation. In February, 1840, the Whig convention of Ohio had an imposing parade, with all these emblems, which stimulated tremendous interest among the people.

When the Democrats had their convention in Baltimore in May, the Whigs put on a typical parade. The Baltimore Patriot thus described it: "Monday was a proud day for Baltimore, for Maryland, for the Union. It was a day on which the young Whigs of all the States were to meet in grand convention. Never before was seen such an assemblage of the people, in whose persons are concentrated the sovereignty of the government. In the language of the President of the day 'every mountain sent its rill, every valley its stream, and lo! the avalanche of the people is here.' It is impossible to convey the slightest idea of the sublime spectacle presented by the procession as it moved through the City. . . . The excitement, the joy, the enthusiasm, which everywhere prevailed, lighting up the countenance of every man in the procession; the shouts, the applause, the cheers of those who filled the sidewalks, the windows, the waving of handkerchiefs by the ladies; the responsive cries of the people; the flaunting banners, the martial music: the loud roar, at intervals, of the deep mouthed cannon, all these and more, much more, must be described, seen in the mind's eye, vibrate through the frame, fill the hearts, before the reader can approach to any conception of the reality: and when all these are done, if they were possible, he has still but a faint and meagre impression of the scene that was presented! In no country, in no time, never before in the history of man, was there a spectacle so full of natural glory."
Pittsburgh was not without its participation in this campaign. William G. Johnston, in his Life and Reminiscences, describes the erection of a large log cabin in a field over in Allegheny near Sandusky Street, as now located, and only a short distance from Stockton Avenue. He says: 'People flocked thither from all the country roundabout, bringing logs of such lengths as were needed for the 'raising.' Farmers accustomed to such work, and especially those who could dovetail the corners, or do whatever chopping there was requiring nicety, performed all such labor. Others, whether of country or city, hauled the logs where wanted, and lifted them into place; these also were equal to the chinking and daubing. By steady work from an early hour of the morning until dark, the cabin was completed and made ready for occupancy. Near by, throughout the entire day, were long tables, bountifully supplied with refreshments, at which all who desired, whether workers or loafers, might help themselves. Near the close of the day a tall pole was raised in front of the cabin, and when pulled into place by the long line of men tugging at the ropes, the Stars and Stripes were run up, when a thousand or more throats joined in a cheer for 'Tip. and Ty': after which all went to their homes.' There was a public meeting in the cabin at "early candle-light," and the place was packed. General William Robinson, Jr., the mayor of Allegheny, presided.

In Pittsburgh, early in the summer of 1840, the Tippecanoe Club was formed with headquarters at the corner of Strawberry Alley and Liberty Avenue. Seats were built for several hundred people for public meetings and on one of the walls of the building was inscribed the slogan, "Two Dollars a Day and Roast Beef," an argument offered by the protectionists. Weekly meetings were held at the club. John D. Davis was president and William M. Darlington and Samuel Fahnestock were secretaries. Johnston says he remembers that one of the speakers at these meetings was "Hon. Walter Forward, an earnest, convincing speaker, and a great favorite with people in general." Henry M. Brackenridge, who was elected to Congress that year, was an occasional speaker, as was also Cornelius Darragh. Johnston also mentions, among other speakers, James Marshall, "whose tongue, hand, and purse found place in every good cause"; Thomas Bakewell, among the best and most useful men the city has ever known, long-headed and unflinching in

duty; William Eichbaum, hand and glove with the latter in very many public matters; and Neville B. Craig, the able editor of the Gazette, never given to much talking, but whose opinions, when made known, always had great weight.”

