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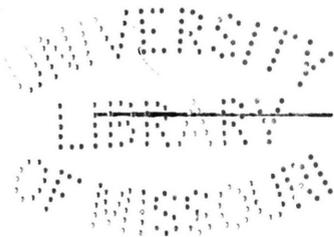
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THE INFLUENCE OF SLAVERY UPON MISSOURI POLITICS  
(TO INCLUDE 1860)

by

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# THE INFLUENCE OF SLAVERY UPON MISSOURI POLITICS.

(TO INCLUDE 1860.)

## Chapter I.

### Influence During Period of Early Growth and Settlement.

In order that this discussion of the influence of slavery upon Missouri politics may be the better understood, it will be well to first present such facts relating to the local status of slavery as will explain its importance as a domestic institution in the commonwealth prior to the period in which it was an issue in the politics of the state, i.e. until 1820.

Slavery existed in the earliest settlements that were planted in the territory included within the present boundaries of Missouri. Renaud and his followers who emigrated here from Kaskaskia in 1723 brought slaves with them<sup>1</sup> and used them in working lead mines in what is now Ste. Genevieve County<sup>2</sup>. These earliest settlers doubtless found slavery profitable, for in 1745 the negroes numbered one half of the whites in the Colony of Louisiana<sup>3</sup>. On December 31, 1772, there were 585 negro slaves in a white population of 803 in the two villages of San Luis and Santa Genoveva (now St. Louis and Ste. Genevieve)<sup>4</sup>. In 1799 there were 988 negro slaves in all of the various local

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1. Carr: Missouri a Bone of Contention; p. 24.

2. Switzler: History of Missouri; p. 143.

3. Ibid: p. 27-29.

4. Houck: Spanish Regime; Vol. I, p.54.



settlements, being about one slave to each family on an average<sup>1</sup>.

In 1756 there were also many Indian slaves throughout the settlements, for the early French settlers engaged in the Indian slave trade, although it was not authorized by law<sup>2</sup>. Slaves at that time were used in Agriculture<sup>3</sup> as well as in mining.

The Ordinance of 1787 prohibiting slavery in the Northwest Territory caused many families to emigrate with their slaves from there to the western side of the Mississippi river<sup>4</sup> and a large number of slaves were thus brought in<sup>5</sup>. At the session of 1803 the population of Louisiana was 10,120, of which about 1270 were slaves<sup>6</sup>, showing a slight but normal growth in the interval since the previous count in 1799.

The total population of Missouri in 1810, was 19,971, of which 2904 were slaves<sup>7</sup>. Consequently both the white and the slave population had practically trebled during the period of eleven years. The greater portion of this period was under American government and as the increase in population in that time should be practically all ascribed to American emigrants, the inference is that a large number of these immigrants brought their slaves with them.

After the war of 1812 where was another rush of emigrants to the territory, and both the white and the slave population were thus trebled in the second decade also<sup>8</sup>.

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1. Houck: History of Missouri; Vol.II, p241.

2. Ibid. Vol.II, p.239.

3. Houck: Spanish Regime; Vol.I, p.XXI.

4. Dillon: History of Indiana (1787 and later) p.410.

5. Houck: Spanish Regime; p.397.

6. Switzler: History of Missouri; p.165.

7. Census 1820; pp.22-23. Prelim.Schedule. Population of Arkansas excluded in these figures.

8. Houck: History of Missouri; Vol.II, p.243.



Most of the English speaking immigrants were from the Slave States of Kentucky, Tennessee, Virginia, and the Carolinas. Very few of them were from the New England States in the period prior to the opening of the Erie Canal,<sup>1</sup> in 1825, and this accounts for the large proportion of negro slaves among the inhabitants during that period. As indicating the sources of immigration at the latter part of the territorial period, the Missouri Intelligencer, then published at Franklin, Howard County, in its issue of November 19, 1819, said: "The emigration to this Territory, and particularly to this County, during the present season, almost exceeds belief. Those who have arrived in this quarter are principally from Kentucky, Tennessee etc.... The County of Howard, already respectable in numbers, will soon possess a vast population....."

In 1820 there were 11,234 slaves in Missouri out of a total population of 70,618. The largest slave owning counties at that time were St. Louis with 1603; Howard 1409; and Cape Girardeau 1082 slaves. This left 7040 slaves distributed among the other counties<sup>2</sup>. It is therefore seen that while slavery was an accepted and established institution in Missouri at the end of her territorial period, it had also grown up with her from the time of the earliest infant settlements one hundred years before.

Throughout the French, Spanish and Territorial periods in the establishment, growth and development of slavery, no issue was raised upon the subject until the Territory made application for admission as a State; then the local slavery situation became

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1. Harvey: The Provinces and the States; Vol.4, pp.18-19.  
 2. Houck: History of Missouri; Vol. II, p. 218.



a matter of considerable popular discussion which continued during the period when admission was pending. Public sentiment at that time upon the question of whether slavery in Missouri should or should not be restricted and, if it should be restricted to what extent, found expression in the views of members of the Territorial Convention; in resolutions adopted by public mass meetings; resolutions and presentments by Grand Jurors; and in the opinion of individuals published in newspapers, usually anonymous. Although there was a difference of opinion regarding whether the further importation of slavery into Missouri as a state should be permitted, public sentiment was practically all against any interference with slavery as it existed in the Territory at that time.

About three fourths of the inhabitants of Missouri at this time did not own slaves but the greater part of these three fourths, including many who were enemies of the institution of slavery, opposed the attempt at restriction by Congress as an arbitrary denial to Missouri of that equality among the States as guaranteed by the Constitution<sup>1</sup>. Among the various views on the subject expressed during the campaign for election of members of the Territorial Convention, were the following:

Favoring emigration with slaves for a limited period; prohibiting a slave market; no emancipation of slaves to be permitted; opposition to any restriction whatever on slavery; that all matters on the subject of slavery ought to be left to the Legislature<sup>2</sup>.

At a meeting of about one hundred citizens of St. Louis

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1. Harvey: The Provinces and the States; p.28.  
2. Missouri Gazette; April 12, 19 and 26, 1820.



April 11, 1820, resolutions were unanimously adopted:

First: Opposing any interference with slavery in the Territory.

Second: Recommended that the Convention prevent the further importation of slaves<sup>1</sup>.

At a meeting of restrictionists at Herculaneum it was unanimously resolved:

First: That slavery was an evil and should be restricted.

Second: That the abolition of slavery was inexpedient<sup>2</sup>.

Various articles from individuals written over noms de plume and purporting to favor slavery restriction were also contributed to local newspapers.<sup>3</sup> The expressions favoring restriction were few compared to those opposing it. Among the public meetings which gave adverse expressions to slavery restrictions were the following:

At St. Louis April 30, 1819, when it was held that if Congress could restrict slavery in the new states it could do the same in the old also; and that restriction would work hardship to the slaves themselves.<sup>4</sup>

At Potosi May 12, 1819, where it was asserted that restriction was contrary to the rights of the state and to the welfare of the slaves; that the exclusion of slaves was unconstitutional and contrary to the provisions of the Treaty of Cession of 1803<sup>5</sup>.

At a public meeting in Franklin County July 5, 1819, where

1. Missouri Gazette; April 12, 1820.

2. Ibid; April 26, 1819.

3. Files of Missouri Gazette and the Intelligencer; 1819 and 1820.

4. Missouri Gazette; May 12, 1819.

5. Ibid. August 4, 1819.



it was declared absurd for Congress to legislate either for or against slavery.<sup>1</sup>

At a public meeting in Potosi July 20, 1819, after advertisement, it was the sense of the meeting that Congress could not enact a law emancipating the children of slaves at a given age<sup>2</sup>.

At a meeting of the citizens of New Madrid County it was resolved that the right of the Territorial Convention over the subject was absolute<sup>3</sup>.

The grand juries impaneled for the sessions of the circuit courts in the various counties also adopted resolutions on the subject, there being entire unanimity of sentiment among them against any right of Congress to legislate upon the subject of slavery in the future State of Missouri. They protested also, under the terms of the Treaty of Cession, against the delay imposed by Congress in admitting Missouri to statehood. The resolutions of the grand juries in Howard County, July 14, 1819, went very extensively into the discussion of the subject<sup>4</sup>. The grand jury in St. Charles County brought in a presentment to the court on the matter in July 1819<sup>5</sup>; and presentments of like character were made by the grand juries of Washington County<sup>6</sup>, St. Louis, Northern Circuit<sup>7</sup>, and St. Louis<sup>8</sup>; the grand jurors at Jefferson City expressed themselves as viewing with regret any

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1. Missouri Intelligencer; July 9, 1819.
  2. Ibid. August 20, 1819
  3. Ibid. September 25, 1819.
  4. Ibid. July 16, 1819.
  5. Ibid. July 30, 1819.
  6. Ibid. August 20, 1819.
  7. Missouri Gazette; April 14, 1819.
  8. Ibid. May 19, 1819.



attempt to restrict slavery<sup>1</sup>. The attempt made in Congress to prohibit the further introduction of slaves into Missouri and to liberate the children of slaves then there, at a given age, was opposed by the territorial delegate, John Scott, in the spring of 1819 by speeches in Congress<sup>2</sup>. Scott was re-elected as delegate to Congress in the summer of 1819 against Samuel Hammond whose views on the subject were identical with his own. Scott's advantage in his campaign for re-election lay in the fact that he already knew the ground thoroughly in Washington covering the matters of admission which so vitally interested his constituents; and so vital was this interest that they wanted a delegate whose health would not fail him and it was pointed out to them that Hammond was not strong physically<sup>3</sup>.

The compromise measure under which Missouri was finally admitted as a slave state provided that in all other territory included in the Louisiana Purchase lying north of latitude 36°-30' slavery should be forever excluded. Benton's statement that this was a Southern measure should be kept in mind in the following chapter on slavery extension<sup>4</sup>.

The attitude of the people toward the slavery question at the time of admission to statehood is further indicated by Section 26, Article 3, of the Constitution adopted at that time which provided that "The General Assembly shall have no power to pass laws -

First, For the emancipation of slaves without the consent of their owners, or without paying them before such emancipation

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1. Missouri Gazette: Aug. 11, 1819.

2. Missouri Intelligencer: May 7, 1819.

3. Ibid: July 16, 1819.

4. Benton: Thirty Years in the Senate; Vol. I, p.8.



a full equivalent for such slaves so emancipated". Another clause provided that it should be the duty of the Legislature to "pass such laws as may be necessary to prevent free negroes and mulattoes from coming to and settling in this state under any pretext whatever".<sup>1</sup> It became necessary, due to this latter clause, and as a condition imposed by Congress, for the Legislature to be assembled and repudiate its provisions by a Solemn Public Act which thereupon, as provided by Congress, automatically qualified Missouri for admission<sup>2</sup>.

There were two general periods in the anti-slavery movement in the United States; the first lasted until about 1831 and depended largely upon the co-operation of slave holders themselves in effecting emancipation of slaves; the second period was characterized by an aggressive campaign against the institution of slavery carried on almost exclusively by the non-slaveholding classes. Both of these periods can be traced, though dimly, in the early statehood period of Missouri politics. Benton's attitude on slavery questions was of potent influence throughout his career which overlapped both these periods. He wrote the emancipation clause of the Constitution, his purpose being to place the slavery question entirely outside the sphere of politics and of legislation<sup>3</sup>. And it will be seen that the emancipation of slaves did not become a direct issue in Missouri politics during Benton's career in Congress. He was not in any way a radical opponent of slavery for he owned slaves himself and

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1. Missouri Intelligencer; July 22 and August 12, 1820.
  2. Switzler; History of Missouri; p. 207.
  3. Benton: Thirty Years in the Senate; Vol. I, p.8.



firmly believed that Congress had no authority to disturb the institution of slavery as it actually existed in the States<sup>1</sup>. He advocated the doctrine of gradual emancipation but he never initiated any active measures to effect it. He opposed slavery, in the abstract, as being an incurable evil and this was his greatest objection to slavery extension for he did not wish to see it inflicted on people who would thereby have to endure it forever. His own words were: "I quarrel with no one for deeming slavery a blessing. I deem it an evil and would neither adopt nor inflict it upon others".<sup>2</sup> Until 1835 Benton looked to the North as the point of danger from slavery agitation and from that time on he looked to the South for that danger. He always opposed slavery agitation from any quarter<sup>3</sup>. That slavery did not influence politics in Missouri at an earlier date and to a greater extent than it did, should be attributed very largely to Benton's dominating influence in Missouri.

As soon as Missouri was admitted to the Union there was an immediate lapse of public interest in the political status of slaves, but in 1827 there was a prearranged and concerted movement for the emancipation of slaves agreed upon by the political leaders of both parties, including both Benton and Barton, at a meeting where resolutions favoring emancipation were drawn up and plans made to print them and place them in the shape of memorials, in the hands of all candidates with instructions to present them to the people on the same day all over the state and urge the people to sign them. But before the plans for

1. Fagg: Missouri Historical Review; Vol. I, pp.25, 26, 35.

2. Eliot: Memoir p. 145.

3. Benton: Vol. I, p.23.



the movement could be carried out they suddenly collapsed, due to the widely published conduct of Arthur Tappan of New York, an emancipation leader, in his treatment of free negroes<sup>1</sup>. This and any other sentiment in the state against slavery doubtless existed as a part of the general movement, led on by Lundy, to encourage the emancipation of slaves by the spontaneous action of slaveholders themselves<sup>2</sup>.

After the era of good feeling had passed and party lines began to be drawn, Missouri aligned herself with the Jacksonian Democrats. Carr intimated that one reason for this was that the great bulk of the free state element which had delayed Missouri's admission to the Union was identified among Jackson's opponents; and that one reason why Missourians were with Clay was probably because Clay had lent his support to the early emancipation movement<sup>3</sup> and of which the Whigs were regarded as the peculiar exponents. In 1835 The Republican advocated a State Constitutional Convention in which measures should be taken to secure the abolition of slavery. The Republican then said that slavery was "an evil which is destroying our wholesome energies and leaving us, in morals, in enterprise and in wealth, behind the neighboring states" and was of the opinion that to secure its abolition, action should be taken at once. But nothing further appears to have come of it and it did not appear as a political issue<sup>4</sup>. This attempt by The Republican to secure abolition of slavery was made four years after Garrison began the publication of "The Liberator" and it is not known to what

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1. Switzler: History of Missouri; pp.221, 223.

2. Thayer: The Kansas Crusade; pp.78, 79. Garrison, Vol I, pp.87-100.

3. Missouri a Bone of Contention; p. 172.

4. Quoted in Statesman; October 19, 1860.



extent it was influenced by the Garrisonian movement. But as Garrison was being mobbed in the North and his paper in constant danger of being suppressed, it is not believed that it was through any persuasive influence of Garrison (if such he had) that The Republican took this step. The policy of Garrison was being generally reprobated throughout the North at this period and he had no organization of strength to back him<sup>1</sup>. Likewise, Lovejoy's emancipation paper "The Observer", published in St. Louis in 1835 and 1836, was not successful in making slavery a political issue although there was a strong contingent for emancipation in the Democratic party at that time.<sup>2</sup> The Observer was a religious paper and Lovejoy discussed the slavery question in it from the moral standpoint. Recognizing that Lovejoy's paper was a disturbing element politically, in spite of its being a religious publication, a letter dated St. Louis, October 5, 1835, was sent him advising him to remain silent upon matters connected with slavery. The signers of this letter were Archibald Gamble, Nathan Ramsey, William S. Potts, John Kerr, G.W. Call, H.R. Gamble, Hezekiah King, Beverly Allen and J.B. Grant. But Lovejoy continued the publication of his paper until his office was sacked in July 1836 by a mob<sup>3</sup> and he then removed to Alton, Illinois.

The temper of the people of Missouri on the subject at that period is likewise illustrated by the fact that one of the causes for the ejection of the Mormons from the state was that they tampered with the slaves and invited free negroes to settle among them<sup>4</sup>.

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1. Wm. Lloyd Garrison: Life of; Vol.I, pp.219-522.

2. Carr: pp.176, 177.

3. Lovejoy: Memoirs; pp.137, 138.

4. Harvey: The Provinces and the States; Vol.IV, p.99.



The Resolutions of the General Assembly approved February 13, 1839, and which were passed without division in either House, were also in effect a protest against anti-slavery<sup>1</sup> agitation of the Garrisonian type. They were:

"First: That the regulation of slavery by the States forms one among the most important features of their reserved rights..

"Fifth: That we can see in these numerous acts of aggression and interference with the domestic institution of the Southern and Southwestern States nothing but wanton invasion of their rights and contemptuous insults to their dignity; and that they have no other safe alternative left to them than to adopt some efficient policy by which their domestic institutions may be protected and their peace, happiness and property secured."<sup>2</sup>

Notwithstanding the efforts which had been made to prevent the anti-slavery movement being introduced into state politics, it was at last injected into it by the political leaders themselves and for political effect solely.

The platform of the Democratic State Convention in 1840 stated that the slaveholding states had just cause for alarm due to the junction effected between the Federalists and Abolitionists. In its address to the people of the state, the Convention recognized the great majority of the Federalists in Missouri as not being abolitionists, but as being victimized, together with the Federalists of other states, by a policy favorable to the growth of abolitionism<sup>3</sup>. As a means of prejudicing the Whigs of the state against Harrison, it was insistently presented to them that Clay's defeat as a candidate for the

1. Harvey: The Provinces and the States; p.99.

2. Laws of Missouri: 1838, p. 339.

3. The Missouri Register: Boonville, Mo. Oct.22,1840.



nomination by the National Whig Convention in 1840 was due solely to his being a slaveholder. The people of the state were exhorted to support no man for office who did not openly and publicly abjure all connection with abolitionism<sup>1</sup>. While this appeal to the prejudices of the people on the slavery question was apparently for political campaign purposes only, it did not, however, materially increase the Democratic vote at the Presidential Election over what it was at the State Election.

State Election, for Governor, 1840:

Thomas Reynolds, Democrat,	29,625.
John B. Clark, Whig,	<u>22,112</u>
Democratic majority	7,413

Presidential Election, 1840:

Martin Van Buren, Democrat,	29,760
W. H. Harrison, Whig,	<u>22,972</u>
Democratic majority	6,788 <sup>2</sup>

And, on the other hand, that this discarding of Clay for Harrison did not gain Whig votes in Missouri, as a whole, is shown by the small increase of 860 votes in the Presidential Election over the voting in the State Election, an increase which may well be accounted for in the number of Whigs who failed to vote, through a lack of interest, in the State Election. And although the Democratic majority at the State Election was about 2000 greater than it had ever been before<sup>3</sup> this was doubtless due to the fact that the Democrats polled practically their entire

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1. The Missouri Register: Boonville, Mo. July 30th., 1840.

2. Switzler: History of Missouri; p.254.

3. Missouri Register, October 22, 1840. Giving speech of Benton.



vote at the State Election. This extraordinary occurrence may be accounted for in the fear of the Democrats that the Whigs and the abolitionists had combined. This view is supported by the fact that the expectation among the Whigs of the Eastern States was that the Whigs would carry Missouri at the State Election<sup>1</sup>. Indeed, the Presidential Election showed substantial Whig gains in several parts of the state. Boone County greatly increased its Whig majority and the following slave counties which had given Democratic majorities in 1836 went heavily Whig: Callaway, Monroe, Ralls, Randolph, St. Francois, St. Louis and Saline. This was more than offset, however, by the heavy Democratic majorities in the new counties organized since 1836 and in the remote and light slave districts generally<sup>2</sup>.

That Missouri was disturbed by the anti-slavery movement at this period is shown by Governor Reynolds' message to the Legislature in 1842 in which he stated that slaves in Missouri were being seduced from the service of their masters in Missouri and aided in escaping by organized bands of abolitionists in the sister States. He recommended that life imprisonment in the penitentiary be awarded for the perpetration of such offenses<sup>3</sup>.

There are certain general aspects of the slavery situation in State politics which should be noted. The numerical increase and the proportional increase and decrease of slaves in Missouri during the Territorial and Statehood periods was as

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1. Missouri Register, Oct. 22, 1840. Giving speech of Benton.
  2. History of Southeast Missouri: pp. 162, 163.
  3. Senate Journal: 1842; pp. 32, 33.



follows:<sup>1</sup>

<u>Year</u>	<u>Total Population</u>	<u>Number of Slaves</u>	<u>Percent of Total</u>
1810	19971	2904	14.5
1820	66586	10222	15.4
1830	140455	25091	17.8
1840	383702	58240	15.5
1850	682044	87422	12.8
1860	1182012	114931	9.8

During the period that slavery gained on the free population the immigration was chiefly from the slave states, and during the period it declined the immigration was largely from the free states and from abroad<sup>2</sup>.

The counties having the greatest population of slaves in 1830 were Boone, Callaway, Howard, Marion, Pike, Ralls, Randolph, Saline, St. Charles, Ste. Genevieve and St. Louis<sup>3</sup>. Of these, in 1836, all except Boone, Marion, St. Charles and St. Louis were Democratic in politics; while in 1840 they were all Whig except Howard, Pike and Ste. Genevieve<sup>4</sup>.