In September, partly in commemoration of Perry’s victory on Lake Erie, the Whigs held an open-air convention on the West Common in Allegheny City, attended by throngs of citizens and addressed by speakers of national prominence, including the vice presidential candidate, John Tyler. On the tenth, the convention day proper, “a great procession,” continues Johnston, “formed in the city, moved through the principal streets, and brought up at the meeting-place, at the foot of Hogback Hill, Allegheny. Flags and banners innumerable were carried; some of the latter were both rude and crude; others, refined and elegant. The subjects of inscriptions in large measure had reference to the depressed times, and what was hoped for in the event of a Whig victory. Many related to the heroism of General Harrison in his battles with Indians. Some told of the evils wrought by the Democratic party; while the extravagance and crimes of President Van Buren and his cabinet were themes much dwelt upon. A common demand was for a protective tariff, and among banners of a pictorial character were those which on one side showed closed mills going to decay under Democratic rule, and on the other, mills in full blast, their great stacks sending forth volumes of smoke, and showing every sign of prosperity under a protective policy. Trades and manufactories of every kind were represented on platform wagons. Thus the printers had a press constantly in motion, from which campaign songs were printed and thrown to the crowds thronging the sidewalks, or hemming in the procession along the thoroughfares. With one of these songs, everybody was familiar, and it was in every mouth. It seemed as if people who never before were suspected of being musical could on that day join in singing the famous song, ‘Tippecanoe and Tyler too.’” He mentions the Revolutionary soldiers who rode in the procession, as well as veterans of the War of 1812.

The election of Harrison was celebrated locally with a dinner given in the large canal warehouse in downtown Pittsburgh. All friends and foes were invited guests, and a good time was had by all, but the day of reckoning came the next morning. The Tippecanoe Club had appointed a committee of arrangements which put on the show, but did not count the cost, and many who danced never paid the piper. One member of
the committee who had to help make up the deficit was so disgusted that he forsook the party, and ever after "walked in the paths of the unterrified Democracy."

On Friday, January 29, 1841, the President-elect stopped over in Pittsburgh for a few days on his way to Washington for the inauguration. An account of his visit here is given in the weekly *Pittsburgh Gazette* of February 5, under date of January 30, which reads in part as follows:

**General Harrison.**—This distinguished patriot, and veteran soldier and statesman, arrived here yesterday afternoon, about 4 o'clock, in the Steam Boat *Ben Franklin*, accompanied by the *Fulton*, which had been dispatched from this place to meet him at Wheeling and convey him here, in case the river should be too low for the Franklin.

Upon landing, he was conducted to the apartments provided for him and his suite at the Pittsburgh Hotel, in an open carriage, accompanied by the Mayors of Pittsburgh and Allegheny and Gen. Markle. He addressed an immense assemblage of our fellow citizens, from the front of *Iron's Hotel*, this morning at eleven o'clock.

The address was eloquent, pertinent to the occasion, and gave very great satisfaction to the many thousands who heard him.

The General will remain in this city until Monday, and then ascend the Monongahela to Brownsville, where he will take the National Road. . . .

So it was that memories of the color and glamor of the first exciting presidential campaign were kept vivid until General Harrison entered the White House as the ninth President of the United States, only to live there for a month.

For reasons not reflecting upon the General, no election ever caused more general disappointment. The Democrats were disgusted with the claptrap of the Whig campaign. They declared the victory was fraudulent, won by the momentary madness of the people and the extravagant use of money. Immediately they determined to put Van Buren before the people again, and plans to this end were started before the Harrison inauguration. During the three years that followed, Democratic conventions in twenty-four of the twenty-six states came out for a return of

---

3 According to Harris' 1841 Pittsburgh directory, the Pittsburgh Hotel was located at the corner of Third Avenue and Wood Street, and its proprietor was Major John Irons—hence, apparently, the other designation used above. General Joseph Markle, a paper manufacturer of Westmoreland County, had served as a captain under General Harrison in the northwestern campaigns of the War of 1812.
Van Buren and three-fourths of the conventions instructed their delegates to support him.

The Whigs, too, were disappointed, but for a different reason. When Tyler became President, he definitely double-crossed his party. The most important question before the people was the promise to correct the financial policy of the Van Buren administration. When a bill was passed to create another Bank of the United States, Tyler vetoed it and the Whigs were not strong enough to overcome the veto. A second bill was prepared and passed, and this, too, was vetoed. Tyler had never favored such a bank while he was in Congress. This double veto was represented by the Whigs throughout the nation. All the members of the Cabinet resigned except Daniel Webster, Secretary of State, and a public announcement was made by the Whig members of Congress that “those who brought the President into power, can no longer, in any manner or degree, be justly held responsible or blamed for the administration of the Executive Branch of the Government.”