Again, taking the population of 1840 as a basis, the counties which had the average percentage of slaves, or greater, at that time, and the political complexion of each in 1836, 1840, 1844 and 1848 were as follows:

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1. Census 1830: Preliminary Schedule; pp.22, 23.  
Census 1830: pp.150, 151.  
Census 1840: p.IX.  
Census 1850: p.665.  
Census 1860: Vol. Population; p.285.
  2. Harvey: Atlantic Monthly; July 1900, pp.65, 70.
  3. Census 1830: pp.150,151.
  4. House Journal 6th General Assembly; p. 273.



County	Percent of slaves 1840 (approximate)	Politics			
		1836	1840	1844	1848
Boone	22	Whig	Whig	Whig	Whig
Callaway	28	Dem.	Whig	Whig	Dem.
Cape Girardeau	16	Dem.	Dem.	Dem.	Dem.
Chariton	24	Dem.	Dem.	Dem.	Dem.
Clay	23	Dem.	Dem.	Whig	Whig
Cooper	20	x	Whig	Whig	Whig
Howard	28	Dem.	Whig	Dem.	Dem.
Jackson	18	Dem.	Dem.	Dem.	Dem.
LaFayette	27	Dem.	Whig	Whig	Whig
Lewis	17	Dem.	Dem.	Dem.	Tie
Lincoln	20	Dem.	Dem.	Dem.	Dem.
Marion	25	Whig	Whig	Whig	Whig
Monroe	18	Dem.	Whig	Whig	Whig
New Madrid	16	x	Whig	Whig	Whig
Pike	25	Dem.	Dem.	Whig	Whig
Randolph	20	Dem.	Whig.	Whig	Whig
Ralls	22	Dem.	Whig	Whig	Whig
St. Francois	16	Dem.	Whig	Whig	Whig
St. Charles	20	Whig	Whig	Dem.	Dem.
Saline	30	Dem.	Whig	Whig	Whig
Scott	15	x	Dem.	Dem.	Dem. <sup>1</sup>

NOTE: x County unorganized.

From the above it will be seen that the principal slave counties, during the period, were habitually Whig excepting Cape Girardeau, Chariton, Howard, Jackson, Lewis, Lincoln and Scott.

1. House Journal 11th Gen. Assembly; p. 594.  
History of Southeast Missouri; pp. 162, 163, 164.



The lighter slave counties of the state, not given above, were all generally Democratic during the same period except about six<sup>1</sup>.

Political lines were not sharply drawn before 1840. An independent element then existed among the "old settlers" class, and before 1840 the fate of a candidate for office depended largely upon the length of time he had resided among them<sup>2</sup>. But party lines were sharply drawn in 1840<sup>3</sup>.

Slavery as a direct issue in Missouri politics will be most easily recognized in two ways:

First: The issue of slavery extension which began about 1844 and continued till the outbreak of the Civil War:

Second: Slavery extinction in Missouri which began to be seriously suggested as early as 1848 and of which the advocates constantly increased until, in 1865, the Ordinance of Emancipation was adopted by the State Constitutional Convention.

But outside of these two general issues slavery acted on local politics indirectly also. Slavery, as property, required security and stability. It was accompanied by corresponding possession of real property and personal property the value of which to the owner largely depended upon the number and condition of his slaves. Capital among the slaveholding class was therefore doubly timid and nothing was more natural than the desire among them to avoid all agitation of the slavery question as tending to unsettle values. Upon issues not bearing directly

1. House Journal 11th Gen. Assembly; p. 594.  
History of Southeast Missouri: pp.162, 163, 164.
2. Broadhead: Memoriam; pp. 22, 23.
3. The Missouri Register: August 20, 1840.



upon slavery the slave owner would naturally take the capitalist's view, each according to his own interest. An instance of their desire for financial stability is easily recognized in the politics of 1840 when (as noted in tabular statement above) the heavy slaveholding counties went to the Whigs after the withdrawal by the Democratic administration of the Government funds from the banks and the resulting panic of 1837. In this instance it was necessary (and doubtless the purpose) for the Democrats of the state to accentuate the anti-abolition sentiment as a means of offsetting the increase of Whig votes in the heavy slave counties.

While slavery as an abstract question was, under the Benton regime, dealt with conservatively by politicians, so also the attitude of the slave holders was naturally conservative in economic matters; and this attitude of conservatism can be traced and interpreted in Missouri politics as long as slavery existed in the state.



## Chapter II.

Slavery Extension and the Overthrow of Benton.

After the earlier agitation toward emancipation had died out, following the northern agitation of the question, the extension of slavery appeared as a political issue in Missouri in the exception taken by Benton's constituents to his position upon the question of the reannexation of Texas. These differences upon this and similar questions grew until his overthrow by his party in 1850. There were three stages in his overthrow:

First: In which the opposition to him by his party on the Texas question was apparent but unorganized, in 1844;

Second: In which the Whigs supported the Democrats in covert opposition to his territorial policy, in 1846 and 1847;

Third: Open and outspoken opposition to his policy in the Jackson-Napton Resolutions, in 1849.

The people of Missouri greatly desired the annexation of Texas, and the mass of them did so without any views to the extension of slavery thereby<sup>1</sup>. That the extension of slavery was comparatively unimportant in their minds is evident from several things. First, in his message to the General Assembly November 19, 1844, Governor Edwards mentioned several reasons why the annexation of Texas would be important to Missouri: that Texas would thereby become a border state to Missouri instead of being foreign territory; ties of intimacy would be assured; trade and commerce would at once begin; that Texas offered a strong strategical position to a foreign foe at war with the United States etc; but not a word regarding the importance

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1. Carr: Missouri, p.194.



of extending the slavery interests.<sup>1</sup> As a matter of fact the chief bond between Missouri and Texas consisted in the ties of consanguinity existing between Missourians and those who had emigrated there. For, up to 1836, nearly every prominent family in Missouri was represented by some member in Texas, led there by the longing for additional territory or by sympathy with Texas in her struggle for independence.<sup>2</sup> Again, the leading Whig paper in the state, The Missouri Statesman, spoke unfavorably of annexation in its issue of May 24, 1844, the chief argument being that most of the lands of Texas had already been granted away and its admission to the Union would promote a landed aristocracy to the prejudice of the interest of the poorer classes. This, in its opinion, was more than sufficient to offset any equality of representation which might be gained for the South by annexation. In all the sentiments for annexation, the desire for slavery extension does not appear to have entered. But while the people attached little importance to the extension of slavery into Texas, the political leaders were evidently desirous of introducing the question. Sections 5 and 6 of the "Texas Resolution"<sup>3</sup> brought the subject of slavery directly into the question. These resolutions were first introduced into the Senate December 12, 1844.<sup>4</sup> Section Five declared it to be the sense of the people of the State of Missouri that Texas should be annexed without dividing her into slave holding and non-slaveholding states, while Section Six stated that the people of Missouri regarded "the annexation

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1. House Journal: pp.195, 198.

2. Carr: Missouri; pp. 195, 198.

3. Laws of Missouri 1844, 1845; pp.403, 404.

4. Senate Journal, 1845; pp. 101, 102.



of Texas to the United States so essential to the interests of this state and of the whole United States that rather than fail in the consummation of this object, if it cannot be effected in accordance with the principles set forth in the above resolution they would consent to such reasonable and just compromises, approximating as near as possible to those principles, as may be indispensably necessary to secure the accomplishment of the measures, and preserve the peace and harmony of the Union." Both these sections were contrary to the policy of Benton who desired annexation provided only there was an equal division of the territory into slave-holding and non-slaveholding states. Benton, to begin with, did not desire the annexation of Texas except as following negotiations whose terms would be agreeable to both Texas and Mexico. Again, as the territory to be reannexed had been a part, or largely so, of the original Louisiana Purchase, which was expressly referred to in the Missouri Compromise Measure of 1820 as being divided into slave and non-slave territory by latitude thirty-six degrees, thirty minutes, and as Texas had escaped the operation of this compromise by the cession of 1819 it was Benton's belief that it was in the spirit of the Missouri Compromise to make it retroactive as to this territory. A considerable portion of it lying north of this line of latitude mentioned in the Missouri Compromise he believed that this portion should be allowed to neutralize itself, respecting slavery, thereby. Also as there was an immense portion of this territory west of the one hundredth meridian of West Longitude (measured from Greenwich) where a slave had never been, Benton believed it morally wrong to allow slavery to be introduced into it even though it were



south of the Missouri Compromise line. As one of the preliminary conditions to operate in the annexation of Texas, Benton advocated that this meridian of longitude be a line to divide slave from non-slave territory. It was virtually a second compromise of the same nature as the Missouri Compromise of 1820 except that it was applied to Western Texas instead.<sup>1</sup> Such being Benton's views, the Texas resolutions could have no other effect than to excite a controversy with him; and such was their apparent purpose. Benton in his Jefferson City speech of May 26, 1849, claimed that it was the additional purpose of his enemies in passing the Texas resolutions to align him with the Whigs upon the question. For the views of the Whigs of Missouri upon the matter were almost parallel with his own as will be seen by Gamble's resolutions introduced into the House, to be shortly referred to. These resolutions passed the Senate of the Legislature of Missouri by separate sections and by strictly party vote, excepting the sixth which was also voted against by six Democrats, five of whom had voted against Benton for Senator (Anderson, Boggs, Detchmندی, Ellis and Netherton)<sup>2</sup>. The effect of these five Democratic votes against the Sixth Resolution was merely to accentuate the anti-Benton animus, for they were unwilling for any compromise approaching in any degree toward Benton's terms, and this of itself indicates pretty clearly the true character of the resolution.

Turning now to the other branch of the General Assembly we find that in the House the resolutions first taken up were those introduced upon motion of Mr. Hough<sup>3</sup> a Democrat who had voted

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1. Statesman: June 24, 1844. Quoting Benton's speech in U.S. Senate on Annexation of Texas.
  2. Senate Journal: 1844, pp. 42, 43.
  3. House Journal: 1845, p.109.



against Benton for Senator<sup>1</sup>. They were decidedly pro-slavery in character and opposed the division of Texas into slave and non-slave states and also especially approved Atchison's vote for the Treaty of Annexation. Hughes of Platte County, a Democrat who had voted for Benton, introduced a substitute which left the question of slavery in Texas entirely to the people of Texas<sup>2</sup>. Hamilton R. Gamble (Whig) introduced a substitute to the Hughes resolution providing that the new State of Texas was to be no larger than the largest state in the Union, and leaving silent the matter of slavery therein, while the remainder was to be held as territory of the United States with slavery forever prohibited in the northern and northwestern part of the territory west of our hundredth degree of West Longitude<sup>3</sup>. Coulter (Whig), of St. Charles County, who had voted for Atchison for Senator, introduced resolutions leaving the question of slavery to the people of Texas without compromise of any character: and this was immediately voted down almost unanimously<sup>4</sup>. The discussion upon these and other resolutions on the Texas question having given the Democrats an opportunity to show that none of them had any predilection for Benton's policy, the Senate Resolutions were then introduced and passed by a vote of 55 to 25, nine Democrats voting with the Whigs against the resolution<sup>5</sup>, the reason being held by these nine being, apparently, that they objected to the compromise feature of the Sixth Resolution. The resolutions introduced by Gamble, as far as slavery was concerned, were prac-

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1. House Journal: 1845; pp. 39, 40.

2. Ibid: p. 109.

3. House Journal: 1844; pp. 121, 122.

4. Ibid: pp. 136, 137.

5. Ibid: pp. 136, 137.



tically identical with the Bill which Benton had introduced into the U.S. Senate in June, 1844, for the annexation of Texas and in supporting which Benton had said he would resign if he thought his constituents differed from him<sup>1</sup>. But Gamble's resolutions were voted down by more than a party vote; and the reason for this, as given by The Statesman, was that the compromising measures embodied in it would lead to dispute, debate and delay, in fact, all the evils attending the adoption of the Missouri Compromise in 1820<sup>2</sup>.

Upon being approved by the Governor, copies of the resolutions were sent to each of Missouri's Senators in Congress and the attitude of these two men toward them was eloquent of a difference existing between Benton and his constituents. Benton rose and presented them to the Senate after which he commented at great length upon them, praising Missouri for the interest she was taking in Texas, but not saying a word about the slavery feature except to laud Missouri for evincing a conciliatory spirit in her willingness to abide by any necessary compromise measures. He said nothing regarding an intention to abide by the resolutions himself. Atchison followed with a few brief remarks in which he acknowledged the right of instruction and his duty as a representative to obey, and concurred in the sentiments of the Resolutions<sup>3</sup>. Benton immediately retrenched his position by withdrawing, on February 5, 1845, all the terms and conditions of the Bill introduced by him in June, leaving it so that Texas would be admitted intact. In addition to this he later, Febru-

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1. Congressional Globe: 1844; Appendix, p.611.

2. Jan. 3, 1845.

3. Congressional Globe: 1845; pp.154, 155.



ary 27, 1845, voted against the same identical proposition (when submitted by another Senator) which he had made in June previous; and he also voted for the joint resolutions to annex Texas, as did Atchison<sup>1</sup>. That Benton recognized at that time that a snare had been laid for him by his enemies in the expectation that he would publicly oppose the resolution<sup>s</sup> is very probable from the excessively laudatory remarks that he made upon them, thereby disarming <sup>his</sup> foes with platitudes and without compromising his own policies. And that a trap had been set for him then was practically admitted by Atchison in July 1849, in a speech at Liberty, Missouri, in which he said: "We thought we had him in '44 but he escaped. He cannot escape now. The combination is so extensively against him that it is impossible for him to sustain himself"<sup>2</sup>. Later, in 1849, Benton attributed this move against him to Calhoun whose desire, he said, was to place him in a position where he (Benton) could be accused of an alliance with the Whigs<sup>3</sup>. But the fact that a considerable number of Whigs voted for Atchison for Senator and that none of them voted for Benton, both elections being in the same session of the Legislature, is sufficient proof that there was no alliance between Benton and the Whigs<sup>4</sup>. But there is no doubt that his views did concur with those of some of the Whigs and that they also diverged from those held by his own party.

Why sixteen Whigs of the House and three of the Senate should have voted for Atchison for Senator and not for Benton and then a few weeks later have voted against the Texas Resolution,

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1. Cong. Globe: 44-45; pp.224, 362.

2. Jefferson Inquirer: May 29, 1852.

3. Ibid: May 26, 1849.

4. House Journal, 1844: pp.39, 40. Statesman: Sep.20, 1844.



which Atchison was known to favor, can be explained as follows. The Whigs voting for Atchison were, in the main, from heavy slave counties that wished to avoid agitation on the slave question (Boone, Callaway, Clay, Franklin, Jasper, Lafayette, Livingston, Monroe, Montgomery, Pike, St. Charles and St. Clair)<sup>1</sup> and there was less agitation promised in Atchison's policy of annexation than in Benton's<sup>2</sup>. After the election of Senators the Democrats brought in the Texas Resolutions for no other apparent reason than to establish a difference with Benton and as this, to the minds of the Whigs, was probably an unwarranted agitation of the subject they, as representing the majority of the heavy slave owning counties of the state, combined in opposing them. Although it was apparent that the Democrats differed from Benton on this question, they undoubtedly had a certain fear at opposing him. Hough of Scott County was the boldest, for he favored instructing Benton to vote for immediate annexation of Texas. C.F. Jackson, who had just been elected Speaker of the House, stated that he had been for immediate annexation but he was now for "annexation at the earliest practicable period". The Statesman taunted them by saying "The Democracy of Missouri, as represented in the Legislature, is afraid to instruct Colonel Benton to do any particular thing that might be contrary to his will or former course"<sup>3</sup>. It was probably this fear of Benton

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1. History of Southeast Missouri: pp. 162, 171.

2. The counties represented by Whigs were (in addition to those above mentioned) Audrain, Cooper, Henry, Howard, Lewis, Lincoln, Macon, Marion, New Madrid, Perry, Ralls, Randolph, St. Francois, St. Louis, Saline, Shelby and Washington.

3. The Missouri Statesman: Jan. 3, 1845.



which constituted the bond that held the party together sufficiently to give him a majority vote for a fifth term in the Senate earlier in the session. A general estimate of the situation indicates that there was considerable dissatisfaction with Benton at this time due to his attitude on the question of the annexation of Texas and that a large portion of the slave holding element of the state was included in the opposition to him.

Professor P. O. Ray is authority for the statement that Judge William C. Price of Missouri canvassed all parts of the state in 1844, urging upon slave holders that they encourage a movement for the abrogation of the Missouri Compromise; that Benton spurned and repudiated the suggestion when made to him by Price and, from that time on, that Price worked for Benton's undoing<sup>1</sup>. This seems to be in accord with the then existing political situation in the state.

A difference in attitude upon the matter of the Wilmot Proviso was the next occasion for widening the breach between Benton and his party. This Proviso was to the effect that none of the territory to be acquired from Mexico should be open to the introduction of slavery.

Benton had opposed this Proviso when it came up in the Senate, in the summer of 1846 because, he said, he believed it to be unnecessary. Slavery had already been abolished by the Mexican Law in the territory affected by it and it was Benton's opinion that there was consequently no authority for its existence there and no necessity for restricting it by an act of Congress; for such an act would bring on unnecessarily a slavery

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1. The Repeal of the Missouri Compromise: pp. 34, 35.



agitation in the United States. The Democratic Party in Missouri opposed the Proviso, on the other hand, not that it tended to agitate the slavery question, but because they wanted slavery in the new territories<sup>1</sup>.

The effect of Benton's position on the main issue was to place him in opposition to the wishes of his own party. Atchison had also announced himself against the Proviso<sup>2</sup> and the Representatives from Missouri had voted against it when it passed the House<sup>3</sup>. The following winter the General Assembly of Missouri passed resolutions, approved February 15, 1847, instructing the Senators and requesting the Representatives from Missouri to vote in accordance with the provision and the spirit of the Missouri Compromise "in all questions which may come before them in relation to the organization of new Territories or States, out of the Territory now belonging to the United States, or which may hereafter be acquired either by purchase, by treaty or by conquest"<sup>4</sup>. The question naturally arises, why did not the General Assembly approve the attitude which its Senators and Representatives had already taken upon the subject instead of giving the resolutions the character it did? And the only answer which can be given is that the General Assembly did not approve of Benton's position and passed the resolutions largely for his benefit. And they doubtless carried their opposition to him in this matter as far as they had the ability to go. On this occasion there was no issue raised about the matter in the General Assembly. The resolutions were passed without division in either House and, apparently, without debate<sup>5</sup>.

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1. Benton: Vol.2, pp.694, 696.

Harvey: Provinces and States; Vol.4, pp.96, 101.

2. Jefferson Inquirer: June 22, 1850.

3. Political Text Book: 1860; p. 71.

4. Laws of Missouri: 1847; p. 367.

5. House Journal:1846-47;pp.360,391. Senate Journal:1846-47; pp.346, 378.



Hence we see that the Democrats were not opposed by the Whigs in the matter and that the Whigs were doubtless as much interested in the resolutions as the Democrats themselves. It is significant of the attitude of the Whigs toward Benton and of their willingness to vote with the Democrats for the resolutions that C. F. Jackson, an enemy of Benton, had the support of twelve Whigs upon his election as Speaker of the House November 16, 1846<sup>1</sup>. These Whigs were from Boone, Clark, Cooper, Lewis, Lincoln, Monroe, Morgan, Pike, Randolph, Ray, Saline and St. Charles counties, all being heavy slave except Morgan and Ray.

The favorable attitude also of the Whigs toward Atchison together with their association with the Democrats in the passage of the resolutions suggests the inference that the resolutions would probably have been cast in a form approbative of Atchison and the Representatives from Missouri in the House had Benton not opposed the Proviso.

Professor Ray states that these resolutions of the General Assembly were pro-Benton and that they were taken as a challenge by the pro-slavery element to the extent that C.F. Jackson introduced counter resolutions into the General Assembly which did not pass on account of Benton's great strength<sup>2</sup>. But there is nothing to justify such a conclusion; Benton's sentiments for keeping slavery entirely out of the newly acquired territories, a large part of which was south of Latitude 36°-30', was to that extent contrary to the spirit of the Missouri Compromise which the resolutions supported. That Benton realized what the temper of his constituents was in the matter and profited by the rebuke

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1. House Journal: 1846-47, p.5.

2. Ray: Repeal of the Missouri Compromise; pp.37, 38.



concealed in the resolutions by modifying his attitude accordingly is shown by the fact that he voted for the Clayton Compromise, which Atchison also voted for, and which passed the Senate in July 1848, but was defeated in the House.