The chief characteristic of Tyler throughout his political life was that he relied on those who opposed him and thwarted the measures of those who elected him. This attempt to curry favor with the Democrats did Tyler no good. As time passed, this pro-Van Buren sentiment waned, however, and toward the close of 1843, the Democrats were in a state of hopeless confusion.

The Whigs were united for Clay, because for the first time, the Tyler treachery had closed their ranks into political unity. Then suddenly the picture changed over the question of the annexation of Texas. Tyler sent a treaty to the Senate on April 22, 1844, providing for the admission of the Republic of Texas. Van Buren and Clay, the potential candidates of the respective political parties, each happened to write a letter about the same time, condemning the proposal as wrong, and pointing out that it meant war with Mexico.

The Van Buren letter cost him the nomination at the next Democratic convention. The delegates who attended the convention held in Baltimore on May 27, 1844, had been pledged to Van Buren, but many were so upset by his letter that they decided to obey their instructions. On the first ballot Van Buren had a majority of 26; he lacked only 10 votes. In each of the next six ballots he lost ground and on the seventh ballot he had only 99 votes. The following day, New Hampshire gave her votes to James K. Polk of Tennessee, and on that ballot Polk received
44 votes. On the ninth ballot, New York produced a letter from Van Buren which authorized the withdrawal of his name in the interest of harmony, and the New York vote went to Polk, which resulted in his nomination.

In the Whig Convention, there was no question about the nomination of Henry Clay.

So the campaign of 1844 was Polk and George M. Dallas against Clay and Theodore Frelinghuysen, and the methods used were in some respects a repetition of the campaign of 1840, with this difference, that now there were shouting and enthusiasm on both sides instead of one. The Democrats at once took the initiative in favoring the “reannexation of Texas and the reoccupation of Oregon.” The argument was that Texas had previously belonged to us under the Louisiana Purchase, and Oregon had been ours prior to the treaty of joint occupancy with Great Britain. It further declared that our title to the whole of Oregon up to 54° 40’ north latitude was clear and indisputable. Such a bold policy caught the popular imagination of both North and South.

For the first time in his life, Henry Clay discovered that he stood on the timid side of all the important public questions, although personally, he was of a broad, generous and daring vision. His past history proved this. He had led public opinion in urging the War of 1812, served with distinction in negotiating the Treaty of Peace at Ghent, forced the country into an early recognition of the South American republics at the risk of a Spanish war, attacked the Florida Treaty of 1819 for surrendering our rightful claim to Texas under the Louisiana Purchase, and while Secretary of State, had taken a firm position with Great Britain on the Oregon question.

Clay was thrown off guard by the appearance of Polk, and took the dangerous step against public sentiment of modifying his position on the Texas question. His letter to Stephen Miller of Tuscaloosa, Alabama, on July 1, 1844, was called his death warrant from the disastrous effects it had on his prospects in certain few states where he was exceptionally strong. This letter declared that “far from having any personal objection to the annexation of Texas,” he would be glad to see it annexed, “without dishonor, without war, with the common consent of the Union, and upon just and fair terms.” Almost overnight this letter multiplied the members and influence of the Abolitionists in the North.

It is generally conceded that the New York Abolitionists defeated
Clay. Had they voted for him, as they might have done were it not for the Alabama letter, he would have had a popular majority of 24,119, and would have been elected by 146 electoral votes against 129 for Polk.

In passing, it is interesting to make note of an incident known as the Plaquemines fraud. The result of the vote in Louisiana gave Polk a majority of only 699 votes. The record of the voting in this parish, which lay just below New Orleans, in 1840, gave the Democrats 250 and the Whigs 40 votes; in 1842 they recorded 179 Democratic votes to 93 for the Whigs; in 1843 there were 310 Democratic votes to 36 for the Whigs; but in 1844, the Democratic vote was 1,007 to 37 for the Whigs. There were more Democratic votes cast in the parish in 1844 than the entire white male population of all ages in 1840. The story is that the steamboat "Agnes" went down from New Orleans with a load of passengers in charge of a politician, and stopped three or four times on the way down to cast each time a unanimous vote for Polk and Dallas, and that the steamboat "Planter" took down 140 others who did the same thing. The fact seems to be undisputed that ten years after 1844, this parish could only muster half as many votes as it gave to Polk that year.

Johnston, in commenting upon the defeat of Clay, observed: "It is among the inscrutable ways of Providence that the party [the antislavery Liberty party] was ever suffered to exist. . . . Whilst it may be true that those belonging to the Liberty party were in general well-meaning people, who were anxious to rid our country of a blot marring its title of being the land of the free; yet they had no well-defined plan of doing this, or one that would meet approval on the part of many thousands of others, as much opposed to slavery as were they, but whose loyalty to a compact by which alone a union of States had been consummated, would not permit them to engage in acts which would disrupt that union. These truce-breakers, on the contrary, were intent upon strife—if they could not rule, they would ruin."

The Polk election was very close in its results. There were only four states in which Polk had a plurality in excess of 10,000. Clay had such a plurality in one state. Although Polk had a 65 majority of the electoral vote, a change of 7,918 popular votes, distributed in New York, Pennsylvania, Georgia, and Indiana, would have given Clay a majority of 103 electoral votes.

Edward Stanwood, in his History of Presidential Elections, says:

---

"Mr. Clay was undoubtedly the most popular man in the United States at the time, but personal popularity did not decide the issue. The Democrats were very much in earnest, both about the election and about Texas. Mr. Polk was a comparatively unknown man, although he had served as Speaker of the House of Representatives. He therefore excited no antagonisms. He was particularly acceptable to the South, and the Northern Democrats had nothing against him. . . . While, therefore, the Whigs carried on an enthusiastic canvass, there were not wanting signs that a majority of the people were still Democratic, and the reverse of 1840 was really but a brief and half-thoughtless revulsion against certain abuses which had crept in, which the people did not like at the time, but to which they have since reconciled themselves most bravely."

The conduct of the campaign of 1844 was patterned after that of 1840, with all the usual torch light processions, public meetings, glee club concerts, and eulogies of the candidates. Apparently the color had faded; there was indistinctly outlined on the horizon the shadow of something ominous. No one knew just what or how, but the North and the South each had definite opinions on the subject of human chattels. The Texas annexation question, which may have changed the whole course of American history in the defeat of Henry Clay, contained this troublesome subject of slavery which started in 1820, in the compromise on the admission of Missouri, and which continued to the moment of secession.

In Polk's first message to Congress, he dwelt upon the Texas question and "deemed it proper, as a precautionary measure, to order a strong squadron to the coasts of Mexico and to concentrate an efficient military force on the western frontier of Texas." To the North it seemed apparent that the administration intended to precipitate war, and war came.

The four outstanding points of controversy in the Polk administration were the Mexican war, the so-called Independent Treasury, the ad valorem low tariff of 1846, and the retreat from "fifty-four forty, or fight" to the line of 49°. These were all bitterly opposed by the Whigs. The war was precipitated, many believed, by the insistence of the President in sending an army of occupation into the country west of the Nueces River, which was the well recognized western boundary of Texas.

6 James D. Richardson, comp., *Messages and Papers of the Presidents, 4:388* (*1897*).
James G. Blaine in his *Twenty Years of Congress* says: "For the first and only time in our political history, an administration conducting a war victorious at every step, steadily lost ground in the country. The House of Representatives, which declared war on the 11th day of May 1846, was Democratic by a large majority. The House, which was elected in the ensuing autumn, amid the resounding acclamations of Taylor's memorable victory at Monterey, had a decided Whig majority. The contrast between the boldness with which the Polk Administration had marched our army upon the territory claimed by Mexico, and the prudence with which it had retreated from a contest with Great Britain, after all our prior boasting, exposed the Democrats to merciless ridicule."

As a result of this turmoil in Congress, all was not well with the Democratic Party. The South was in complete control of the party and at the same time filled the Whigs with fear and terror. The question of slavery upset the Northern Democrats both in heart and mind. As a result, the antislavery men in New York set about to split the party in the state. Two factions of the party were known as the Hunkers, because they "hunkered for office," and the Barnburners, because of the zeal of their reforms. As one of their spokesmen put it, the latter imitated the Dutchman who burned his barn in order to destroy the rats that infested it. The contest between these two factions is said to have lost the election of 1848 for the Democrats. It not only deprived them of necessary electoral votes, but it gave the antislavery followers in other states the courage to carry on their campaigns more vigorously.