The positions which Benton had taken upon slavery questions in 1844 and 1846, and to which exceptions were taken by his party, were such that he could and did recede from them without loss of dignity, leaving his enemies without ground for a quarrel. But in 1847 Benton came out in such violent denunciation of the Calhoun Resolution<sup>2</sup> that he was irrevocably committed against them; and all knew his attitude toward them. His long standing hostility to Calhoun would prevent him changing his policies should a quarrel upon them be raised with him by his enemies in Missouri. Ample grounds for a difference now existed. In Missouri many Democrats and some Whigs believed that Congress

1. Clayton's proposal was that all questions regarding slavery in the new territories should be left to the decision of the Supreme Court of the United States. (See Political Text Book 1860: pp. 71, 72.)
2. Submitted by Calhoun in the U.S. Senate February 19, 1847: affected to define the jurisdiction of Congress over the territories belonging to the United States, repudiated the right of Congress to interdict slavery in such territories or to impose upon new states admitted from them any conditions not specifically provided for by the Constitution of the United States.

Immediately upon their presentation Benton rose from his seat and denounced them as a "string of abstractions" calculated to obstruct necessary business. On Feb. 24, 1847, Benton reviewed Calhoun's official connection with the Texas matter since 1819 and was unsparing in his adverse criticism upon it. (See Cong. Globe, 1846-47, Vol. 17, pp. 455, 494, 495, 496, 497, 498.)



could not interfere with slavery in the territory; the belief being that the people of the territories alone had the right to exclude it upon entering statehood.

Again, many believed that the Wilmot Proviso was merely the forerunner of later interference by the North with slavery in the States.

In addition, there was personal hostility to Benton by many members of his party whose jealousy or dislike had been aroused by his domination over them<sup>1</sup>. Atchison was not committed upon the Calhoun Resolutions for he took no part in the discussion in the Senate upon them<sup>2</sup>. The quarrel with Benton by his party need not therefore involve them with Atchison. It would be with Benton alone.

The position which Benton took was that slavery should not be legislated by Congress into the territory and that it could not get into it otherwise. This was counter to the views of his party which was largely in favor of slavery extension<sup>3</sup>. These sentiments by Benton against slavery extension accorded with those held by a considerable portion of the Whig party at that time, for they were with great difficulty kept out of the Whig platform in 1848<sup>4</sup>. Therefore, slavery extension not being an open issue in the campaign for the Presidential Election in 1848 there is nothing to reveal what the result would have been in Missouri had the Whigs declared against slavery extension in their national platform that year. But the probability is that they nominated Taylor, who was a Southern slaveholder, and rejected the anti-slavery extension plank for the very purpose of

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1. Harvey: Provinces and States; Vol. 4, pp.103, 104.

2. Cong. Globe: Vol. 17, 1847, pp.453 to 458.

3. Carr: Missouri; p. 227.

4. Political Text Book: 1860; p.15.



not alienating the Whig votes in Missouri and other slave holding states. Compared with the Presidential Election of 1844 there was a general decrease of the Whig vote in the light slave counties; but there was an increase in the heavy slave counties sufficient to increase the number of Whig votes for the entire state by 1420. The heavy Whig increase in the strong slave counties was probably due to the conservative Whig element that looked with more disfavor upon agitation of slavery extension than they might have either favored or disfavored slavery extension itself. There was also a general decrease of the Democratic vote in the strong slave counties (as well as in many of the light slave counties), with a decrease for the state of 1292 votes<sup>1</sup>. This reduced Democratic vote may be accounted for as being due to the influence of Benton whose views on slavery extension were practically the same as those of the Free State Democrats<sup>2</sup>. That the result of the Presidential Election showed the presence of some disaffection in the Democratic party was so evident that the assertion to the contrary, which Governor Edwards took pains to insert in his message to the General Assembly in 1848, merely emphasized the fact<sup>3</sup>. The result of the State Election showed a slight Whig gain also in the membership of the House of the General Assembly, and of the twenty-eight Whig members all were from heavy slave counties except eight. Only six of the heaviest slave counties elected Democrats and in these the voting was comparatively close (Chariton, Howard, Jackson, Lincoln, Pike and St. Charles)<sup>4</sup>. There were six Whigs in the Senate, four being from heavy slave districts and two from

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1. Political Text Book: 1860; pp.235, 236.

2. Ibid: pp. 17, 18.

3. House Journal: 1848-49; p.18.

4. Statesman: Aug. 25, 1848.



St. Louis. But this slight increase for the Whigs in the State Election can be attributed to the influence of the Presidential campaign.

That the Democrats regarded Benton as one of the sources of this disaffection in the Democratic ranks is seen by the course they took to repudiate him. Early in the session of 1848-1849 of the Legislature, Judges Napton and Scott of the Supreme Court, together with Birch, Jones, C. F. Jackson, Buffington, Hough and others (all Democrats), met and drafted a set of resolutions which were to be presented to the Legislature for adoption. These resolutions repudiated Benton's policies on the matter of slavery by denying the right of Congress to legislate upon the subject anywhere; they opposed the free-soil doctrine and threatened disruption of the Union<sup>1</sup>. The intent was to commit the Democratic party to an outspoken opposition to Benton and not to invite an issue with the anti-slavery states<sup>2</sup>. C.F.Jackson presented them to the Senate which passed them by a party vote of 24 to 6<sup>3</sup>. Upon their reaching the House, Thomas E. Birch (Whig), Clinton County, offered a set of resolutions as a substitute which condemned all inflammatory appeals to the people on the subject, opposed action by Congress upon the subject of slavery in the territories and disapproved of the Wilmot Proviso. These substitute resolutions being in accord with Benton's views were immediately tabled by a vote of 56 to 27. All the Whigs voted against tabling them except Darnes of Scott County. Two Democrats, Jones of Andrew and Gregory of Osage, voted with the

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1. Laws of Missouri: 1848-1849, pp.666, 667.

(see also 2.)

2. Switzler: History of Missouri, p. 269.

3. Senate Journal:1848'49; pp.175, 176.



Whigs<sup>1</sup>. The Senate Resolutions then passed by a vote of 56 to 25. Darnes of Scott County and Bartlett of Stoddard (elected as Whigs) voted for the resolutions. Those voting against the resolutions were all Whigs except Jones of Andrew County<sup>2</sup>. Upon being approved by the Governor the State stood committed to the resolution. It should be pointed out, however, that an analysis of the State Election returns shows that the votes in the House against the Resolutions represented 40,323 and those for them represented but 31,989 of the votes polled at the State Election<sup>3</sup>. Therefore, the resolutions did not necessarily represent the predominant sentiment of the State at large. Considering this view of the situation together with the fact that the matter of Benton's re-election would not come up until two years later, there is good grounds to believe that had Benton ignored the Resolutions no particular importance might have been attached to them. Or if he had taken a conciliatory attitude, which it was not in his nature to do, it might have been smoothed out. But Benton took the matter up himself at this point and agitated it. He realized the danger of the Calhoun movement and wished to prevent Missouri being drawn into it by immediately and widely denouncing it, for he placed loyalty to the Union above every other consideration. The direct result was his defeat for re-election to the Senate, and the ultimate result was that the Democratic party was split in the state and remained divided until the Civil War.<sup>4</sup>

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1. Statesman: March 23, 1849.

2. House Journal: 1849; p.480.

3. Jefferson Inquirer: Nov. 17, 1849.

4. Ray: Repeal of Mo. Compromise; p.41.  
Carr: Missouri; p.229.



Benton first established his own position more emphatically by opposing Calhoun's doctrine of the transmigration of the constitution thereby carrying slavery to the territories; and he also opposed the slavery manifesto which was formulated and signed in Washington in the spring of 1849<sup>1</sup>. One of the signers of this manifesto was Senator Atchison (the only one from Missouri who did sign it). While Atchison explained his signing the manifesto by saying that he regarded it as merely imploring the slave states to stand united in opposition to the members of the free-soil men and of the abolitionists<sup>2</sup>, Benton alluded to it as "a conglomeration of invented horrors" and stated that it sustained his belief that Calhoun would spare no effort to break down the Constitution and the Union for the sake of slavery extension<sup>3</sup>.

Benton did exactly what his enemies had calculated he would<sup>4</sup>. He openly opposed the instructions in the resolutions and appealed from them to the people of the state in a letter dated St. Louis, May 9, 1849<sup>5</sup>. He followed this up by making an extensive canvass of the state during the summer and autumn of 1849. As far as Benton's chances for re-election were concerned he would have probably done better to have kept quiet until the following year and then have introduced his appeal (if at all) as an issue in the campaign for the State Election. By canvassing the state in 1849, however, and then returning to Washington to resume his Senatorial duties, he allowed his enemies nine months in which to go over the entire local situation

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1. Benton: Thirty Years in the Senate; Vol. 2, pp. 734-736.

2. Jefferson Inquirer: July 17, 1849.

3. Benton: Vol. 2, p. 734.

4. Jefferson Inquirer: May 29 '62.

5. Ibid: May 19, 1849.



in his absence and thoroughly perfect their organization against him. That Benton did not realize this and proceed otherwise was probably due to two things:

First: He doubtless overestimated his own strength with the people of the state.

Second: He wished to keep the matter out of politics if possible. He undoubtedly realized that a split in the Democratic party would probably result in the success of the Whigs which he was too good a party man to desire. He stated at the opening of his canvass that the question was above party and that he meant to keep it there<sup>1</sup>.

Benton began his canvass of the state by making a speech at Jefferson City when he boldly and unequivocally proclaimed his personal attitude on slavery in the following words: "My sentiments, then, are against the institutions of slavery and against its introduction into places in which it does not exist"<sup>2</sup>. In this speech he also inveighed at great length against Calhoun's political career with reference to slavery. He also went farther and ascribed the authorship of the Jackson Resolutions to Calhoun. It is possible that Benton believed this at that time but a letter written him August 8, 1849, by Sterling Price<sup>3</sup> informed him concerning the true origin of these resolutions. Benton continued until the end of the canvass to proclaim Calhoun as being the originator of them. This lack of candor must have been noted by his hearers. Benton at no time showed a disposition to doubt Price's word.

Benton's itinerary began with the Jefferson City speech in

1. Jefferson Inquirer: May 26, 1849.
2. Ibid: May 26, 1849.
3. Ibid: May 29, 1852.



May and extended all over the most populous portions of the state, chiefly through the slave counties on both sides of the Missouri river, the western and southwestern part of the state, and the slave counties along the Mississippi river above St. Louis, ending with Clark County in November<sup>1</sup>. Most of his enemies were in the western part of the state<sup>2</sup>. His Jefferson City speech was a prototype of those made throughout the canvass as far as the slavery issue was dealt with.

A counter canvass was made at the same time by his chief opponents, particularly Atchison, Jackson, Napton, Birch and Price<sup>3</sup>.

Benton made a serious error in his addresses in that he classified all "Jacksonians" (i.e. Benton men) as opposed to slavery extension and the Union, and all "Calhounists" (i.e. anti-Benton men) as being friendly to slavery extension and disunion. As a matter of fact there were some "Jacksonians" who were not opposed to slavery extension and disunion. There were "Calhounists" also who were not in favor of slavery extension or disunion, although the majority of them did believe in disunion as an abstract right<sup>4</sup>. This lack of discrimination coupled with the abuse which he constantly heaped upon all "Calhounists"<sup>5</sup> undoubtedly cost him dearly. The language which he used in villifying his political foes was not of a kind to win many friends to his cause<sup>6</sup> being of so gross a character that the end of his canvass found him defending himself against a

1. Jefferson Inquirer: May to November 1849.

2. Ray: Repeal of Missouri Compromise: p. 48.

3. Harvey: Provinces and States: Vol. 4, pp. 105, 113.  
Jefferson Inquirer: Nov. 17 and Dec. 8, 1849.

4. Harvey: Vol. 4, p. 108.

5. Ray: Repeal of Missouri Compromise; p. 58.

6. Ibid.



suit for libel brought against him by Judge Birch<sup>1</sup>.

But the canvass brought out into the open both his foes and his friends. Of the former not already mentioned were James S. Green, Louis V. Bogy, Trusten Polk, R. M. Stewart, Carty Wells, John W. Reid, J. H. Britton and George C. Medley.

Among his friends in the Democratic party were Blair, Brown, Barrett, Able, Stephenson and Krekel; in the Whig party were Thomas Allen, James S. Rollins, James O. Broadhead, A. W. Doniphan, H. T. Blow, S. H. Woodson and C. H. Hardin<sup>2</sup>.

At the end of his canvass Benton returned to Washington where he still further announced his position on slavery questions by his speeches and his votes on the various matters involved in the compromise measure before Congress in 1850. He said that he was ready to vote governments to California and New Mexico without reference to slavery; would vote for any efficient fugitive slave bill; opposed the abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia and opposed the discussion in Congress of any matter connected with slavery in the States because the slave states were, he said, "much agitated about it; but without reason and against reason".<sup>3</sup> When the Statehood Bill of California, which had itself decided to exclude slavery, came up, Benton voted for it and Atchison against it<sup>4</sup>. Atchison signed a protest against the passage of the bill admitting California, but Benton prevented the protest being recorded in the Senate proceedings<sup>5</sup>. Thus were the two Senators from the same state and of the same political party diametrically opposed on the slavery extension

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1. Missouri Statesman: March 8, 1850.

2. Harvey: Provinces and States: p.p. 105, 113.

3. Cong. Globe: 1849-'50; Part I - Appendix pp. 446, 450.

4. Ibid. Part II - p. 1565.

5. Benton: Thirty Years in the Senate: Vol. 2, pp. 769 to 770.



question, Atchison being one of the most radical of the pro-slavery element. Each of them had their followers in Missouri and it was recognized during the winter of 1849-1850 that there would be a split in the Democratic party in Missouri. The anti-Benton faction suggested it were better to give up Benton and thereby unite the party than to contend over him and allow the state to go to the Whigs<sup>1</sup>. But as soon as it became evident that Benton's followers would not sacrifice him for the sake of party union, the Whigs sent a member of their party over the state offering the Whig vote to such anti-Benton Democratic candidates for the Legislature as would, in return, pledge themselves to vote for a Whig for United States Senator. This was characterized by the Inquirer, a pro-Benton paper, as an act of bad faith on the part of the Whigs after having voted against the Jackson Resolutions<sup>2</sup>.

The result of the State Election in the summer of 1850 gave ample evidence of such a coalition between the Whigs and the anti-Bentons. Of thirty-one counties which elected anti-Benton Democrats to the House of Representatives of the Legislature, ten were those<sup>in</sup> which the slave population was twenty percent, or more, of the whole (Boone, Chariton, Howard, Lewis, Mississippi, Monroe, Platte, Randolph, St. Francois and Schuyler counties). Of these the following had elected Whig Representatives in 1848: Boone, Lewis, Monroe, Randolph, St. Francois and Schuyler. Four lighter slave counties which had elected Whig Representatives in 1848 also elected anti-Benton Democrats in 1850 (Davis, Scott, Stoddard and Washington). Here, then, were twelve normally Whig

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1. Jefferson Inquirer: Dec. 15, 1849.

2. Ibid: March 10, 1850.



counties which voted a majority to one of the faction of the divided Democratic party.

But the disaffection in the Democratic party operated to give the Whig candidate the majority of votes in Audrain, Camden, Lincoln, Pike and Warren counties (normally Democratic) in each of which the Democrats had but one candidate. The presumption here is that a large number of the Benton faction either did not vote or that they voted with the Whigs. The division of the Democratic party in the following normally Democratic counties caused pluralities to be given the Whig candidates: Caldwell, Jackson, Pettis, Ste. Genevieve, St. Louis and Sullivan counties, and in these counties no coalitions were apparent. The division in the Democratic ranks was most apparent in the strong slave counties. But as notwithstanding this division in the party generally throughout the state the anti-Benton faction won in several strong slave counties which were normally Whig, and the Benton faction did not carry any strong slave counties, the conclusion seems imperative that the opposition to Benton was very strong among the slave owners<sup>1</sup>.

The State Senatorial Districts had been rearranged since the previous State Election in 1848 and in the 1850 election returns there is not much evidence of vote trading upon the State Senatorial candidates. But the Whigs elected their candidates, by majority vote, in the First, Second, Third, Thirteenth and Fourteenth Districts, which included heavy slave counties, and by plurality of votes in the 9th, 16th, 23rd, 25th and 30th Dis-

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1. Analysis of returns as published in Missouri Statesman, Aug. 25, 1848, Aug. 30, 1850, and data in U.S. Census 1850 (population of counties, free and slave.)



districts which were composed of light slave counties<sup>1</sup>. Party divisions and coalitions took place among the Congressional Districts also. The Democrats were divided in all Districts except the Second. In the First and Third Districts the Whig candidates won by pluralities. In Perry County (First Congressional District) and in Monroe and Boone Counties (Third Congressional District) anti-Benton candidates were elected to the Legislature and strong majority votes polled for the Whig candidates for Congress. In the Second District, in which there was no Benton candidate, and which was ordinarily strong Democratic, the Whig candidate for Congress, Porter, won against Henderson. This result was probably due to the large number of Democrats (doubtless Benton's) who failed to vote. That Democratic votes were cast for Porter, the Whig candidate, in return for Whig votes for Democratic members of the Legislature, might also be inferred as it was a slave district; but there is nothing tangible which can be found to support the inference. The anti-Benton candidate won in the Fourth and Fifth Districts<sup>2</sup>.

When the Legislature assembled in December, Governor King, a friend of Benton, did not allude to the division in the Democratic ranks. But he advocated the doctrine that Congress had no power to legislate upon the subject of slavery in the territories and at the same time he emphatically repudiated nullification and secession, although he placed the responsibility for the present difficulty upon the North<sup>3</sup>.

A triangular contest began with the election of Speakers of the House. On the 21st ballot twelve anti-Benton Democrats

1. Jefferson Inquirer: Aug. 24, 1850.

2. See footnote 1, page 40.

3. House Journal: 1850; p. 52.



voted for the Whig nominee, Watkins, electing him<sup>1</sup>. Six of these were elected from the vote-trading counties above mentioned (Boone, Lewis, Monroe, Randolph, Schuyler and Scott). A last effort was made by the Benton caucus to find grounds for a union of the party before the election of a United States Senator, but neither faction would accept the condition offered by the other. Hence the election of a Senator was a triangular contest<sup>2</sup>. The Benton Democrats had previously agreed in caucus that under no circumstances would any of them vote for a Whig for Senator<sup>3</sup>. Before the voting for Senator began, open hostility to Benton was announced by resolutions which were of such a character that there could be no withdrawal by the anti-Bentons from the course they had assumed. The resolutions were laid on the table; but they committed the anti-Bentons to an implacable warfare upon Benton<sup>4</sup>. The election of a Senator was a prolonged contest; James S. Green was the nominee of the anti-Bentons, Henry S. Geyer of the Whigs, and Benton was nominated by the wing of his party. The first ballot gave Geyer 64, Benton 55, and Green 37, which represented the actual strength of the parties present in the Legislature. There was little variation from these numbers throughout the voting. The determining factor in breaking the deadlock was the knowledge that, in case of a failure to elect, Governor King would appoint Benton to the resulting vacancy<sup>5</sup>.

Finally, on the 40th ballot, two anti-Bentons of the Senate and twelve of the House, under the leadership of Senator R.M. Stewart<sup>6</sup>, voted for Geyer thereby electing him. Stewart an-

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1. House Journal: 1850; p.52.
  2. Jefferson Inquirer: January 11, 1851.
  3. Ibid:
  4. House Journal: 1850-51; Appendix p.240.  
Senate Journal: 1850-51; p.88
  5. Bench and Bar of Missouri: -p.16.
  6. Carr: Missouri; p.231.



nounced that he infinitely preferred any Whig of sound sentiments to Benton<sup>1</sup>. Many others of the fourteen Democrats who voted for Geyer, rose and explained that they did so merely to defeat Benton, and it was so understood and taken by all<sup>2</sup>. There was no evidence of vote trading in Stewart's election. He was an old enemy of Benton. But Jones, the other anti-Benton Senator voting for Geyer<sup>3</sup> was from the 26th District composed of Cooper and Moniteau Counties (heavy slave) and which had given heavy majorities to the Whig candidates for Congress (and elected him). In these two counties the Whig candidates for Congress had received 1208, the Benton candidate 754, and the anti-Benton candidate but 385 votes<sup>4</sup>. A wholesale pre-election trading of votes in these two counties is here most palpable. A pre-election arrangement is likewise shown in the votes of the twelve of the House who voted for Geyer. The counties and congressional districts in which they were located were as follows:

Mississippi County,	1st	Congressional	District
Monroe	"	"	"
Reynolds	"	"	"
Scott	"	"	"
Wayne	"	"	"
Texas	"	2nd	"
Boone	"	3rd	"
Howard	"	"	"
Lewis	"	"	"
Miller	"	"	"
Schuyler	"	"	"
DeKalb	"	4th	"

In Boone, Howard, Monroe and Schuyler Counties the Whig candidate for Congress received the majority of the votes. Lewis and Scott Counties had previously been Whig for the Legislature. All

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1. Ray: Repeal of Missouri Comp; p. 66.  
 2. Jefferson Inquirer: Jan. 11, 1851.  
 3. Senate Journal: 1850; p.216.  
 4. Statesman: Aug. 30, 1850.



the counties, except DeKalb, were in districts electing Whigs to Congress and (including DeKalb) giving increased votes to the Whig candidates for Congress. It is significant of the existence of both a radical pro-slavery element and a dominating conservative element in the Legislature at this time to state that several resolutions originating in the Committees on Federal Relations of each House were brought in which agitated the same question that Congress had disposed of in the Compromise Measure, and that they were promptly suppressed.<sup>2</sup>

The overthrow of Benton shows how different views on the subject of slavery extension disrupted the Democratic party in Missouri and that, as the slave holding counties practically all repudiated him, the slavery element in the party was chiefly for slavery extension.