The President asked the Congress for an appropriation with which to pay Mexico, as a condition of peace, for the territory which had been acquired through the war. In the debate on this appropriation measure, David Wilmot of Pennsylvania submitted an amendment of momentous character. He felt that if this money were to be spent by the President in the acquisition of new soil, the North should be certain that it be free soil, and his amendment, offered on August 8, 1846, provided that it be "an express and fundamental condition to the acquisition of any territory from Mexico, that neither slavery nor involuntary servitude shall ever exist therein." This Wilmot Proviso played a big part in the campaign of 1848.

The internal affairs of the Whig party likewise disturbed the Whig leaders. The popularity of Henry Clay was fast waning; he had been identified with issues already decided, the Texas question, the tariff
question, the sub treasury question, and the Oregon question. On the new question, the all-important question, Mr. Clay was not so acceptable to many leading members of his party. Hence, the hand of fate had turned upon him, too. General Zachary Taylor was in command of the Army of Occupation in Texas, and his successful march from the Rio Grande to Buena Vista kept the country in a state of excitement, which naturally suggested that he be substituted for Clay as a candidate for President in 1848.

In September, 1847, the Native Americans held a convention in Philadelphia and recommended, but did not nominate, Taylor for President.

The real campaign for him opened on February 22, 1848, in the state convention in Louisiana, where delegates from thirty-six parishes suggested his name and decided in the name of their constituents to nominate him as a candidate for president. The Alabama Whigs likewise nominated him, and a nonpartisan meeting was held in Baltimore in his interest. No one knew Taylor's position on any of the issues, but judged by two letters that he wrote in April, his position was highly unsatisfactory to many prominent Whigs. The party leaders were men of principles, but General Taylor seemed to have none. Nevertheless, his nomination was assured, even before the convention.

The Whig national convention met in Philadelphia in June, 1848, and commenced balloting on the second day. Zachary Taylor received 171 votes out of 280 on the fourth ballot, and at least one vote from each of the states. Millard Fillmore was nominated for Vice President on the first ballot. No committee on resolutions was appointed, and the convention adjourned without even a declaration of principles for a party platform.

The Democratic convention had met at Baltimore on May 22. All the states were represented and the convention was thoroughly organized. It might be said in passing, that this convention created a central committee of one member from each state to have general charge of the campaign and of the party's interest—the first of the national committees since regularly constituted by both major parties.

The pot was then boiling in New York, and this internal strife was the chief subject of interest in the convention. New York had had two state conventions and had sent 36 Hunkers and 36 Barnburners to the national convention. Both delegations were admitted, but both groups
refused to take part in the proceedings, and the Barnburners openly withdrew from the convention. It required four ballots to nominate Lewis Cass for President, and General William O. Butler was nominated for Vice President on the first ballot. The platform adopted was chiefly a counterpart of the 1844 platform, although several resolutions were added without opposition. On the other hand, William L. Yancey of Alabama offered a resolution that was voted down 216 to 36. It read: "Resolved, That the doctrine of non-interference with the rights of property of any portion of the people of this confederacy, be it in the States or Territories thereof, by any other than the parties interested in them, is the true republican doctrine, recognized by this body." All the affirmative votes came from the Slave States. Some of the Southern Democrats explained their negative vote by saying that they deemed it unnecessary, since the resolution was a repetition of that which was already in the platform, at the same time indulging in the faint hope that the Northern Democrats might think that the Southern extremists were defeated in their purpose to commit the party to slavery.