On the face of conditions the Whigs had not been divided on the question. But further consideration of the matter will show that the Whigs were divided upon it. As among Southern and Northern Whigs it is fair to assume that the Southern Whigs had a preponderance in the strong slave counties and the Northern Whigs had their greatest number in the light slave counties. Considering with this the fact that the Whigs in the strong slave counties made their votes a matter of commerce in the overthrow of Benton, and that three of the light slave counties preserved, in general, their integrity intact, we can, roughly speaking, delimit the Southern Whigs upon one side and the Northern Whigs

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1. House Journal 1850: p.147.  
Missouri Statesman: Sep. 8, 1848.  
Ibid: Aug. 30, 1850.
  2. Senate Journal: 1850-51; Appendix p.289.  
House Journal: 1850-51; Appendix pp.240, 241, 242.



upon the other side of the slavery extension issue, the chief bond of union between them being the common desire for political spoils.

By 1850, therefore, the question of slavery extension had opened up very plainly a line of cleavage through both the Whig and the Democratic parties in Missouri.



## Chapter III.

Slavery Extension and the Final Elimination of Benton.

The expectation of Benton's enemies that he would retire from political life after being defeated<sup>1</sup> for re-election as United States Senator was not to be realized. He was upon the scene of action in 1852 and took such an active part in politics that the interest in the state campaign in the summer far exceeded that taken in the Presidential Election in November. At the State Election the Democratic poll was 8000 and the Whig 3000 greater than at the National Election<sup>2</sup>.

It was the general desire among the Democrats to unite the party if possible and as a rule they were against the further agitation of the slavery extension question. The Whigs, on the other hand, knowing the advantage they had gained from it, were not averse to having it agitated in localities where they could gain an advantage thereby, notwithstanding the State Whig Convention particularly disclaimed against further slavery agitation<sup>3</sup>. The general desire among the Democrats to discard the slavery issue was chiefly noticeable in the County Democratic Conventions throughout the state in the winter and spring of 1852. In these conventions Benton's name was seldom or never mentioned and it was the invariable spirit of these meetings to abide by the action of Congress on the slavery question and to unite upon and elect a full state Democratic ticket<sup>4</sup>. The Jefferson In-

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1. Ray: Repeal of the Missouri Compromise; pp.66, 67.

2. Harvey: Provinces and States: Vol. 4, pp.109, 110.

3. Jefferson Inquirer: July 31, 1852.

4. Ibid: November 8, 1851 to June 5, 1852, particularly April 17/1852.



quirer, Benton's chief sheet in the state, openly opposed two State Democratic Conventions, for the futility of the Bentons attempting to carry the state was fully recognized<sup>1</sup>. Benton's greatest strength was in St. Louis and other<sup>2</sup> counties in the First Congressional District and notwithstanding there were comparatively few anti-Benton men in St. Louis the Benton Democracy there gave them places on the ticket for the city election for the sake of harmony. The anti-Benton faction showed their lack of gratitude for this by meeting, nominating a candidate for mayor and selecting delegates to the Democratic Congressional Convention<sup>3</sup>. This effected a split in the First Congressional District whereupon Benton announced his candidacy for Congress as an Independent. The German element in the District which had theretofore been largely against the Whigs went to Benton in this election through the endorsement and recommendation of the "Anzeiger"<sup>4</sup>. Slavery then became the leading issue with the Germans and they gave their votes to Benton in 1852, and again in 1854, on this account<sup>5</sup>. How the German vote determined the election is here shown:

	<u>1850</u>		<u>1852</u>
Rozier (Benton)	5600	: Benton	8437
Bowlin (Anti-Benton)	5317	: Bogy (Anti-Benton)	2566
Darby (Whig)	7145	: Carruthers (Whig)	7596

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1. Jefferson Inquirer: May 1, 1852.
  2. Bollinger, Cape Girardeau, Jefferson, Madison, Oregon, Perry, Ripley, Stoddard and Wayne.
  3. Jefferson Inquirer: April 3, May 20, 1852.
  4. Ibid: June 5, 1852.
  5. Harvey: Provinces and States; Vol 4, p.138.



In these figures we see the Whig vote remaining intact and the German vote changed in large part from the Anti-Bentons to Benton. An analysis of the voting of the various counties in the First District indicates that the Anti-Benton decrease was largely due to Democrats who did not vote (about 1550) and the net remainder (about 1200) is accounted for in part of the Benton increase. The remainder of the Benton increase (about 1600) was doubtless due to the foreign element which had not voted prior to 1852<sup>1</sup>.

The only strong slave holding counties electing Benton Democrats to the Legislature in 1852 were Cape Girardeau, Jackson, Lafayette, Lincoln and St. Charles. In the first four a Whig was also elected in each and in the latter an Anti-Benton Democrat was also elected. Benton's strength had not increased among the strong slave counties while, on the other hand, the Anti-Bentons had increased<sup>2</sup>.

The session of the General Assembly following the election was without any feature of note respecting the slavery question, except that on February 5th, 1853, F.P. Blair introduced resolutions in the House to rescind the Jackson-Napton Resolution. A substitute was at once offered by Tompkins (Whig) of Cooper

1. Jefferson Inquirer: Aug. 14, and Oct. 12, 1852, giving votes of counties. An inspection of the returns of these counties shows that there was a total decrease of about 3100 anti-Benton votes in fifteen counties of the District. About 1550 of these can be probably accounted for in the increase in Benton or Whig votes in same counties, leaving about 1550 Democrats not voting in 1852. There were three counties where the Anti-Benton vote increased. In St. Louis there was a decrease of 140 Anti-Benton votes and an increase of 1573 Benton votes and 625 Whig votes.
2. Missouri Statesman: Aug. 27, 1852. Jefferson Inquirer: Aug. 21, 1852.



County, which practically reaffirmed the Jackson-Napton Resolutions as respects slavery. By a vote of 72 to 49 both Blair and Tompkins' resolutions were laid on the table, 27 Whigs and five Benton Democrats (from light slave counties) being among those voting to table<sup>1</sup>. Of the 27 Whigs thus voting, only 7 were against the repeal of the Jackson Resolutions. The other 20 were in favor of repealing them but wished to avoid a discussion that would prevent the progress of necessary business. The same was true of the 5 Benton Democrats. The real sense of the House on the repeal of the Resolutions was therefore 72 to 47 in favor of repeal. This was largely due to the nullifying clause (the fifth); but as the previous General Assembly, which had adopted them had neutralized this clause by repudiating the Nashville Convention it was not thought necessary to consider the matter further<sup>2</sup>. No particular change in attitude on the slavery question was indicated by this action of the House.

While we have seen in the preceding chapter how favorably the slavery interests in Missouri looked upon the question of extending slavery into the newly acquired territories, we will now consider the attitude of the state, including the slavery interests, upon the like question as brought about by the organization of Kansas and Nebraska Territories.

The economic conditions in the western part of Missouri were favorable to slave labor, hemp raising being an important industry there<sup>3</sup>. And the residents of that portion of the state were in favor of opening up the adjoining lands to the West to

1. House Journal 1853: p. 519.

2. Missouri Statesman: March 4, 1853.

3. Ray: Repeal of the Missouri Compromise: pp. 115 to 131.



settlers because the conditions there were recognized as being similar to those existing in Western Missouri. Petitions with this in view were sent in to Congress by citizens of Western Missouri<sup>1</sup>. In accordance with these petitions Representative Hall (Benton Democrat) of St. Joseph, Missouri, introduced a Bill into Congress December 3, 1852 to organize the "Territory of the Platte". This Bill passed the House but was laid off the table in the Senate by Democratic votes. It did not provide for the repeal or modification of the Missouri Compromise. Senator Atchison of Missouri did not vote to lay it on the table but he intimated that he was unfavorable to the organization of the new Territory on account of the provisions of the Missouri Compromise which, he said, was a political error<sup>2</sup>. He was in favor of relaxing the Missouri Compromise before organizing that Territory<sup>3</sup>. Benton, hoping thereby to weaken Atchison's influence in Missouri and recoup his own political fortunes, took advantage of this attitude of Atchison to canvass Missouri in 1853 in favor of opening up the new territory to settlers<sup>4</sup>.

The following December Atchison announced emphatically in the Senate that his opposition to organizing the Territory was in accord with the interests of his slave owning constituents and that his consent to it would be obtained only under protest<sup>5</sup>. Just before the opening of Congress he had announced in Missouri that he was willing to vote for it if the Missouri Compromise were not to be applied<sup>6</sup>. By this time it had become well understood that Benton was urging the passage of the Bill without abrogating the Missouri Compromise while Atchison

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1. Ray: Repeal of the Missouri Compromise: p.81.
  2. Harvey: Provinces and States: Vol.4, pp.113,114.
  3. Political Text Book 1860: p.80.
  4. Ray: Repeal of the Missouri Compromise, pp.115-131.
  5. Jefferson Inquirer: Dec. 3, 1853.
  6. Ibid: Dec. 17, 1853.



avored it subject only to the relaxation of that measure; and there is nothing to show that Benton had gained any advantage over Atchison with the people of Missouri due to this difference of opinion. The following March both Atchison and Geyer voted for the Douglas Bill while Benton was the only member from Missouri who voted against the Richardson House Bill which finally became the Kansas-Nebraska Bill upon passing the Senate. Atchison voted for this latter bill in the Senate while Geyer did not vote upon it<sup>1</sup>. As soon as the repealing features were introduced into the measure Atchison became one of the most ardent champions of the bill while Benton reversed his position and opposed it because of the repealing clause<sup>2</sup>.

As showing the sentiments of a portion of the people of Western Missouri upon the matter it may be stated that the people of Andrew County, which was one of those immediately concerned in the opening of the new territory, met in mass meeting November 26, 1853 and passed resolutions to exclude the subject of slavery from the organization of the territory, thereby leaving the people in the territory concerned to decide the matter for themselves<sup>3</sup>.

The introduction of the repealing clause into the bill had placed Benton in a more embarrassing position than he had endeavored to place Atchison. If he voted for the bill in its latter form he would lose caste with the restrictionists of the state, while if he opposed it he would lose the support of the people in the western part of the state, at least. He would lose considerable following in either case: but his vote was

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1. Political Text Book, 1860: pp.79 to 87.

2. Harvey: Provinces and States: p. 118. Rhodes: Vol.I,p.489.

3. Jefferson Inquirer: December 24, 1853.



consistent with his long sustained support of the compromise throughout his public career. Nevertheless Benton was a candidate in 1854 for election to Congress and also a candidate for election of United States Senator to succeed Atchison<sup>1</sup>. He was defeated in the election to Congress by Kennett (Whig)<sup>2</sup>. The returns would indicate that a number of Anti-Benton men voted for Kennett and that other Benton men probably remained away from the polls. The Whigs also won, by majority or plurality of votes, in all Congressional Districts except the Fifth where the Democrats won through being undivided<sup>3</sup>. In this election forty-one counties changed the character of their majority voted as compared with the election of 1852:

The Whigs	won	16	counties	and	lost	9
The Anti-Bentons	"	16	"	"	"	16
The Bentons	"	9	"	"	"	16

Very few of the heavy slave counties were involved in this change. On the western border Buchanan County changed from Whig to Anti-Benton and Jackson County from Benton to Anti-Benton and Whig. Daviess County changed from Whig to Anti-Benton. On the other hand, two light slave counties (Cass and Bates) elected Benton men: as also did Johnson County. Cape Girardeau changed from Benton to Whig. Pike County changed from Whig to Anti-Benton. About the only generalization that can be

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1. Jefferson Inquirer: May 20, 1854.
  2. The newspapers of the period designated Kennett as a Whig at the time of election (see Missouri Statesman and Jefferson Inquirer). He was subsequently known as an American. The Official Manual State of Missouri, 1909-10 (p.125) gives Kennett's politics as "Know Nothing" in 1855.
  3. Missouri Statesman: Aug. 25, 1854.



made from this involving <sup>the</sup> political aspect of slave counties is that Benton appears to have lost ground among them, for no Benton men were elected from heavy slave counties. The results in Jackson and Buchanan counties were significant of an attitude of intolerance among slavery men in that section toward any party that was not for slavery extension.

The strength of the parties in the Legislature upon organization in December 1854 was as follows:

Senate, 12	Whigs, 9	Anti-Bentons, 9	Bentons
House, 48	" 45	" "	34 "
Joint	—	—	—
Session 60	" 54	" "	43 " 1.

The Jefferson Inquirer of August 19, 1854, made the sweeping statement that scarcely a Whig had been elected in any county save by Anti-Benton votes and not an Anti-Benton was returned who was not indebted to the Whigs for his election. The general results of the election did not apparently justify this assertion. But if vote trading did occur, as the forty-one changes noted above might indicate, it was not through any prearranged plans involving the election of a United States Senator, but occurred locally in the election of minor officials in the county election. Had there been any systematic vote trading involving the election of a United States Senator it would have appeared by combinations between the Whigs and Anti-Bentons in the Legislature. As a matter of fact the Anti-Bentons combined with the Whigs in the election of House officials upon the assembling of the General Assembly in December, B. Gratz Brown, of St. Louis, leading in this coalition. A

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1. Statesman: Sep. 3, 1852 and Sep. 1, 1854.



Whig was elected Speaker of the House while Benton Democrats were elected to other offices in the House<sup>1</sup>. The Bentons who voted for the Whig for Speaker were all from the counties having considerable of the German element in the population and they were from counties which had been represented by Anti-Benton men in the previous Legislature.

Notwithstanding the preponderance of Whigs in the Legislature, it was the general feeling that the Whig party in Missouri was breaking up<sup>2</sup>. As an indication of this it may be stated that in the Whig caucus of the House the "Slave Rights Whigs" attempted to establish the "power test" -- that Congress had not the power to legislate upon the subject of slavery in the territories -- as a test of orthodox whiggery. But the proposition was voted down by the caucus. The Statesman, the principal Whig organ of the state at the time, said that it made no difference what a man's views were upon the slavery question as long as he believed that Congress should not agitate the question one way or another by legislating upon it<sup>3</sup>. This, of itself, was an endorsement of the policy involved in the proposed power test. Balloting for U.S. Senator began in joint session January 5th and continued to February 3, 1855: and during this time the slavery question was debated in all its political phases. The anti-Bentons taking part in the debate were Stewart, Bogy, Medly, Gilstrap, Price and Reid. The Bentons were Blair, Brown and Stevenson; and the Whigs were Goode, Rollins, Doniphan, Todd, Breckenridge and Davis<sup>4</sup>. During the

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1. Missouri Statesman: Dec. 29, 1854. House Journal: 1854, p.-6-9.
  2. Harvey: Provinces and States: Vol. 4, p.19.
  3. Statesman: February 2, 1855.
  4. Switzler: History of Missouri, p.278.



first twenty-four ballots the voting was, in general, as follows:

Anti-Bentons	-----	Atchison	56
Bentons	-----	Benton	40
Whigs	-----	Doniphan	59

On the 25th ballot Price was substituted for Atchison and no change in votes resulting, Atchison was again put on and Price removed on the 26th ballot. On the 27th ballot, on January 25, James O. Broadhead was voted for by a Benton Democrat and on the 28th ballot Mosely, Moore and Darnes (Whigs) changed their votes from Doniphan to Atchison<sup>1</sup>. This change necessitated explanations which were, by Mosely, that as a "Slave Right Whig" Atchison best represented his views, if Doniphan could not be elected<sup>2</sup>. But Mosley's bolt to the Anti-Benton was probably influenced by the fact that on January 10, 1855, they had joined with his Whig friends in electing him President of the Branch Bank of the State of Missouri at Cape Girardeau<sup>3</sup>. Darnes and Moore resumed voting for Doniphan when Broadhead's name was withdrawn, but Mosely continued to vote for Atchison. Considerable excitement was caused by these three Whig members changing their votes<sup>4</sup>.

On February 1, 1855, Mr. Goode, a "Slave Right Whig", introduced resolutions into the House respecting steps to be taken to compel Illinois to enforce the fugitive slave law and they were promptly sent to a committee to be buried<sup>5</sup>. In a speech on the same day he advocated breaking through party ties and called

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1. House Journal: 1855; pp.63-179.

2. Ibid: p.177.

Statesman: February 2, 1855.

3. House Journal: 1855; p.153.

4. Statesman: February 2, 1855.

5. Ibid: February 16, 1855.



on others of his party to join him in voting for some other man in order that the election of a Senator might be effected, as it was evident that Doniphan would not be. But the party held fast to Doniphan. In his speech Goode asked Rollins if he would vote to make Kansas a slave state. Rollins replied that as a citizen of Missouri he would. Goode later stated that personally he desired very much to see Kansas peopled with slave holders,<sup>1</sup> and he commented on the fact that 1900 slave holders owned one-half the property of Missouri. The diversity of views among Whigs is no better exemplified than by the speech of Goode and that of Rollins who replied to him on February 2nd. Rollins paid his respects to the "power test" by insinuating that it was nothing but an attempt to gain some common ground for Anti-Bentons and bolting Whigs to stand upon in electing Atchison. He condemned Atchison for voting for the Badger Proviso<sup>2</sup>, introduced into the Kansas-Nebraska Bill, because it left slave interests in the new territories wholly unprotected. He insisted that the Whig party of Missouri was with Benton on the matter of not agitating the slavery question: that it was sound and conservative, "ready to resist illegal northern aggression and abolitionism on the one hand and to suppress Southern fanaticism and nullification on the other<sup>3</sup>."

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1. Statesman: March 2nd.
  2. This Proviso prohibited the revival of any act prior to March 6, 1820, protecting, establishing, prohibiting or abolishing slavery in the territories in question. It left slavery unprotected there. (Political Text Book, 1860: p.81).
  3. Statesman: March 16, 1855.



On the forty-first ballot the votes for Senator stood:

Atchison	58
Benton	38
Doniphan	56

The Joint Session then adjourned to meet upon concurrent resolutions of both Houses<sup>1</sup>. In this contest for the election of a United States Senator we see the last strong stand made by the Whigs of Missouri for party union.

While the Democratic party was divided into two factions at this time it is apparent from the views expressed in the Legislature that the number of opinions held by the Whigs on the subject was not limited to than number; and the variety is difficult to determine and classify by any generalization or rules of inference involving identification with slavery interests.

Not being successful in the election of a Senator and disintegration having already begun, the outcome was that the Southern Whigs allied themselves to the American party and later to the Constitutional Union party. The Northern Whigs began to affiliate with the factions which were afterwards consolidated into the Republican party. A few continued to retain their designation of Whigs<sup>2</sup>. They made up a conservative element, however, in whatever party they may have found themselves.

Until 1854 the slavery extension question was largely one of abstract notions and views; but, beginning in 1854, it became a concrete issue on account of the struggle for Kansas which commenced that year. In the controversy attending the passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Bill, it was the unofficial understanding by

1. House Journal 1855: p.214.

2. Harvey: Provinces and States; Vol. 4, p.119.



Atchison and others in Missouri that Kansas would be surrendered to slavery and that Nebraska, for which no contest would be made, would be allowed to remain free<sup>1</sup>. The willingness of Atchison to vote for the Badger Proviso is corroborative evidence that such an understanding was had. The people of Missouri began moving into Kansas, accordingly, as soon as the territorial action was signed and it is probable that the first settlers from Missouri, in 1854, were bona fide emigrants who went there in good faith.

But in July, 1854, the Emigrant Aid Society of Massachusetts sent out their first party to Kansas<sup>2</sup>. This changed the temper of Missourians, especially the pro-slavery element of the western border counties, to a determination that Kansas should be a slave state<sup>3</sup> and the census of 1855 showed that about one-half of the Kansas voters were from Missouri.<sup>4</sup> This first influx of Missourians into Kansas was, as a rule, of the non slave holding class of the South who hated free negroes more than they hated slavery<sup>5</sup>. The detachments sent out by the Emigrant Aid Societies continued to arrive, carrying fire arms, and in 1855 the practical abolitionists among them began operations in some of the western Missouri counties<sup>6</sup>. Excitement was at once raised to fever heat, especially in Platte, Clay and Jackson Counties, where fillibustering societies were organized under various names and the object of which was, by intimidation and mob violence, to make Kansas a slave state. These border socie-

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1. Harvey: Provinces and States; p.117.