The Barnburners, who had withdrawn from the Baltimore convention, held a state convention in Utica, New York, on June 22 and nominated Martin Van Buren. A similar Ohio state convention soon after recommended that a national convention be held in Buffalo on August 9, where, as it turned out, Van Buren was nominated for President and Charles Francis Adams for Vice President. The preamble to their platform opened with the statement: "We have assembled in convention, as a union of free men for the sake of freedom, forgetting all past political differences, in common resolve to maintain the rights of free labor against the aggressions of the slave power, and to secure free soil for a free people." The final resolution read: "Resolved, That we inscribe on our banner, 'Free Soil, Free Speech, Free Labor, and Free Men,' and under it will fight on, and fight ever, until a triumphant victory shall reward our exertions." All this put the candidate pretty much on the spot in the light of his previous platforms. Speaking of the Free Soil Campaign of 1848, William Allen Butler says: "Mr. Van Buren's name was in it, but not his head or his heart. Great words were inscribed on its banners... but they were words of advance and not of strategy, and Mr. Van Buren was too deeply intrenched in his old political notions to utter them in earnest."

The Van Buren vote in New York exceeded the Cass vote, however, and this caused the defeat of the Democratic ticket and assured a Whig victory as was intended. The total vote cast in the nation exceeded the 1844 election by only 173,304, and of these, 83,609 came from the four new states—Florida, Texas, Iowa and Wisconsin. No interest was shown in the contest; the outcome was apparent from the beginning; and the result of the electoral vote was Taylor and Fillmore 163, and Cass and Butler 127.

The Campaign of 1848 was an aftermath of the war. The Democrats offered a soldier with a good record plus an able statesman with many high honors, but the glamor boy was he who with 5,000 soldiers had defeated and routed 15,000 under Santa Anna. The Democratic party had itself precipitated the war, organized the military force that prosecuted it, controlled its immense patronage, and brought it to a victorious conclusion, yet had gained no political strength by so doing. The glory dropped in the lap of the Whigs. However, the Whigs were not too happy, for General Taylor had but little education and seemed to lack what it took to succeed.

On the other hand, the Democrats were not too disturbed by the Whig victory. Taylor was even better than Cass from the viewpoint of the South. He was born in Virginia, a resident of Louisiana, and a slaveholder. The Southern Whigs supported him on this ground, and the Northern Whigs with serious misgivings. As a matter of fact, Taylor was neither Whig nor Democrat; he scarcely knew the difference between the parties, and had not, so far as is known, cast a vote. If he had, it is probable that it was Democratic. In fact, Taylor was never considered a party President.

In the political campaigns of the eighteen-forties the Whigs had two victories and the Democrats one. The significance of these victories is negligible. In the campaign of 1840, General Harrison gained a glorious victory and might have done much for the development of the nation, but the hand of fate cut him down before he had a chance, and the trickery of Tyler was a terrific blow to the hopes of the Whigs.

The campaign of 1844 seemed promising for the Whigs, who became united through the trickery of Tyler, and late in 1843 they had counted on an easy victory, but the sudden change in public opinion on the Texas re-annexation policy, which Calhoun had forced the Demo-
crats to adopt, brought about the overthrow of Van Buren, and forced Clay to the fatal step in his Alabama letter.

In the campaign of 1848, the vice presidential candidate, Millard Fillmore, was placed on the ticket to conciliate the Northern Whigs who resented the nomination of a Louisiana slaveholder, when the specter of slavery was becoming more ominous. Although a strong man, he had but little opportunity to help the cause during the period prior to July 9, 1850, when President Taylor died, and the issue had become so tense by that time, that Fillmore's policy was necessarily affected by the fact that he was required to reconcile the slaveholders within the party and the Northern opposition.

These three campaigns all resulted in victories whose effects were short-lived. The plans of Harrison were thwarted by death; the trickery of Tyler was disappointing and upsetting to the party; the defeat of Clay was serious beyond words; the brief term of the inexperienced Taylor was inconsequential; and the work of Fillmore was more or less vacillating. Yet through it all there was being spun the web of national thinking on the subject of slavery, which dominated the politics of the country and found no solution short of secession, or an attempt to shatter the union so carefully built and hitherto so solid and impregnable.

But the slavery question was finally settled, as well as other national problems, and through it all we have preserved our freedom of purpose and action. The thought that now impresses the writer is that all that we have has been accomplished through the preservation of our two-party system, where monopoly of political power may be curbed, and that sooner or later, even though it takes sixteen years or more, the strongly entrenched "isms" may be eradicated and a new era may dawn upon the world.