2. Rhodes: History of the United States: Vol.2, p.78.

3. Harding: Life of George R. Smith; p.211.

4. Carr: Missouri a Bone of Contention; pp.247, 248.

5. Thayer: The Kansas Crusade; p. 90.

6. Boonville Observer: March 17, June 27, July 19 and Aug.11, 1855



ties were unfavorably commented upon by The Missouri Statesman, The Fulton Telegraph, The Boonville Observer, The Hannibal Messenger, The Glasgow Times, The Independence Messenger and the St. Louis News<sup>1</sup>. The notorious wholesale election frauds accompanied this excitement. This episode on the border occurred in a year when there was no political campaign in progress in Missouri and there was consequently no appreciable effect upon local politics to be noted in elections, for none were had; and there is no official record to determine what the full force of public opinion, as expressed at the polls, would have been at that time. The conservative element of Missouri undoubtedly held itself aloof from the election frauds and remarked them with disfavor. Concerning the illegal voting The Statesman said: "The act was wrong - decidedly wrong - but its extenuation is to be found in the prior causes which provoked it - in the notorious irruption of voters sent out by aid societies with no other purpose but to vote. The election was a foul game but fairly played. The Pro-Slavery won it and we don't see any other alternative but for it to stand"<sup>2</sup>. This was probably a fair exposition of public opinion in Missouri upon the Kansas Election, particularly in the slave holding counties.

A "Kansas Meeting" in Boone County, June 1, 1855, condemned the action of the aid societies as a "mockery of the public law and a disregard of our peace". Its resolutions called for non interference by Congress and by the people of the free states with slavery in both the States and Territories<sup>3</sup>. This meeting was noted and its proceedings favorably commented upon by so

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1. Statesman: May 25 and June 1, 1855.

2. June 1, 1855.

3. The Missouri Statesman: June 8, 1855.



many of the leading newspapers<sup>1</sup> of Missouri that one is constrained to believe the mass of public opinion was in accord with it. Public meetings where like sentiments were expressed were held in Johnson County, Cooper County and Howard County<sup>2</sup>. In addition, public opinion upon the subject of slavery extension into Kansas and Nebraska, found expression in a State Pro-Slavery Convention held at Lexington, Missouri, pursuant to a call sent out from Lexington, Missouri, June 21, 1855, addressed "To the Members of the General Assembly of the State and all true friends of the South and Union": and the reason for the call was, as stated therein, on account of the movement to abolitionize Kansas and the Nullification Law movement begun in the East against the fugitive Slave Law<sup>3</sup>. The St. Louis Intelligence, noting the call, advised that only slave holders be sent to the Convention as it would thereby be assured against taking on the character of a mob. In addition, its influence upon the North would be more forcible if composed of slave holders only<sup>4</sup>. The various counties, politics at preceding State Election and number of delegates sent to this convention pursuant to the call (the delegation being selected at county meetings held for the purpose) were as follows:

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1. Among these newspapers were The St. Louis Republic, St. Louis News, The Brunswick, The Palmyra Whig, The Fulton Telegram, The Cape Girardeau Eagle, The Paris Mercury, The Ste. Genevieve Plain Dealer, The Huntsville Citizen, The St. Louis Intelligence, The St. Louis Herald, The Western Reporter, The Glasgow Times, The Boonville Observer, The Independence Message, and The Hannibal Messenger. (See Statesman of June 15, 22, 29, 1855).
  2. Statesman: June 1, Sep. 21, and Observer, July 7, 1855.
  3. Statesman: June 29, 1855.
  4. Statesman: June 15, 1856.



<u>County</u>	<u>Politics</u>	<u>Number of Delegates.</u>	:	<u>County</u>	<u>Politics</u>	<u>Number of Delegates.</u>
Andrew	Benton & Whig	2	:	Henry	Whig	6
Benton	Benton	1	:	Jackson	Whig and Anti-Benton	15
Boone	Whig	6	:	Johnson	Benton	13
Caldwell	"	4	:	Lafayette	Whig	9
Carroll	"	7	:	Livingston	Anti-Benton	7
Cass	Benton	13	:	Lynn	" "	1
Clay	Whig	24	:	Morgan	Whig	1
Cooper	"	11	:	Pettis	"	6
Clinton	"	6	:	Platte	Whig and Anti-Benton	17
Cole	Anti-Benton	4	:	Randolph	Whig and Anti-Benton	1
Chariton	" "	3	:	Ray	Whig	38
Daviess	" "	2	:	Saline	Whig	18
Howard	Whig and Anti-Benton	9	:			1

Two delegates from St. Louis were also given seats after some discussion, there being a suspicion that they were anti-slavery men. Prominent personages of Missouri who attended the Convention were: Governor Price, King, Doniphan, Atchison, Napton, Birch, Woodson, C.F. Jackson, and Marmaduke: also President Shannon of the University of Missouri (all anti-Benton men). This Convention caused an address to be drawn up and published to the people of the United States protesting against the action of the Massachusetts Legislature in fostering and incorporating the Emigrant Aid Societies and Kansas Leagues, and expressed the purpose of resisting all such attempts on the part of the Northern States and Societies.

As being the deliberate opinion of regularly selected delegates from twenty-five slave countries of the State, these opinions are entitled to consideration in determining the attitude of public opinion toward the slavery situation in Mis-



souri. Excepting a radical pro-slavery speech by President Shannon of the University of Missouri, there was nothing to mar the conservative character of the proceedings. But this speech by President Shannon, together with like speeches and public letters emitted later by him, was unfavorably received and adversely commented upon for their radical character by many of the leading newspapers of the state<sup>1</sup>.

As the purpose of the Convention was not to construct or mould public opinion in Missouri, but chiefly to state what that opinion was, it cannot be said to have influenced party politics in the state. There is no evidence that it did. But the semi-official character of its organization and proceedings, taken in connection with the political events preceding it and subsequent thereto, confirm the belief that the slave-owning elements in Missouri were favorable to slavery extension.

Passing to the political events of 1856 we find the Democratic Party still divided and the Whig Party succeeded in large part by the American Party. The Benton Democracy was ready to make overtures to the other wing of the party with a view to its union on a moderate platform respecting slavery. In fact, they were anxious for a union, but they were unwilling to be dictated to by their opponents. A practical attempt at a reunion of the party was made by the Benton men when, at the State Democratic

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1. Among them being The Statesman, The Brunswicker, (a radical pro-slavery paper), The St. Louis News, Palmyra Whig, Independence Messenger, Boonville Observer, St. Louis Western Watchman, St. Louis Democrat, Jefferson Inquirer, and Lexington Express. (See Statesman, July 27, August 3, 17, 24, and Boonville Observer, July 28, 1851).



Convention in April, 1856, the Benton wing proposed, through a Committee, as common ground upon which they all could stand, the ignoring of differences of opinion on the Kansas-Nebraska Act. This was rejected by the Anti-Bentons and their proposition involving complete acceptance and endorsement of their own platform and ticket was in turn rejected by the Committee of the Bentons. The essential difference upon the slavery question which was proposed to be ignored was this: While both wings opposed the repeal of the Kansas-Nebraska Bill, the Bentons deprecated its passage while the "anties" did not. The stand taken by the Anti-Bentons required the approval of the passage of the Bill as a basis of coalition. The Committee appointed to confer with the Anti-Benton wing consisted of Austin A. King, Thomas L. Price, Samuel A. Lowe, H. E. Richardson, Charles F. Holly, Thomas S. Nelson and John D. Stevenson, and the action and recommendation of this Committee were approved by the Benton Convention which then nominated Thomas H. Benton for Governor. The platform, as affecting slavery, adopted by them disapproved of the repeal of the Missouri Compromise on account of the agitation of the subject which the repeal had produced and it opposed any attempt to restore it as tending to the same kind of agitation. It acquiesced in the principles of the Kansas-Nebraska Act fairly and honestly carried out. The Anti-Bentons nominated Trusten Polk for Governor and their platform cordially approved the passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Bill and announced the doctrine that the people of the territories had the right to form and regulate their domestic institutions in their own way, subject only to the Constitution of the United States: that Congress could not impose conditions



on new states not imposed by the Constitution on the original  
<sup>1</sup>  
 thirteen states .

The newly organized American Party in the state nominated Robert C. Ewing for Governor. Their platform regarded the repeal of the Missouri Compromise and the enactment of the Fugitive Slave Law as finalities which were not to be disturbed; and it stated that voters of territories had the exclusive right to adopt their own Constitution subject only to the Constitution of the United States. The only previous authoritative statement by the American Party, within the state, was an address by members of that Party in the Legislature of 1854-'55 and this ignored the slavery question<sup>2</sup>.

There was not enough left of the Whig Party in the state for a State Whig Convention; but the Whig State Control Committee, of which Edward Bates was chairman, issued an address advising the Whigs to vote for Fillmore and condemned both the American and the Democratic platforms<sup>3</sup>. As showing how the remainder of the Whigs were divided, it is sufficient to state that H. S. Geyer, in a public letter dated St. Louis, September 15, 1856, advised all Old Line Whigs to vote for Buchanan. He wished to insure the defeat of the Republican Party and prevent the election being thrown into the National House of Representatives of which he apprehended some danger<sup>4</sup>. The Whigs had no state ticket.

The end of the state campaign showed that there were two

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1. Statesman: May 9, 1856; Jefferson Inquirer: April 26 and May 10, 1856; Boonville Observer: April 26 and May 3, 1856.
  2. Jefferson Inquirer: Jan. 19, 1856; Statesman: Jan. 27, 1856; and Boonville Observer: April 26, 1856.
  3. Boonville Observer: Sep. 13, 1856.
  4. Boonville Observer: Sep. 27, 1856.



positions being taken toward the slavery feature of the Kansas-Nebraska Act by the Benton Democrats in the state. One, of which Frank P. Blair was a representative type, did not endorse the principles of the Kansas-Nebraska Act and was in favor of the restoration of the Missouri Compromise, while Benton's followers in the rural districts endorsed the principles of the Act and were opposed to agitation to restore the Missouri Compromise<sup>1</sup>. The comparative strength of the Bentons, Anti-Bentons and Americans, as shown in the vote for Governor, was as follows:

Polk	received	46,889	votes	
Ewing	"	40,578	"	
Benton	"	27,527	"	2

As regards slave counties, Polk carried Cape Girardeau, Chariton, Clay, Howard, Jackson, Lewis, Lincoln, Mississippi, New Madrid, Perry, Pike, Platte, Randolph, St. Francois, Schuyler, Warren and Washington. Ewing carried Boone, Callaway, Cooper, Greene, Henry, Lafayette, Marion, Monroe, Montgomery, Pettis, Ralls, Ray and Saline. Benton carried Cole, Franklin, St. Charles and St. Louis<sup>3</sup>. It should be noted that Polk, as representing the pro-slavery views, carried the counties where the border excitement was strongest, (Jackson, Clay and Platte).

In the State Legislature the American Party elected representatives from the following strong slave counties: Boone, Callaway, Cooper, Greene, Johnson, Lafayette, Marion, Monroe, Montgomery, Ralls, St. Charles, Saline and Schuyler. The Whigs elected one of the representatives from Cooper County. The Anti-Bentons elected representatives from all the other strong

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1. Boonville Observer: Aug. 16, 1856.  
 2. Ibid: Sep. 13, 1856.  
 3. Statesman: Aug. 22, 1856.



slave counties.

The representatives elected by the Benton Democracy were all from the light slave counties (including Franklin, Gasconade, Johnson and St. Charles).<sup>1</sup>

There are certain evidences of vote trading in the State Election. The following counties gave majority votes to Anti-Benton candidates for Congress or for Governor and elected Americans, Bentons or Whigs to the Legislature, and the representatives from these counties voted for Polk, and most of them for Greene, in the election of two United States Senators by the Legislature instead of voting for their party caucus candidates. The counties thus involved were Andrew, Audrain, Dallas, Franklin, Holt, Nodaway, Osage, Oregon, St. Clair, Benton, Gentry, Grundy, Polk, Platte, Stoddard and Webster.<sup>2</sup> The result of the State Election was to represent the different parties in the Senate and House as follows:

	<u>Senate</u>	<u>House</u>	<u>Total</u>
Anties	12	63	75
Americans	9	29	38
Bentons	7	35	42
Whigs	5	7	12
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
Totals	33	134	167

34  
12  
22  
22

22

The majority on joint ballot would therefore be 84, or nine more than the number the Anti-Benton Party actually had. The pre-election arrangement in the twelve counties would therefore insure success to the Anti-Benton candidates for Senators. The counties involved in this vote trading were all light slave except Platte. Why this occurred in the light slave counties and

1. Statesman: Aug. 22, 1856.

2. Ibid: Aug. 15, 22, 1856.



not in the strong slave counties, as in previous elections, was probably as follows: First, the new American Party being the successor of the Whig was strongest in the heavy slave counties and pride in the new party organization would prevent them entering into such a combination as would indicate, if it did not actually produce, party demoralization. The strongholds of the new party could not be allowed to be corrupted. Second, the Benton Democrats of the rural districts, as we have seen, viewed the slavery phase of the Kansas-Nebraska Act from a different attitude than did the Blair type and this difference of opinion made vote trading easy among the lukewarm Bentons in the light slave rural districts where it actually took place.

After the State Election in August Benton advised his followers to vote the Buchanan electoral ticket<sup>1</sup>. That there was a greater interest taken in the State Election than in the Presidential is shown by the fact that 8313 more votes were cast in the former than the latter. This was doubtless due to the fact that slavery extension was a greater issue in state politics than in national. The State American platform had a plank on slavery extension, while the National American Party platform for that year did not<sup>2</sup>. Buchanan received 58,160 votes which was 16,256 less than the combined Benton and Anti-Benton votes in August. Fillmore received 48,521 votes which was 7,943 more than Ewing had received in August. Fillmore gained in all the strong slave holding counties except Ralls and in all the others excepting six in which there were very few slaves.

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1. Statesman: March 16, 1860.

2. Political Text Book: 1860; p.23.



The votes cast for Benton in the State Election are approximately accounted for as follows in the Presidential Election:

Buchanan's increase over Polk,	11,271	plus.	
Approximately 1500 Polk men not voting	12,771		
Fillmore's increase over Ewing,	7,943	plus.	
Approximately 400 Ewing men not voting	8,343		
Benton men not voting throughout state	6,413		<u>        </u>
Total	-----		<u>27,527</u> <sup>1</sup>

About two-fifths of the increased vote of each candidate can be accounted for as Benton votes in the heavy slave counties; about one-fourth in St. Louis; and the remainder in the light slave counties. Roughly speaking, less than half of Benton's followers took his advice and voted for Buchanan: a little less than a third of them voted for Fillmore, and the remainder did not vote at all, due doubtless to dissatisfaction with both parties. This non-voting remainder doubtless includes all the voters in the state who were unalterably against slavery extension into Kansas and Nebraska Territories and would not vote because they had no standard bearer to follow<sup>2</sup>.

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1. A comparison of the votes of the various counties in December with those of the like counties in August, shows that there were many having a decrease of votes for Buchanan under the number given to Polk. In thirteen strong slave counties there was such a decrease, amounting to 1034; and for the entire state, about 1500. Likewise several counties showed an actual decrease of votes for Fillmore under the number given Ewing, nine strong slave counties showing such a decrease and amounting, in all the counties showing a decrease, to about 400.
  2. Analysis from votes by counties published in Missouri Statesman, September 12, and December 12, 1856.



The business of electing two United States Senators was taken up early in the 1855-56 session of the Legislature, Benton being a nominee in each election. James S. Green, the Anti-Benton caucus candidate, was elected on January 12, 1857, on first ballot, with the aid of Benton Democrats representing the vote-trading counties, for the short term to expire in 1861.

Trusten Polk was elected January 13, 1857, for the six year term with the aid of several others from the vote-trading counties. Benton lost 8 votes in the election of Green and 19 votes in the election of Polk<sup>1</sup>.

The slavery extension plank of the Benton State Platform had been relaxed as far as possible in 1856 for the purpose of attracting votes; but nevertheless not a single heavy slave county elected a Benton Democrat to the Legislature and of the light slave counties which did elect Benton candidates a large number apparently elected them with the deliberate intent of betraying him.

It would therefore appear that in 1856 there were few opponents to slavery extension among slavery interests in Missouri.

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1. Statesman: Sep. 2, 1856; Jan. 16, 23, 1857.



## Chapter IV.

The Slavery Extension Question to Include 1860.

The election in 1857 of Governor Trusten Polk to the United States Senate created a vacancy in the office of Governor which was filled by a special state election in August 1857. The candidate selected by the Anti-Benton Democracy was Robert M. Stewart. The principles of the party regarding slavery, as announced in his canvass, did not differ from those set forth by the Anti-Bentons in the state and national campaigns in the previous year. The only other candidate was James S. Rollins who was not formally nominated by any party but who announced himself as a candidate on the "Opposition Ticket" in response, as he stated, to letters sent him by members of the General Assembly and at the request of numerous Americans, Whigs and Benton Democrats throughout the state. He stated that his political sentiments had not changed<sup>1</sup>. Throughout his canvass he supported no specific platform. But it was expected that, due to his views on slavery, he would get the votes of a large number of Old Line Whigs who had voted for Polk in 1856 and that the great body of Benton Democrats as well as the American Party would also vote for him<sup>2</sup>. The spirit of opposition to the predominant Anti-Benton Democrats and the general desire for a change in the political complexion of the State Government was looked to as the chief tie among these opposition elements rather than any common opinion on the slavery question. As Rollins was an American, the key-note of his arguments regarding

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1. Statesman: April 24, 1857.

2. Ibid: May 29, 1857.



slavery extension were taken, as might be expected, from the attitude of the Americans on that question. Just what that attitude was is best shown by the resolutions of the American State Council of Missouri as adopted April 15, 1857:

"Resolved: that the systematic agitation of the slavery question has brought our Union into peril, and it is the duty of every American patriot not to interfere with other States over which he has no legitimate control.

Resolved: that we are opposed to the interference of the General Assembly in the settlement of the question of slavery in the Territories, and we believe that the citizens of the United States, bona fide residents of the Territories, have the right to determine the question of slavery when they come to the adoption of a State Constitution."<sup>1</sup>

This was a pretty definite position for Americans to take on the slavery extension question considering that the American National Platform of the previous year had avoided the subject entirely. These resolutions did not touch the issue regarding whether slavery should or should not be extended into Kansas and Nebraska but they very clearly left the inference that it was favorably considered. At the same time the Anti-Benton Democrats were taken to task for the interferences of the General Assembly in the question and this latter furnished the ground for the Benton Democrats to stand on in making common cause against the Anti-Bentons.

In his speech at Arrow Rock, Saline County, at the beginning of his canvass, Rollins expressed himself as opposed to slavery agitation but, in order to preserve good neighborhood between Missouri and Kansas he believed it important that Kansas

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1. Statesman: April 24, 1857.



be made a slave state. He said that for this purpose he had always been ready to aid in sending bona fide settlers into the territory<sup>1</sup>. Rollins' cause among the slave holding classes was aided by the fact that he was himself a slave holder while his political opponents, including Stewart, who affected to support the slavery interests were as a rule not slave owners; and the opposition newspapers were quick to point out the incongruity of the situation<sup>2</sup>.

The canvass made by Stewart and Rollins was mostly confined to those sections of the state having the slave counties. Stewart began in Southeast Missouri where there was a strong conservative combination against him<sup>3</sup> while Rollins began in Western Missouri (Clay, Jackson and Saline counties) where many of Benton's chief opponents were found. Beginning in July they made a joint canvass, including Newton, Greene, Jackson, Cass, Henry, Jackson and Buchanan counties in their itinerary<sup>4</sup>. Although there was a general desire among the opposition to turn the Anti-Benton Democrats out of office, Rollins encountered a great deal of apathy among the opposition during his canvass.

1. Statesman: May 15, 1857.

2. The Independence Messenger said: "He (Rollins) is a slave holder by inheritance as well as by interest and is consequently acquainted with whatever good or evil is consequent on slavery; hence we consider him a much safer guardian of the rights of slave holders than any of the numerous class of violent pro-slavery patriots who are only allowed to smell other people's negroes". (Quoted in Statesman, May 15, 1857.)

3. Statesman: June 5, 1851.

4. From files of Statesman, various dates during canvass.



One cause of this was the widely spread report that he was a "free soiler"<sup>1</sup> and it required constant assurances to be made by himself and his friends that his views were conservative to counteract the effect of this report.<sup>2</sup> Rollins was conservative on the slavery issue throughout the canvass yet without endorsing any view which would not be acceptable to the most ultra pro-slavery man.

Throughout their joint canvass Stewart continually taunted Rollins with being a free soiler, thereby keeping Rollins continually upon the defensive on this charge. At last, and near the end of the canvass, at Gallatin in Daviess County, Stewart accused Rollins of being a "Black Republican" whereupon Rollins retorted in kind, reminding his hearers that the Hannibal and St. Joseph Railroad, of which Stewart was President, was largely owned by Massachusetts stock holders and that if association of personal interests meant anything it was that Stewart was a "Black Republican" and not himself. Stewart passed the lie and a physical encounter requiring the interference of by-standers resulted<sup>3</sup>. This was the only time during the canvass that Rollins did not preserve his equanimity. The Inquirer, in noting the incident, expressed the belief that if Rollins had given Stewart a good whipping at the beginning of the campaign instead of the end, it would have been good for 20,000 more votes for Rollins<sup>4</sup>. The incident is worthy of note because it shows that the people of the state required just some such demonstration to clear their minds of the lurking doubt that Rollins might have free soil sympathies. But it occurred too late

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1. Free soilers were those whose creed was the exclusion of slavery from the territories.

2. Statesman: Aug. 7, 1857.

3. Ibid: Aug. 7, 1857.

4. Ibid: Also The Jefferson Inquirer. Aug. 1, 1857.



in the canvass to benefit Rollins as much as it should and he was defeated for election by only 334 votes. The defeat was due chiefly to the fact that thousands of the men whom the opposition had relied upon remained away from the polls<sup>1</sup>.

The larger towns and more accessible districts gave majorities to Rollins while the less accessible districts went to Stewart<sup>2</sup>. As regards the voting of the slave counties, the majority of the Benton element seems to have voted for Rollins in the following counties: Boone, Cooper, Cape Girardeau, Greene, Johnson, Jackson, Pike, Platte, Pettis, Randolph and Saline. In St. Charles County most of the Bentons apparently did not vote, but most of those who did voted for Rollins. In Cole and St. Louis Counties the Benton vote appeared to be about equally divided. In the following slave counties the majority of the Benton men apparently voted for Stewart: Buchanan, Callaway, Cass, Lafayette and Moniteau. In Franklin County about one-half of the Benton men did not vote, but the majority of those who did voted for Stewart.

In Chariton, Howard, Lincoln, Monroe, Marion, Montgomery, New Madrid, Ralls, Ste. Genevieve and St. Francois the Benton vote was so small in 1857 as to be of no consequence. For some reason, not apparent, Stewart lost heavily in Clay County<sup>3</sup>. The twenty-seven heaviest slave counties gave Rollins a total of 18,430, and Stewart 16,650 votes. The twenty-seven lightest slave counties gave Stewart 7,401 and Rollins 4,394 votes. In DeKalb, Dent, Mc Donald, Maries, Schuyler, Texas, Taney and Wright counties (having in all by 1850 census only 563 slaves)

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1. Statesman: Aug. 21, 1857.

2. Ibid:

3. Statesman: Sep. 4, 1852 and Sep. 12, 1856.



the vote for Rollins was 563 and for Stewart 2490. Shannon County, which did not have a single slave, did not give Rollins a vote<sup>1</sup>.

Shortly after the election Rollins expressed the opinion that had the opposition won the state would have been theirs for years thereafter<sup>2</sup>. The total votes cast for the two candidates was 95,616 while in the previous election of Governor, in 1856, the total was 114,994, a decrease of 19,382. If we allow the same number of American votes cast for Rollins as for Ewing (40,578), a fair assumption, we see in the 47,641 votes for Rollins a gain of 7063 from the Benton Democrats and Old Line Whigs (most of which was from the heavy slave counties). Allowing the same number of Benton Democratic votes to Stewart as to Rollins, there would still be about 13,400 of the Benton votes of August 1856 to account for as not voting. Allowing about 6,000 as the number of Polk men not voting in 1857, (which an examination and comparison of return shows to be about correct) the decrease of 19,372 votes for the 1837 election is accounted for; which confirms the belief that as many as 13,400 Benton men did not vote in 1857. The only cause which can be assigned for this relatively large decrease of the Benton vote as compared with the decrease of the Anti-Benton vote is that Rollins did not satisfy their political belief. He was probably not sufficiently anti-slavery for the Blair contingent, on account of his liberal but conservative views, and, in addition, the rural contingent in the backwoods districts (Northern Whig element) probably did not know how to place him on the slavery question. Naturally, also, it was hard for any Democrat to vote

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1. Statesman: Aug. 21, 28, 1857.

2. Harding: Life of George Smith; p.264.



for a man who had always been one of the chief leaders among the Whigs. The fact that he was an American undoubtedly had an adverse influence upon many Germans<sup>1</sup>.

At about this time the Anti-Bentons began to call themselves "National Democrats". The purpose of this was apparently to cover up the views of the ultra pro-slavery element which favored disunion rather than a failure of the plans for slavery extension.

As the extension of slavery had not been a part of the acknowledged creed of the old Democratic Party (when led by Benton in Missouri) it was deemed an opportune time to style the Benton wing of the Democracy as "Union Democrats", their purpose being to stand by the Union let the issues be as they might<sup>2</sup>.

Popular interest in Missouri upon the subject of slavery questions was next fixed upon the Lecompton Constitution adopted by the Kansas Territorial Convention in October 1857. This constitution provided for slavery in the new State of Kansas, when admitted, and for the carrying of slaves into Kansas by emigrants thereto<sup>3</sup>. The people of Kansas had voted December 21, 1857, to adopt this constitution by a vote of 6266 with slavery, and 567 without slavery: and upon again voting upon it, January 4, 1858, at the instance of the new territorial legislature, the vote was 162 for adopting the Lecompton Constitution and 10,226 against adopting it<sup>4</sup>. Upon the recommendation of President Buchanan Congress took up the matter of admitting Kansas under the Lecompton Constitution. A bill to admit Kansas

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1. Conclusions based upon an analysis of return by counties in elections 1856 and 1857, (see Statesman, Sep.12,'56 and Sep. 4,'57.
  2. Jefferson Inquirer: Aug. 29,1857.
  3. Political Text Book: 1860; p.120.
  4. Ibid: p.117.



under the Lecompton Constitution was introduced into the Senate by Senator Green of Missouri and passed the Senate March 23, 1858, both of the Missouri Senators voting for it.

Upon being taken up in the House the Crittenden-Montgomery substitute was adopted April 1, 1858, which provided that the people of Kansas again vote upon the adoption of the Lecompton Constitution before the question of admission be determined by Congress. The votes of the Missouri representatives upon this substitute were as follows:

- Yeas: Blair (Benton Democrat).
- Nays: Anderson (American), Clark and Craig (Anti-Benton Democrats), Woodson (American), Phelps (Anti-Benton Democrat).
- Absent: Caruthers (Anti-Benton Democrat)<sup>1</sup>.

The indications were at that time that if the Lecompton Constitution were again voted upon in Kansas at a fair election it would be rejected and this determined the adverse voting of the Missouri representatives. The slavery extension issue in Missouri in 1858 turned upon the voting of its representatives in Congress. Considerable excitement was caused by the votes of the two Americans (Anderson and Woodson) in voting against the Crittenden-Montgomery substitute. Anderson's district consisted of Audrain, Boone, Callaway, Lincoln, Monroe, Marion, Montgomery, Pike, Ralls, St. Charles, and Warren counties (all heavy slave except Audrain and Warren). The Benton vote in 1856 had been divided between Anderson and Richmond (Anti-Benton), Anderson being elected 8871 to 8229. The question was to what extent did Anderson's vote represent the views

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1. Political Text Book: 1860; pp.121, 122, 123.



of the majority of his district?

On April 10, 1858, a mass meeting of citizens was held in Boone County and resolutions were adopted heartily endorsing Anderson for his vote and recommending he be again a candidate for election in 1858 in order that the question might be fairly placed before the people for discussion and final decision at the ballot box, pledging their votes for Anderson in case he should be an Independent candidate; - and thanking the entire Missouri delegation (except Blair) for their votes<sup>1</sup>.

The Missouri Statesman vigorously protested against the question of the Lecompton constitution being made an issue in Missouri politics, as the mass meeting had suggested, believing that one might favor or oppose Lecompton without compromising a single American principle<sup>2</sup>. There is no evidence, however, that Anderson's vote was seriously objected to by the Press of his district.

On April 6, 1858, Woodson, in a letter from Washington, announced his candidacy for re-election to the voters of his district (The Fifth), consisting of Benton, Cass, Cooper, Cole, Henry, Johnson, Jackson, Lafayette, Morgan, Moniteau, Miller, Pettis and Saline Counties (all the heavy slave counties in Western Missouri south of the Missouri River). Woodson justified his vote on the grounds that the Republican Party was threatening to establish the policy that no more slave states should ever be admitted into the Union and that as the Republicans did not desire peace upon the question but wished to agitate it for political effect in the Presidential Election of 1860, and as the Democratic Party were insufficient numerically

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1. The Missouri Statesman: April 16, 1858.

2. Ibid:



to cope with them without the assistance of the American Party, he deemed it his duty to make common cause with the Democrats against the Republicans "in view of the well known opinion and wishes of his constituents". He stated that the purpose and principle of the Republican Party looked to the predominance of the North over the South and the ultimate extinction of slaves by constricting it within a limited area<sup>1</sup>.

The American State Party in Missouri officially practically repudiated both Anderson and Woodson for their votes in Congress on the Lecompton question. The State Council which met in St. Louis late in April avoided the Lecompton question and stated that the slavery question should not be agitated<sup>2</sup> and this was practically what Anderson and Woodson were both doing. But the Democrats now came to their assistance.

On May 8, 1858, The Jefferson Examiner distinctly gave its Democratic readers to understand that if Anderson was "re-elected by Democrats, or without serious opposition from Democrats, this District (the Fifth) will be secured for years to come to the Democratic Party, and that thereby the election of Democrats to the Legislature from counties that will otherwise elect Know-nothings or Americans" would be secured<sup>3</sup>. This was an open proposition to trade votes with the Americans, and was doubtless so taken. The Statesman, May 21, 1858, denounced this proposition as one "humbugging" the Americans.

Of the thirteen counties in the Fifth District, six were represented by Americans in the previous Legislature and one by a Whig. In August, 1858, the Whig county (Benton) and three

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1. Statesman: April 23, 1858.  
 2. Ibid: April 30, 1858.  
 3. Ibid: May 21, 1858.



of the American counties (Cass, Cooper, and Henry) elected Democrats to the Legislature. Likewise, Morgan County, which was represented by a Benton Democrat in 1856, elected a National Democrat in 1858.

In the Second District, in which every county except Pike and Warren had elected an American to the Legislature in 1856 (Pike and Warren electing Anti-Bentons), six counties (Audrain, Callaway, Monroe, Marion, Montgomery and Ralls) elected National Democrats in 1858.

Anderson and Woodson both ran as independent American candidates in 1858 and were re-elected. A more open instance than this of vote trading could hardly be imagined.

Anderson defeated Henderson (National Democrat) by 4413 votes. Woodson ran against Reid (National Democrat) and Smith (an American), defeating Reid by 988 votes and Smith by 5904. All the counties of the Fifth District increased their pluralities for Woodson except Lafayette.

The other five congressmen elected in 1858 were also all Lecompton men<sup>1</sup>: and this congressional election of 1858 proves conclusively that on the slavery extension question as presented in the Lecompton issue the great majority of Missourians were for slavery extension.

The election of members of the General Assembly in 1858 resulted as follows:

House	87	National Democrats.	42	Opposition.	
Senate	<u>24</u>	"	"	<u>9</u>	"
Total	111	"	"	<u>51</u>	" 2

The heaviest slave counties electing National Democrats were Chariton, Cooper, Howard, Lewis, Lincoln, Monroe, Montgomery, New Madrid, Ralls and Randolph.

1. Statesman: Aug. 22, Sep. 24, 1858.

2. Ibid: Sep. 24, 1858.



Those represented by Opposition men were Boone, Callaway, Cape Girardeau, Franklin, Greene, Lafayette, Marion, Pike, Platte, St. Charles, St. Francois, Saline and Schuyler. Of these, Callaway, Cape Girardeau, Franklin, and Marion each elected a National Democrat also<sup>1</sup>. The representatives from St. Louis were National Democrats by only a small majority over American and Benton candidates<sup>2</sup>. It is apparent that there was a lack of cohesion among the opposition throughout state campaign and that the general unanimity of opinion in the state in favor of slavery extension was the chief factor in preventing the consolidation of the opposition in 1858. ✓

The Lecompton Constitution having been, by direction of Congress, submitted to a vote of the people of Kansas Territory and by them rejected and a new constitution in which slavery was prohibited having been adopted by them (The Wyandotte Constitution) the matter of admitting Kansas under this constitution was brought before Congress early in 1859. In the House all the representatives from Missouri voted against the bill except Barrett of St. Louis and Phelps (who paired with Davis of Indiana). In the Senate both Polk and Green voted against a like bill which failed to pass<sup>3</sup>. That Barrett voted at variance with his colleagues was probably due to the fact that he had been elected by a plurality only, of 426 over Blair (Free Democrat) and 1389 over Breckenridge (American); and he doubtless desired to prevent a political defeat for himself in 1860. With the exception of St. Louis, therefore, we may say that it was the sense of the people of Missouri, as expressed by the votes of their representatives in Congress, to oppose the

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1. Missouri Statesman: Sep. 24, 1858.

2. Ibid:

3. Political Text Book: 1860; p. 126.



admission of Kansas as a free state.

There was no action taken by the 1858-59 Legislature at its regular session which would officially indicate the sentiments of the members upon the slavery extension question, but at the called session in 1859-60 the so-called "Churchill Resolutions" were passed. These resolutions were based upon the slavery extension question and with particular reference to what was believed to be the relation and duties of the Federal Government in the matter. They passed the Senate without division but the ayes and noes were called on each separate resolution in the House. The First Resolution which approved of Buchanan's course on the slavery question, passed by a vote of 76 to 27. Those voting against were all of the Opposition and the heavy slave counties represented in this opposition vote were Boone, Caldwell, Callaway, Cape Girardeau, Daviess, Greene, Johnson, Lafayette, Marion, Montgomery, Perry, Pike, Platte (one member), Polk, Ray and Saline. The heavy slave counties represented in the vote for the resolution were Jackson, Jefferson, Pettis and Platte (one member).

The Second Resolution expressed approbation of and confidence in the Senators from Missouri (presumably for their stand on the slavery question) and passed by a slightly heavier vote than the First. The representatives from the following slave counties joined in voting for it: Lafayette, Perry, Ray, and Scott.

The Third Resolution asserted the right of the citizens of any state to remove to any territory and to take with them any property they desired and that any attempt to debar them from this privilege was a flagrant violation of the federal compact. This expressed the slavery extension doctrine and all the mem-



bers voted for it except three: Davis of Buchanan County, Maguire of Platte County, and Woodson of St. Charles County.

The Fourth Resolution asserted the right of a territory to be admitted with or without slavery as its own citizens might see fit. The voting upon this was the same as upon the Third Resolution<sup>1</sup>. The Resolutions were approved by the Governor December 15, 1859<sup>2</sup>. Therefore, as represented by the opinion of the Governor and the members of the Legislature, the State of Missouri was officially, and almost unanimously, in favor of slavery extension at that time.

Although the members of the Legislature who were elected by Opposition votes in 1858 joined in the sentiments for slavery extension in December, 1859, we find that early in the next year there was a change in the sentiments of the party representatives due, in part, to the fact that party lines were more closely drawn in the State and Presidential Campaigns. ✓

The Whigs and Americans met in a mass convention in Jefferson City, February 29, 1860, and expressed themselves as opposed to the arrant heresies of the so-called National Democratic Party in regard to the subject of slavery in the territories and to the reopening of the slavery question by political leaders for purely political purposes. The permanent officers of this Opposition Convention were practically all from strong slave counties.<sup>3</sup> A "Union Ticket" was selected by them. Sample Orr of Greene County was nominated for Governor. The Statesman endorsed this Union Ticket June 29 and the Jefferson Inquirer endorsed it June 16, 1860. Orr was chosen because it was neces-

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1. House Journal: 1859-'60; pp.83 to 86.

2. Laws of Missouri: 1859-'60; pp.684, 685.

3. Statesman: March 9, 1860.



sary to find a strong man south of the river to hold the opposition elements together in that section<sup>1</sup>. The opposition was therefore presumably better organized among the counties north of the river in which section of the state the greater portion of the slavery interests also existed.

The National Democratic Party became divided in 1860 into two factions upon the slavery extension question. The ultra-pro slavery element which believed that Congress should intervene for slavery in the territories, if necessary, to protect it, drew away from the main body and nominated H. Jackson for Governor<sup>2</sup>. This was done after C. F. Jackson who had been nominated for Governor by the main body of the Democracy, had announced himself for Douglas for President. But even this main wing of the State Democracy departed from the ideas of Douglas; for they asserted in their platform that the Territorial Legislature could not exclude slavery from a territory by unfriendly legislation<sup>3</sup>. Indeed, as early as two years previous to this The Examiner had opposed identifying the Missouri Democracy with the fortunes of Douglas<sup>4</sup>.

The Republicans in their state platform practically asserted that Congress should intervene to exclude slavery from the territories<sup>5</sup>. They nominated James B. Gardenshire for Governor. The opinions of the Republicans were cogently stated in a letter written by Edward Bates March 17, 1860, in which he said: First; that the National Government had power to permit or forbid slavery in the territories. Second; that the Constitution did not carry slavery into the territories<sup>6</sup>.

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1. Jefferson Inquirer: June 16, 1860.
  2. Ibid: July 28, 1860.
  3. Jefferson Examiner: April 14, 1858.
  4. Ibid: Oct. 2, 1858.
  5. Jefferson Inquirer: June 16, 1860.
  6. Political Text Book: 1860, p.198.



Here, then, were four separate parties in the state taking as many different views upon the slavery extension question.

That there was danger of defeat for the main body of the Democracy (Douglas Democrats) due to this division, was recognized by them early in the State Campaign when a fusion of the Democracy for the State Election was proposed. Senator Green, who was canvassing the state for Breckenridge and Lane in the Presidential Campaign<sup>1</sup>, addressed a letter to the Missouri Republican July 17, 1860, in which he said that the support of the regular State Democratic Ticket would not be taken as an endorsement of Douglas and Johnson<sup>2</sup>. On July 13 he had gone still farther than this in a speech made at Stewartville, Missouri, where he said it was the duty of every Democrat to support the regular Democratic State Ticket and promised his hearers that C. F. Jackson had distinctly disavowed all sympathies with the doctrine of squatter sovereignty, saying also that he himself would vote for and support C. F. Jackson. He stated that this was in accordance with an honorable agreement entered into prior to the recent division in the party<sup>3</sup>.

It would therefore appear that this division in the Missouri Democracy was not due to any disaffection among the local leaders. The ability to promote a fusion of the two elements, as was done, suggests also the ability to have prevented the division. Why the fusion was effected can be seen; but what the immediate impelling motives were for the division is not so apparent. Neither appears to have primarily sprung from a desire to promote the slavery interests in Missouri but both of them do appear to have been actuated by machine politics. The votes for

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1. Statesman: July 13, 1860.

2. Switzler's Scrap Book: 1860;(unpaged): in Missouri Hist.Library.

3. Ibid:



Governor were therefore misleading in that they did not show the actual strength of the party divisions. This remark applies also to the Republican vote which was a great deal larger as cast for members of the Legislature in St. Louis than it was in the entire state for Governor. The voting for Governor was as follows:

C. F. Jackson	(Douglas Democrat)	74,446
Samuel Orr	(Union )	66,583
H. Jackson	(Breckenridge " )	11,415
J.B. Gardenshire	(Republican )	6,135

Notwithstanding the low vote for H. Jackson the Breckenridge Democrats elected their candidates in forty-four counties of the state; and, on the other hand, the Douglas Democrats elected their candidates in only thirty-two counties. The Union Party carried but thirty-one counties although they polled two-fifths of the votes for Governor (and the assistance of Republican voters was not needed in carrying any of them). But more than half of these counties were heavy slave: Audrain, Boone, Callaway, Cape Girardeau, Clay, Greene, Johnson, Lafayette, Marion, Moniteau, Monroe, Pettis, Platte, Ralls, Ray and St. Charles. As this was the only party in which the voting for all Douglas Democratic candidates was consistent, the large number of slave counties which voted majorities for it may be taken as an indication that it possessed the confidence of the main body of the slavery interests.

Of the forty-four counties electing Breckenridge Democrats, only eleven were heavy slave; Cape Girardeau, Chariton, Jackson, Lewis, New Madrid, Pike, Randolph, Ray, St. Francois, Saline and Washington.

Of the thirty-two counties electing Douglas Democrats only nine were heavy slave: Cass, Cooper, Cole, Franklin, Howard,



Jackson, Lincoln, Marion, and Platte. It will be noted that three slave counties elected both Union men and Douglas Democrats, and two counties elected both Union men and Breckenridge Democrats.

As showing the conservative influence of the heavy slave counties in general it is seen that twenty-three of the thirty-three elected Douglas Democrats and Union men<sup>1</sup>.

In the Congressional Election the Republicans elected Blair (1st District); the Union Party elected Rollins (2nd District); and the Democrats elected the candidate from the other Districts<sup>2</sup>.

In joint session of the Legislature the relative weight and influence of the slave counties, as represented in the various parties, were as follows:

	<u>Slave Counties</u>	<u>Senate</u>	<u>House</u>	<u>Total</u>
Breckenridge Democrats	11	15	47	62
Douglas "	9	10	36	46
Union	17	7	37	44
Republican	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>13</u>
Total	* 38	33	132	165 <sup>3</sup>

\* A total of 33 counties, with two representatives each of different parties. Five counties

As there were men among those elected as Douglas Democrats who were in reality of the Breckenridge type, one of whom was Vest, the predominant if not the controlling element of the Legislature were Breckenridge Democrats who affected to be the exponents of the best interests of the slave owner, but it is apparent that the great majority of the slave owners themselves did not have confidence in the Breckenridge Democrats.

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1. Statesman: Aug. 31, 1860.  
 2. Ibid: Aug. 24, 1860.  
 3. Missouri Statesman: Aug. 31, 1860



After the State Election a second State Democratic Convention was held September 20, 1860, for the purpose of transferring the Democracy of the State to Breckenridge and Lane at the Presidential Election. This was done at the suggestion of Polk and Green<sup>1</sup>. C.F. Jackson also attended this second Convention and distinctly stated that Breckenridge was his preference and that he wished to see the Missouri Democracy united<sup>2</sup>. But the action of the Second Convention was repudiated by two members of the Democratic State Central Committee (acting for it) who warned the Democracy of Missouri that such an attempt would mean the defeat of Douglas and the breaking up of the Democratic Party in Missouri. Jackson hastened to make a speech also in which he disclaimed his remarks made at the second Convention<sup>3</sup>, and which he said he believed Douglas would fully enforce the fugitive slave law<sup>4</sup>. To carry the state for Breckenridge had been the plan of Jackson and the other party leaders<sup>5</sup> but Jackson undoubtedly realized just in time that he could not break down the solid strength of the Union Party, as seen in the majority of the slave counties, and that it would be practically impossible to transfer the 55,000 votes from Douglas to Breckenridge

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1. Jefferson Inquirer: Aug. 18, 1860.

2. Statesman: Sep. 28, 1860.

3. Ibid: Oct. 12, 1860.

4. After the adoption of the Wyandotte Constitution by Kansas, the faithful execution of the Fugitive Slave Law was the only remaining principle which the slave holders of Missouri could rely upon for the protection of their interests, and this was the best endorsement which Jackson could give Douglas under the circumstances.

5. Missouri Statesman: Aug. 17, 1860.



which would have been needed to overcome the plurality of the Union Party. So he wisely concluded to remain for Douglas. As it was, the Douglas party lost adherents and the Breckenridge gained them in every county which had been strong for Jackson in August. In fact there were only a few counties where the Douglas vote did not run under the C.F. Jackson vote and the Douglas vote exceeded the Bell vote by only 429 for the state.

To show the conservative influence which the slave counties had upon politics in the state, as shown in this election, it may be stated that:

(a) Of the thirty three strong slave counties in the state the Bell-Everetts carried Boone, Callaway, Cape Girardeau, Greene, Henry, Jackson, Johnson, Lafayette, Livingston, Marion, Mississippi, Monroe, Montgomery, New Madrid, Pettis, Pike, Platte, Ralls, Randolph, Ray, Saline and Scott (Twenty-two). The Douglas ticket carried Carroll, Cooper, Chariton, Howard, Lincoln, St. Charles, St. Francois, Warren and Washington (nine). Breckenridge carried Cole County, and Lincoln carried St. Louis County, in both of which the percentage of slave population was small.

(b) An inspection of the returns shows that in the slave counties carried by Douglas the Breckenridge votes were nearly all less than one-third of the number of Douglas votes.

(c) The Bell-Everett votes outnumbered the Douglas and Breckenridge votes combined in Boone, Greene, Johnson, Lafayette, Montgomery, Monroe, Pettis, Ralls and Saline counties.

(d) In the 19 counties carried by Breckenridge the slave population was inconsiderable in all of them except Cole County.

(e) In St. Louis the Lincoln vote was 9,945, exceeding the Douglas by 681 only. Breckenridge received but 610 votes in St.



Louis<sup>1</sup>.

We therefore see in this conservatism an almost complete change in the attitude of the slavery element in Missouri on the slavery question from what it had been in 1858. The reason is found largely in the fact that in 1858 the Lecompton Bill was of such great importance to the slavery interests in Missouri that practically the entire state was in favor of the admission of Kansas under it: while in 1860 it was seen that slavery would be excluded from Kansas and therefore its extension into Kansas had become a dead issue and the future agitation of the question would merely be detrimental to slavery interests which thereupon polled their votes accordingly against further agitation on the subject.

The Presidential Campaign of 1860 was the last occasion when slavery extension was to any extent an issue in Missouri politics, for soon thereafter it was lost in the greater question of Union or Disunion and the following events of the Civil War.

A brief résumé of the influence of slavery extension upon Missouri politics shows:

First: That notwithstanding the views first taken upon the question of slavery extension were largely of an abstract character due to the more or less remote influences of the newly acquired territories, they were sufficiently potent by 1850 to divide the Democratic Party in the state into two hostile factions. And although the Whig Party was not likewise divided by it at that date, it was nevertheless divided in sentiment upon it.

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1. Conclusions arrived at from comparison of August with December returns by counties as published in Statesman Aug. 17, and Dec. 7, 1860.



Second: That the question of slavery extension into Kansas and Nebraska was of immediate importance to Missourians: and, although favored by the slavery interests, this did not consolidate the factions of the political parties but seemed to further disintegrate them. By 1856, the Whig Party had been absorbed in large part into the American Party and the remnants of the Whigs were still divided upon the question. Also, by 1856, the Benton wing of the Democratic Party was itself divided in sentiment on the subject.

Third: That in 1857 and 1858 there was a general desire throughout the state to overthrow the dominant wing of the Democratic Party and an effort was made to consolidate all other factions into an opposition with this in view. But the slavery extension problem still permeated the political situation and served to prevent the degree of cohesion among the opposition elements that was essential to their success.

Fourth: That the slavery interests of Missouri accepted the adoption by Kansas of the Wyandotte Constitution as a finality and as an end of their hope that slavery might be extended into Kansas and Nebraska; and they indicated by their votes in the Presidential Election of 1860 that their desire was to terminate that phase of the slavery extension question.



## Chapter V.

Slavery Extinction becomes an Issue in Missouri Politics.

As the extinction of slavery had been accomplished by slow and gradual processes from other states where it had once existed so, in Missouri, the movement for the elimination of slavery from the state began many years before the emancipation of all the slaves was accomplished. And notwithstanding that the provision of the Constitution of Missouri had a tendency to keep the subject out of state politics from the first<sup>1</sup> the idea of the eradication of slave labor from Missouri began to be seriously considered by political leaders several years before it was allowed to become an issue in local politics.

Among the conditions which favored the growth of the idea may be mentioned the fact that Missouri was surrounded on three sides by non-slave territory and its geographical location, its soil and its climate were such as to bring the labor of whites into direct competition with the labor of slaves. This contact of white labor with slave labor was a condition which had always obtained in Missouri but it had been, for many years, among elements which were accustomed to the presence of slavery. As long as the bulk of the immigration to Missouri was from slave territory there was little or no complaint to be heard from the whites against slavery. But when immigration from the free states and from foreign territory began to arrive in respectable numbers they were not as willing to adjust themselves to prevalent condition with which they had previously no sympathies.

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1. The first State Constitution forbade the Legislature to enact any law providing for the emancipation of slaves without the consent of their owners and without first making full compensation to the owner for the value of the slaves so emancipated.



The majority of the free population of Missouri in 1850, about the time that the extinction of slavery began to be spoken of, had been born outside the state:

Born in Missouri	-----	265,304
" " other states	-----	249,223
" " foreign countries	-----	76,570
Unknown	-----	907
Total	-----	<u>592,004</u>

That the bulk of the migration from other states was from slave territory is seen by a comparison of the following figures:

<u>Slave States.</u>		<u>Free States.</u>	
Kentucky	- 69,694	Indiana	- 12,752
Tennessee	- 44,970	Ohio	- 12,737
Virginia	- 40,777	Illinois	- 10,917
North Carolina	- 17,009	Pennsylvania	- 8,291
Maryland	- 4,253	New York	- 5,040
South Carolina	- 2,919	Iowa	- 1,366
Alabama	- 2,067	Massachusetts	- 1,103
Arkansas	- 2,120	New Jersey	- 885
Georgia	- 1,254	Connecticut	- 742
Louisiana	- 746	Vermont	- 630
Mississippi	- 638	Main	- 311
Delaware	- 518	New Hampshire	- 304
Texas	- 248	Michigan	- 295
District of Columbia	234	Rhode Island	- 124
Florida	- 67	Wisconsin	- 123
		California	- 4
		Territories	- 80
Total	<u>187,514</u>	Total	<u>55,704</u> 1

Those born in foreign countries were partially as follows:

Germany	44,352
Ireland	14,734
England	5,379
France	2,138
British America	1,053
Switzerland	984
Prussia	697
All others	<u>7,233</u> 2
	76,570

That the foreign elements were naturally hostile to slavery is indicated by the fact that the states having the smallest per-

1. These figures leave 6005 unaccounted for, due to some discrepancy in the census tables.  
2. Census 1850: p.XXXVII.



centage of foreigners (figures of 1860) were six slave states and those having the largest percentage of foreigners were six free states<sup>1</sup>. But by 1850 Missouri's foreign born population exceeded that of any other slave state and was greater by over nine thousand than the aggregate of the following states: Alabama, Arkansas, Delaware, District of Columbia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Florida, Georgia, Mississippi, Texas and Tennessee<sup>2</sup>. That the amount of hostility to slavery by the foreign element should therefore be greater in Missouri than in any other slave state was offset only by the fact that the percentage of the slave population of Missouri was comparatively very small.

The slave population in 1850 was 87,422 out of a total population of 682,044; while the total number of slaves in the United States was 3,204,421<sup>3</sup>.

But the presence of slavery to even this extent was sufficient to divert large numbers of emigrants of the laboring classes away from Missouri. Instead of debarking from the river boats at points in Missouri they continued their way to more remote and frequently less desirable localities<sup>4</sup>.

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1. Census 1860: p.XXX.

2. Census 1850: p. XXXVII.

3. Census 1850: ppIX, 655.

4. Frank P. Blair used this example of the blighting influence of slavery in Missouri as an argument against permitting slavery being extended into the territories, and in a speech upon the subject made by him in St. Louis in September 1848, we see the first public expression of a political leader in Missouri intimating that it were better if slavery were excluded from Missouri. (In Missouri Speeches, Missouri Historical Library).



The split of the Democracy in Missouri in 1849 afforded the element opposed to the extinction of slavery in Missouri an opportunity to identify themselves with a political faction. Those who wished to see slavery extinguished in Missouri allied themselves largely with the Benton Democracy: but it must be remembered that Benton was not himself a believer in slavery extinction in those places where it already existed. The earliest anti-slavery leaders were supporters of Benton, Frank P. Blair, B. Gratz Brown, Arnold Krekel, John D. Stevenson and Richard A. Barrett<sup>1</sup>, all of St. Louis, in which place the large majority of the foreign element hostile to slavery (particularly the Germans) was found. Benton did not disclaim their ideas, and neither did he advocate them, during the period in which he was organizing his factional forces. He was doubtless glad to receive their support as long as they did not attempt to commit him to their policy which he found convenient to ignore for several years.

But the Anti-Benton Democratic Party throughout the state took advantage of this accretion to the Benton strength, to stigmatize the whole Benton party as "Abolitionists", "Black Republicans" etc., and this gave the abolitionists of the North a false idea of the number of abolitionists in Missouri and thereby encouraged an increased migration of their forces into the state which otherwise would probably not have come. This secondary or reactionary effect tended to promote sympathies against the pro-slavery elements.

But one must discriminate between the abolitionists who wished to kill slavery outright, and who were comparatively few in numbers, and the main anti-slavery element which merely de-

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1. Harvey: Atlantic Monthly; July 1900.



sired to see slavery gradually and peacefully extinguished in the state; for some of the leaders of this latter element were slave owners themselves. The first mentioned desired the eradication of slavery for sentimental or moral, while the latter wished its extinction for strictly economic reasons.

The ideas of the abolitionists were largely propagated by ministers and itinerant preachers sent into the state for the purpose and not by politicians. The earliest effects of the abolitionist movement was outwardly discernible in the division of the churches into "North" and "South" congregations<sup>1</sup>, which may be taken as an indication of the measure of bitterness that existed among the people over the question. This bitterness accounts for the animus in the Free Negro and Mulatto Bill passed by the Legislature in 1847, a vindictive measure which withdrew educational privileges from the negroes and forbade them to congregate for religious purposes unless under supervision of an officer of the law or to immigrate into the state from any other state or territory<sup>2</sup>. The sources of information which show the status of slavery extinction in politics in the period of the early '50's are so scant that the inference is that public opinion as expressed in politics was practically all on one side, i.e., against it, and there being no issue raised there were therefore no arguments to record.

Blair's attitude on the subject was so well known, however, that in the special session of the Legislature in 1852 when he was nominated for Speaker of the House the members who voted for him were careful to state that they did so as a personal com-

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1. Leftwich: Martyrdom in Missouri: Vol.1, pp.59 to 116.

2. Laws of Missouri: 1847; pp.103, 104.



pliment due to his popularity among the members and that it was not to be taken as an endorsement of his views on the slavery question<sup>1</sup>.

(In 1856 Blair came out boldly and unequivocally for emancipation and the growth of the Republican Party in Missouri was rapid from that time on.)<sup>2</sup>

The attitude of Governor Price toward abolitionism was expressed in a letter to the "Society of Friends" dated Jefferson City, Mo., November 22, 1853<sup>3</sup>, and his Message to the Legislature December 24, 1854<sup>4</sup>, in which latter he attributed the ultimate purpose of the abolitionists to be the abolition of slavery in all the states, show that officially there was nothing in Missouri at that date which was not antagonistic to the abolition movement.

It was not until the organization of the Republican Party that the anti-slavery element was able to show any particular independence of thought or movement. Harvey states that Benton's Democratic supporters joined the Republican Party at its appearance in 1854<sup>5</sup> but this could be only partly correct at best. If the Republicans had any organization at that date in Missouri it was restricted to some remote or unimportant locality. For Rollins, in his speech in reply to Goode, Feb-

1. Jefferson Inquirer: September 8, 1852.
2. Peckham: Life of Lyon: pp.IX, X. Introduction.
3. In this letter he said: "It is a fact now universally acknowledged by intelligent minds that great and incalculable injury has already resulted to the slaves of North America on account of the misguided zeal of those who have undertaken to embrace the whole universe in the sphere of their philanthropy." (Jefferson Inquirer, Dec. 3, 1853.)
4. House Journal 1854-'55: pp.30, 31.
5. Atlantic Monthly: July, 1900; p. 71.



ruary 2, 1855, in joint session of both Houses of the Legislature, disclaimed any knowledge of a party in Missouri of which the design was the abolition of slavery<sup>1</sup>.

The extent of the hostility to the idea of the organization of a Republican Party due to its position on the slavery question may be seen from the fact that when a Republican State Electoral Ticket was proposed in 1856 by Alexander Kayser of St. Louis the Missouri Democrat refused to publish his letter and he then offered to pay for its insertion in The Republican at advertising rates;<sup>2</sup> and it was not until 1860 that a State Republican Party was finally organized.

The population increased rapidly from 1850 until the Civil War. It was doubtless from the new influx of the anti-slavery element from the free states and from abroad that the Republicans largely recruited their ranks in this formative period. The German population, always anti-slavery, which was chiefly in St. Louis, St. Charles, Franklin, Gasconade and Cole Counties, increased rapidly at this period<sup>3</sup>.

That the emancipationists, though not strong enough to be a power politically when acting independently, were sufficiently numerous to make their votes desirable was recognized by the Anti-Benton Democracy early in 1857. In order to gain the emancipation vote, the Anti-Bentons in the Legislature elected William Palm, an out-spoken emancipationist, as Bank Director in January, 1857. The Missouri Statesman denounced this as a move on the part of the Anti-Benton Democrats to gain the emancipationist votes and subsequent events showed that this was

1. Smith: Rollins Memoirs; p.122.

2. Boonville Observer: Sep.27,1856.

3. Elliot: Biography; p.142.

Leftwitch: Martyrdom in Missouri; Vol.1, p.34.



correct<sup>1</sup>.

Another purely political maneuver was attempted when Darnes (elected as an American) introduced the following resolutions into the joint session January 27, 1857:

"Resolved by the two Houses, now assembled in joint session, that the emancipation of negro slavery in the State of Missouri is impracticable and unjust to the slave holder and ought not to be agitated."

This was followed by considerable discussion when Mr. Clover, a Benton Democrat of St. Louis, proposed the following as an amendment:

"But this proposition is a point upon which a difference of opinion is allowable in the Democratic Party: the Democratic Party not being a pro-slavery party, it being neither for slavery or against slavery, but for just letting it alone."<sup>2</sup>

As Darnes then withdrew his resolution it would appear that the purpose of its introduction was merely to cause the Benton Democrats to commit themselves in the defense of emancipation in any discussion which might be provoked by it.

Shortly afterward, on February 1st, the Anti-Benton Democrats commenced their second tactical movement in their maneuver. On that date Senator Carr (Anti-Benton) who had been elected from the heavy slave district of Pike and Ralls Counties, introduced the following resolutions into the Senate:

"That the emancipation of all the slaves held as property in this state would not only be impracticable, but that any movement having such an object in view would be inexpedient, impolitic, unwise and unjust, and should, in the opinion of the General Assembly, be discountenanced by the people of the state."

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1. House Journal 1857: pp.105,106. Senate Journal 1857:pp.127, 128. Statesman, April 3, 1857.
  2. House Journal: 1857; pp.204, 206. Missouri Statesman: April 10, 1857.



The division of votes upon the passage of this resolution marked the beginning of the issue of emancipation in the Legislature of Missouri. The ayes and noes were called for and the resolution passed with six senators voting against it: Stevenson of the 14th District, comprised of Franklin and Washington counties, and Blow, Frost, Holmes, Morris and Rannels of the 28th District (St. Louis), all Benton Democrats<sup>1</sup>. Upon the following day it was introduced into the House and passed with twelve Benton Democrats voting against it there: Able, Allbright, Brown, Burk, Clover, Dick, Farrar, Gardner, Miller and Winkelmaier of St. Louis, Jennings of Taney County, and Sitton of Gasconade County<sup>2</sup>. The slavery interests, as represented in the Legislature, were all in favor of the adoption of the resolution. But as they were of a nature to agitate the very question which the slavery interests did not wish agitated, some other and ulterior motive must have been involved. The plan was, doubtless, to not only commit as many as possible of the Benton Democrats into voting against them but to inveigle the Americans into voting for them. At the preceding State Election for Governor, the Emancipationists in St. Louis had voted in large numbers for Ewing, the American candidate. In order to draw these emancipation votes in St. Louis away from the Americans, the American members of the Legislature were placed on record as voting for the Carr Resolutions, which fact would establish grounds for a separation.

When the Carr Resolutions were introduced into the House, B. Gratz Brown made a speech against them in which he advocated

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1. Senate Journal, 1857: p.213.

2. House Journal, 1857: p. 303.



emancipation. This speech called forth a letter from Benton in which he renounced and repudiated it for its abolition sentiments and he expressed regret at having allowed the Emancipationists to use his name in the campaign of 1856 and thereby win the election in St. Louis. And he also stated that he had been warned that the outcome would be as it was but could not then believe such an outrage would be perpetrated by those calling themselves his friends<sup>1</sup>. This breach between Benton and the Emancipationists would tend to make an alliance by the latter with the Anti-Bentons the easier. The next move was made by the St. Louis Leader, the principal Anti-Benton paper in the state. It published an article on March 24, 1857, recommending that the Emancipationists vote the Anti-Benton City Ticket at the St. Louis election, giving as its reason that the Anti-Benton Democrats were the particular advocates of quietude on the matter of slavery and that this quiet on the subject would operate to induce immigration; while if the Bentons were elected (the Benton Democrats having nominated for city offices certain candidates with abolition tendencies) emancipation would be set back indefinitely because immigration would be retarded thereby. By remaining quiet on the subject, cultivating harmony and permitting the slavery agitation to sleep, northern emigrants would, it said, begin to pour in rapidly as soon as it was learned that slavery was merely nominal in most parts of the state<sup>2</sup>. This article, published by The Leader, reveals the fact that a large part of the Emancipationists were recognized at that time by the Democrats as being hostile to the Abolitionists and also shows

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1. Published in Jefferson Examiner: July 17, 1858.

2. Statesman: April 3, 1857.



that the Democrats were sufficiently clever to appeal to this prejudice as a means of gathering votes. While the Americans were the party which, more than any other, advocated quiet on the subject of slavery, the performances of Goode and Mosely and Darnes in the Legislature could be referred to as indicating the contrary. The hostility of the Americans to foreign immigration and their opposition to the participation by foreigners in the benefits of our institutions made it easy to alienate the foreign elements of the Emancipationists from the Americans. That the Emancipationists were of sufficient strength to be reckoned with is shown by the fact that the foundation of an Emancipation Party was both decried and advocated in the public press. Early in 1857 The St. Louis Intelligencer stated that the existence of an Emancipation Party in the state was "an impossibility, an impertinence, a nuisance and a humbug". To this the Democrats replied in an editorial February 27, 1857, by saying: "Every mile of railroad construction in the state and every mine opened is the auxiliary of that Party. It will summon its recruits from the factory, the workshop and the field: and so far from being a political and economic blunder it is the organization which <sup>of</sup> all others conforms most strictly to the principle of political and economic science." This interchange of editorial views was likewise caused by Brown's speech upon the Carr Resolutions<sup>1</sup>.

The degree of success secured by the Anti-Benton Democrats in winning over the emancipation votes in St. Louis is best seen by comparing the returns of 1856 with those of the City Election in 1857. In 1856 the total vote cast by the county

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1. Harding: Life of Smith; p.306.



for Governor was 13,859, as follows:

Benton	....	6365
Polk	....	2781
Ewing	....	<u>4713</u>
Total	....	<u>13859</u>

At the City Election in April 1857 the total vote for Mayor was 11,077, as follows:

Weimer (Benton)	.....	5487	
Pratte (Anti-Benton)	...	3759	
Lane (American)	.....	<u>1831</u>	1
		<u>11077</u>	

Assuming the decrease of 2782 in the total votes was proportionally distributed among the three parties an inspection of the returns shows that about 1936 voters (presumably Emancipationists) changed to the Anti-Benton and Benton candidates, about 1836 to the former and 400 to the latter. The St. Louis Herald and the Intelligencer both stated that many who had voted the American ticket in 1856 changed to Pratte and Weimer, although they claimed ten of such votes to Pratte to every one cast for Weimer. But notwithstanding this well laid political plan of the Anti-Benton Democrats it is seen that the Benton candidate won in the City Election.

While the emancipation cause was not presented as an issue on its own merits but was merely used in the machinations of party politics, so likewise the abolition doctrine was not honestly presented. The latter supplied material for odious campaign epithets applied by one party to the other and reacted to the detriment of slavery interests. Benton warned the people of its adverse and reactionary effect in a letter on the subject

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1. Statesman: Aug. 15, '56 and April 17, '57.



published in the Jefferson Inquirer May 18, 1857<sup>1</sup>.

That Rollins in his state canvass of 1857 incurred no great odium on the charge of being an abolitionist was because he exercised the greatest tact and caution on the subject of slavery in his public speeches<sup>2</sup>. His problem was to obtain the votes of the Emancipationists without avowing their cause and he probably had a greater degree of success in this than would any other man who was not an Emancipationist could have had. But Rollins had extreme difficulties to overcome in his canvass. As one instance: Professor B. S. Head of the University of Missouri caused to be published in the press of the state that he knew Rollins to be "an abolitionist in disguise" and "a dishonest man in the strong sense of the term". This was given circulation in the anti-emancipation districts<sup>3</sup>. On the other hand, the Daily Chronicle, a German Stewart paper, informed its readers that Rollins was not an Emancipationist being "a slave holder in the full sense of the word"<sup>4</sup>. Rollins' difficulties were therefore probably best realized by himself. He shrewdly omitted those sections of the state containing the emancipation element from his itinerary until almost the eve of the election. In the anti-emancipation districts Rollins stated that emancipation was wrong, impracticable and unwise and that the slave owners should "garote" the Anti-Benton demagogues who were trying to blow it into flame; and that he was satisfied to keep

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1. He said that the negroes upon hearing the campaign discussions regarding abolition of slavery believed what they heard, not knowing it was all political lying for election purposes; and they naturally concluded they ought to be doing something for themselves when it appeared they had so many powerful friends at work for them.

2. Harding: Life of Smith; p.263.

3. Statesman: June 12, 1857.

4. Ibid: July 17, 1857.



his own slaves - believing them to be the happiest laborers on earth.<sup>1</sup>

When finally compelled to reply to the accusation that he was an Emancipationist he addressed the following to the St. Louis Intelligencer:

"Opposed as I am to emancipation and to all agitation of the slavery question, our friends must guard this point. I do not claim to be the peculiar advocate of slavery. I am nevertheless the owner of between twenty and thirty slaves and have the control of as many more that I do not own."<sup>2</sup>

This reply showed him to be an adept at parrying the question and it is difficult to see how it could have been improved upon, under the circumstances. But after reading it one does not wonder that a large number of people doubted how he stood on the slavery question. He ended his campaign in St. Louis; and on almost the eve of the election, when it would have been physically impossible for most of his former hearers to learn of it, he expressed views favoring emancipation which, notwithstanding well guarded reservations, would have utterly ruined him in the greater part of the state had they been known. In this speech he advocated a cordial welcome to emigrants to Missouri from the North and the South and said:

"If, I say, this emigration in the course of years brings about such a proportion between the white and the black races that it is no longer the interests of the slaveholder of the State of Missouri to continue it a slave state, I say, 'then let it go'."<sup>3</sup>

But the supporters of Rollins and those of Stewart both declared that the success of the other would be an Emancipa-

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1. Statesman: May 29, 1857.  
 2. Switzler's Scrap Book: 1857.  
 3. Ibid: 1857.



ist victory<sup>1</sup>. The Opposition papers attempted to prejudice the pro-slavery element in the state against Stewart by publishing the fact of his being the President of the Hannibal and St. Joseph Railroad and calling him, for this reason, the "hired man of the Abolitionists"<sup>2</sup>. They gave prominence to the fact that Stewart owned no slaves: that the entire pro-slavery press of the state, owned but three slaves while Rollins owned ten times that number<sup>3</sup>. The Daily Chronicle attempted to gain friends for Stewart among the Emancipationists by promising them that Stewart would not oppose the gradual abolition of slavery provided slavery was abolished by legal processes; that Stewart owned no slaves and would consequently be among the first to lend his hands to carry out the emancipation measures<sup>4</sup>.

Considerable excitement was caused throughout the state at the latter end of this canvass by the publication of Blair's "Emancipation Map" in St. Louis and by its being copied in the Northern papers. The chief feature of this map was the indication of strength of slavery in the various counties showing the localities where immigrants would not be in contact with slaves<sup>5</sup>.

This gubernatorial campaign brought out the fact that the Emancipationists of the state regarded the extinction of slavery in Missouri as being of greater importance than the question of slavery extinction which latter, as shown in the preceding

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1. Statesman: June 5, 1857.

2. Ibid: July 10, 1857.

3. Ibid: June 19, 1857 and July 10, 1857.

4. Ibid: July 17, 1857.

5. Ibid: July 31, 1857.



chapter, was of the most immediate importance to the slavery interests. The reduced returns in the Emancipationist districts would also indicate that many Emancipationists failed to vote; and this was probably because they were dissatisfied with the indefinite position taken by Rollins upon that question<sup>1</sup>

Beginning with 1858 it is found that sectionalism was being rapidly promoted by the discussion of emancipation and that the Democratic Party was becoming pro-slavery. In the first message of Governor Stewart, however, is seen a liberal spirit manifested in the matter of encouraging the immigration of white laborers to the state and in this message of December 29th, 1858, he attempted to locate the responsibility for the discouragement of free state immigration upon the American and Republican Parties<sup>2</sup>.

The Jefferson Examiner, while it did not attempt to discourage immigration from the North into the state in general, did take an active part in opposing the efforts of the Jefferson City Land Company to build up the population of Jefferson City by bringing in immigration from the free states. Such efforts were being made by this Land Company in connection with the proposed establishment of a university near Jefferson City where anti-slavery ideas were to be inculcated and to both of which the Examiner was unfriendly<sup>3</sup>.

James S. Green, C. F. Jackson and Bowlin took the position, in speeches made by them in the winter of 1857-58 opposing the incorporation of the proposed university, that immigration from the free states should be prevented even if necessary to resort

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1. Statesman: Aug. 21, 28, 1857.
  2. House Journal 1858-'59, pp. 33 to 37.
  3. The Examiner: May 15 and July 31, 1858.



to violence for the purpose<sup>1</sup>. The Land Company and the university ideas were being fostered by James B. Gardenshire, an outspoken Emancipationist, who was defeated in all his plans as well as being defeated for re-election as Mayor of Jefferson City upon this same issue, in August 1858. Jefferson City, which contained a considerable slave population, polled a vote of 257 to 114 against him at this election<sup>2</sup>.

But the Examiner and the pro-slavery Democrats were not alone in the fight against the proposed university. The Americans in the Senate also voted against incorporating it because they believed it would be an Emancipationist, if not an Abolitionist, institution of learning<sup>3</sup>. On the other hand, the Jefferson Inquirer favored the Land Company and the university and attributed the opposition to those propositions to the fear held by office holders that a new population would turn them out of office<sup>4</sup>. Had these two proposed enterprises been successfully established they would have constituted a distinct advantage to the emancipation cause in the state but as yet the Emancipationists were not powerful enough to accomplish them.

The St. Louis Democrat took up the cause of slavery extinction in the summer of 1858. It disclaimed against any plan of liberating the slaves but urged that extinction be accomplished by utilizing the vast appliances of population, colonization and machinery "together with a liberalized public sentiment".<sup>5</sup>

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1. Jefferson Inquirer: Nov. 14, 1857.

2. The Jefferson Examiner: Aug. 7, 1858.

3. Statesman: May 7, 1858.

4. Jefferson Inquirer: Nov. 14, 1857.

5. St. Louis Democrat quoted in Examiner July 3, 1858.



This was another way of expressing the proposition to make slave labor so unprofitable in comparison with skilled white labor that slave holders would sell their slaves out of the state.

Whatever importance emancipation may have had as an issue in the state in 1858 it was believed that it was subordinate to the question of slavery extension. Blair who lived in an Emancipationist stronghold and who had voted against slavery extension in Congress on the Lecompton question, was defeated for re-election notwithstanding he had made "Free labor" and "Emancipation" leading features of his canvass among his constituents<sup>1</sup>. The propagation of the abolition doctrine complicates the situation for the foreign born Emancipationists because this doctrine hinted strongly of negro equality. Likewise, the known hatred of the white immigrant by the Americans made him averse to them. Blair's association with the Republicans and with abolitionism might therefore have been sufficiently repulsive to some of these Emancipationists to drive them out of the Blair ranks and into line with the National Democrats. The defection among Blair's followers and the large vote given to Breckenridge, his National Democratic opponent for Congress in 1858, can thus be largely accounted for: but there are no available facts to establish it. Governor Stewart's message to the Legislature December 27, 1858, in which he presented this phase of the question indicates this might have been the cause, however.

The influence of slavery upon state politics was largely reflected also in the character of legislation pertaining to free

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<sup>1</sup> Missouri Statesman: Aug. 6, 1858.



negroes. The free negroes were held largely to account for the escape of fugitive slaves: it was believed that the abolitionists used them in spreading discontent among the slaves. Moreover, if the emancipation of slaves by their owners was to be systematically undertaken, the disposition of the emancipated slaves would become an important question. The anti-emancipationists seized upon this latter aspect of the question with the purpose of discouraging emancipation by making the hardships of the free negro as great as possible. The Emancipationists viewed the question in another light. They wanted neither slaves nor free negroes in the community, and to encourage the elimination of the freed negroes from the community colonization was proposed for them. Blair had made a speech in Congress in 1858 favoring the acquisition of territory in South America for free negro colonies<sup>1</sup>. But aside from receiving some favorable local comments the proposition went no farther. But the Jefferson Inquirer on January 8, 1859, took up the matters and proposed that the free negro question be considered strictly with the view of protecting the slave owner and his slaves. The subsequent events showed that the slavery interests in Missouri, as represented in the Legislature were, in general, intolerant of the idea of emancipation.

A bill to exclude all free negroes from the state was introduced into the State Senate by Senator Parsons (National Democrat from light slave district) on February 8, 1859 and it passed the Senate without division on the 9th of February. On March 9th this bill and several others on the subject of emanci-

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1. Mc Cabe, James D. Jr: Life of Seymour and Blair: pp.302 to 317.



pation and free negro exclusion were taken up in the House which finally decided to postpone the matter till the adjourned session the following December<sup>1</sup>. But before taking the matter up at this adjourned session joint resolutions were passed in December denouncing as gratuitous and impertinent all attempts made by free states to intermeddle with the subject of slavery in the slave states: these passed without division in either House and were approved by the Governor December 15, 1859<sup>2</sup> and may be taken as a fair indication of the intolerance of the people of Missouri with the abolition doctrine and confirms the belief that the free negro bill, which was passed soon afterwards, was for the purpose of making the condition of free negroes so hard that the abolitionists would be discouraged in their attempts at liberating slaves from bondage. The Free Negro Exclusion Bill which was passed in January, 1860, was so extremely radical that the most ordinary mind would perceive that it was wholly unfitted as a punitive measure against abolition movements by individuals of the free negro class. This bill provided that no slave might be emancipated by his owner except upon the condition of the removal of the slave from the state within six months thereafter; that all free negroes and mulattoes should leave the state within six months after the passage of the act upon penalty of being apprehended and sold into slavery at sheriff's sale to the highest bidder unless they could show that they had emigrated to the state prior to May 17, 1847. This bill passed the House January 10, 1860, by a vote of 70 to 28. Of those voting against it about two-thirds were of the "Opposition" and the remainder were

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1. Senate Journal: pp.212 to 220, and House Journal, p.468, Session 1858-'59.  
2. Laws of Missouri: 1859-'60; pp.684, 685.



Democrats from light slave counties. On January 13th the Senate passed the bill, about one-third of the Senators voting against it; these latter were members of the "Opposition" or were from light slave counties<sup>1</sup>. This bill was similar to a law which had been enacted and put into force in Arkansas a short time before<sup>2</sup>.

The Legislature adjourned January 16, 1860, and the Governor took advantage of this to prevent the bill becoming a law by holding it in his possession without signing it. At a called session of the Legislature which convened February 27, 1860, both Houses again took up the bill and passed it, the Senate on March 7th and the House on March 9th. Those voting against it in the Senate were:

Gullett,	Ind. Democrat,	Lawrence County.	
Harris,	American,	Cooper	"
Johnson,	Democrat,	St. Louis	"
Morris,	"	" "	"
O'Neal,	"	" "	"
Rains,	American,	Jasper	"
Scott,	"	Buchanan	" 3

In the House twenty-five members voted against the bill. Those of the "Opposition" voting against it were from the following counties: Andrew, Boone, Cape Girardeau, Caldwell, DeKalb, Dunklin, Franklin, Gasconade, Jasper, Johnson, Lawrence, Laclede, Polk, Ray, St. Charles, and St. Louis. The Democrats voting against it were from Cedar, Gentry, and Hickory counties<sup>4</sup>. It is therefore seen that the opponents of the bill were principally

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1. Statesman: Jan. 20, 1860. House Journal: 1859-'60; p. 284. Senate Journal: 1859-'60; pp. 266, 267.

2. Statesman: January 20, 1860.

3. Senate Journal: Special Session 1860; p. 53. Also Statesman: Aug. 15, 27, 1858. (Showing politics of members).

4. House Journal: Special Session, 1860; p. 24: and Statesman: Aug. 15, 27, 1858.



from the emancipation districts (St. Louis and St. Charles) or were members of the opposition chiefly from the light slave counties. The Governor disapproved the bill and the remarks which he made upon it in returning it with his veto disclose the fact that its enactment and re-enactment were chiefly for political purposes. He said: "The public mind has become weary of slavery agitation and demands of legislators attention to various other subjects that pertain to our material and intellectual advancement which have been necessarily ignored during the period that sectional strife has been made the paramount issue in National politics..... It is certainly impolitic on the part of Missouri to so legislate as to revive the misdirected sympathies in behalf of the colored race or to strengthen the too popular error in regard to the moral status of slave holding communities.... I am constrained to regard the re-enactment of the bill uncalled for and calculated to breed political discord..... The fact that a spirit of fanaticism on the part of those not immediately interested has improperly and without cause forced upon the body politic the consideration of the various questions pertaining to the political rights of the negro cannot justify the infliction of unusual and excessive penalties upon that class of people...."<sup>1</sup>

No further attempt was made to legislate upon the subject of slavery at that session. But Galusha Anderson says<sup>2</sup> that the public mind had become deeply impressed by the bill; that men became sensitive and suspicious on the subject of slavery throughout the state; and that it served to make slavery the main issue in the

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1. Statesman: March 30, 1860.

2. A Border City during the Civil War: pp.14, 15.



state in the political campaign of 1860 for it showed to what lengths the pro-slavery element would go if given the opportunity.

The most important feature of note in the political aspects of slavery extinction in Missouri in 1860 was the organization of the Republican State Party; for as this Party contained the elements favorable to that cause its forces could be more effectively directed and utilized to this end through a state party than through separate county organization. Early in the year the National Democrats had attempted to gain the support of the German Emancipationists for the state campaign by electing Christian Kribben of St. Louis, an Emancipationist, as Speaker of the House for the called session<sup>1</sup>. He was nominated by the Democratic caucus. The incongruity of the situation was shown when Kribben, as Speaker, voted against the Free Negro Bill upon its passing the House March 9, 1860<sup>2</sup>. That the Democrats should go to such a length to obtain the Emancipationist votes was sufficient of itself to show the need for a state organization which could effectually command those votes. In all the Northern States coalition of the Anti-Slavery Party with the American Party was taking place and to prevent this in Missouri might have been the aim of the Democrats in this move. But if this was an object, they were not successful; for late in July Gardenshire in a public letter urged the importance of throwing the Republican vote to the Opposition ticket in the State Election<sup>3</sup>. Gardenshire stated that the Republicans had often been mistreated by the "Opposition" but that without such a coalition the Republicans

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1. House Journal: Special Session; Feb. 27, 1860.

2. Ibid: Special Session; 1860; p.24.

3. In Switzler's Scrap Book: 1860.



would have a long probation in Missouri, but with such a coalition, and the election of Lincoln, an easy and early victory was assured. The fact that the Republicans did cast their votes with the Opposition in the State Election was noted in the preceding chapter.

The policy of the State Republican Party was outlined by B. Gratz Brown in the opening speech at the State Convention March 12, 1860. The relations of the party to the slavery situation as seen in "the irrepressible conflict" between free labor and slave labor<sup>1</sup> was the burden of his theme<sup>1</sup>. But in the entire speech not a word was said intimating that the party would work for emancipation for any sentimental reason looking to the betterment of the condition of the negro; but the plan was to attack the slave power for the benefit of the white laborer solely and annihilate it before it would obtain the ascendancy over white labor. The same sentiment was expressed by Carl Schurz in a speech in St. Louis August 1, 1860, on "The Doom of Slavery" in which he arraigned slavery against free labor and showed their entire incompatibility<sup>2</sup>.

As has been previously intimated the Presidential election furnished the test of strength of the Emancipationists in Missouri in 1860, for it is believed that the great bulk of them voted the Republican ticket at that election. The coalition in the State Election prevented any definite conclusion being drawn from the face of those returns. The foreign element in the state, particularly the Germans, were naturally more interested in the cause of slavery extinction than they were in slavery extension.

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1. Daily Democrat: March 12, 1860. In Switzler's Scrap Book, 1860.

2. Anderson: A Border City; pp. 16 to 18.



An inspection of the election returns by counties shows that the ratio of foreign born population to the number of votes cast for Lincoln in the German counties was about the same as the ratio of foreign born population to votes for Lincoln in the entire state, about 1 to 11. It would appear that the bulk of the Lincoln votes were cast by foreign born voters. But the total number of votes cast at the National Election 165,518 was about one-sixth of the total white population, 1,062,609; and from this difference in ratios it appears that only a little over one-half of the foreign born voters voted for Lincoln. As the Germans made up a little more than one-half of the foreign born population in the state, it is inferred that the Germans cast most of the votes given to Lincoln in Missouri in 1860<sup>1</sup>. The votes for Lincoln, therefore, represented closely the number in favor of slavery extinction with whom slavery extinction was the chief issue.

The most radical opponents of the Republicans were the Breckenridge Democrats. They were not only against slavery extinction, but they were for slavery extension. If a list of the heavy slave counties be made in the order of percentage of votes given Breckenridge, the counties on the Kansas border will be found at or among the highest on the list; from this it is inferred that the slavery interests in the border counties were those most interested in slavery extension, as well as being against slavery extinction. The same holds true of other outlying slave counties such as Greene, New Madrid, Cape Girardeau, and Lewis; in general also none of the counties which had participated in the State Pro-Slavery Convention in 1854 will be

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1. Census 1860: Vol. "Population"; pp. 286, 287, 301.  
History Southeast Missouri: pp.176, 177.



found low on the list. But farther inspection will show that more than the average percent of Breckenridge votes was cast in the following light slave counties: Carter, Oregon, Osage, Ozark, Pulaski, Reynolds, Ripley, Shannon, Stoddard, Stone, Taney, Texas, Vernon, Webster and Wright. The explanation of this may be that the inhabitants of those counties were of the non-slave holding classes of the Southern States who hated free negroes more than they hated slavery and who voted for Breckenridge as best representing their views against emancipation and abolition. The Breckenridge Democrats who doubtless voted for the Douglas electors in order to prevent the success of the Bell-Everett ticket in the state should be considered, but their number cannot be determined with respect to any phase of the local slavery question.

Up to and including 1860 it would appear that the only practicable plan proposed for bringing about slavery extinction was to effect a preponderance of interest in the state in favor of white labor. And notwithstanding the Constitution of the State was so contrived as to discourage slavery extinction becoming an issue in state politics it was inevitable that the economic relation between slavery interests and those of the white laboring classes were such as would sooner or later demand that the matter be given the chief place in state politics.











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