

## The Knownothing Party In Indiana

(Continued)

By CARL BRAND

### THE CAMPAIGN OF 1856 IN INDIANA

The year 1856 marked the advent of the Know Nothings into national politics, for their first and only presidential campaign. Circumstances seemed favorable for the success of a new party. The Democratic administration had given universal dissatisfaction to the north. A revival of the Whig party was conceded to be hopeless. The Republican party was not yet organized on a national basis, but it was already beginning to overshadow the American movement in the north. Which one of the two would survive to contest future elections with the Democracy depended largely on the issue of the campaign of 1856.

The Grand Council was to meet at Philadelphia February 18, 1856. As this body did not have the power to nominate candidates, President Bartlett of the Grand Council issued a call for a national convention to be held at the same place four days later. Each state delegation was to consist of one delegate from each congressional district and two from the state at large.<sup>1</sup> As a matter of fact the same representatives were to compose both council and convention.

Since the Indiana delegation at Cincinnati had acquiesced in the move for a reunion with the Grand Council, preparations were made to send representatives to the Philadelphia session. The "twelfth section" issue however was not allowed to go unnoticed. If not expunged it would prevent a union of the anti-slavery forces and make certain the election of a Democrat. Another view was that it introduced the question of slavery where nothing should have been said on the subject.<sup>2</sup> For either the former or the latter reason most of

<sup>1</sup> Richmond *Jeffersonian*, December 6, 1855.

<sup>2</sup> Terre Haute *Wabash Courier*, January 19, 1856; New Albany *Tribune*, February 27, 1856.

the Indiana Americans favored the excision of the twelfth section.

The First district convention met at Princeton, January 22, 1856.<sup>3</sup> As the Know Nothings of the First district were the strongest "South" Americans in Indiana, the delegates were mostly "twelfth section" men, in favor of non-interference on slavery. Delegates were in attendance from Vanderburg, Warrick, Posey, Knox, and Gibson counties. Judge Samuel Hall of Princeton was chairman; James A. Mason of the *Vincennes Gazette* and Addison H. Sanders of the *Evansville Journal*, secretaries. A. M. Phelps of Warrick county was appointed a delegate to the national convention with James A. Mason as alternate, and was instructed to vote for Millard Fillmore. A series of resolutions was adopted which would satisfy the straightest Americans. It called for a revision of the laws on suffrage; none but Americans in spirit and in thought should rule America; the Bible should be kept in the schools; and the union must be preserved. Any mention of the slavery issue or the Kansas-Nebraska question was carefully avoided. These resolutions are noteworthy as the only case in which an important body in Indiana put forth a platform that was strictly American, and not tainted with "abolitionism."

On February 8, the Americans of the Seventh district held their convention at Greencastle. General G. K. Steele of Rockville was appointed as delegate with instructions to vote for Fillmore.<sup>4</sup>

There is no record of any other district convention. William Sheets, president of the order, and Solomon Meredith were delegates, but whether elected by district convention or appointed by the state council for the state at large is uncertain.

The Grand Council met at Philadelphia February 18, 1856. Sheets, Phelps, and Meredith constituted the Indiana delegation. In the absence of President Bartlett, Sheets was called

<sup>3</sup> Accounts of the convention are to be found in the *Indianapolis Sentinel*, January 11, 1856; *Indianapolis Journal*, January 26, February 18, 1856; *Princeton Democratic Clarion*, January 26, 1856; *New Albany Tribune*, February 6, 1856; *Richmond Jeffersonian*, January 31, 1856.

<sup>4</sup> *Terre Haute Wabash Courier*, February 16, 1856; *New Albany Tribune*, February 20, 1856.

to the chair and made the opening address, in which he expressed the hope that sectional issues would be laid aside and that the true spirit of American principles might reign supreme in the convention.<sup>5</sup> But the slavery question would not down. Sheets made a speech in which he assured the southern members that the "twelfth section" must be expunged if the party wished to carry the north.<sup>6</sup> In spite of his efforts to propitiate the pro-slavery members, he gained the name of "rank abolitionist" for himself. After two days of exciting debate the "twelfth section" was abolished and a new plank inserted which declared merely for the enforcement of all laws constitutionally enacted until their repeal.<sup>7</sup> The eighth section was altered in such manner as to please the Louisiana Catholics.<sup>8</sup> The new platform was adopted by a vote of 108 to 77; Sheets and Phelps voting with the majority and Meredith with the minority.<sup>9</sup> While the north had gained the repeal of the "twelfth section," the conservatives were successful in resisting all attempts to commit the order to any principle of emancipation. The Grand Council finished its work on February 21, having returned to the policy of neutrality and non-interference.

On February 22 the national council reorganized as a nominating convention. A resolution was introduced that the national council had no authority to prescribe a platform of principles for the nominating convention and that no candidates for president and vice-president who were not in favor of interdicting slavery north of 36° 30' should be nominated by the convention. It was tabled by a vote of 141 to 59.<sup>10</sup> A motion to proceed to the nominations was carried, whereupon most of the anti-slavery delegates, including all from New England, Michigan, Wisconsin, and Ohio, and others

<sup>5</sup> Indianapolis *Journal*, February 20, 1856.

<sup>6</sup> Appendix to *Congressional Globe*, 34 Congress, 1 Session, 1019; Indianapolis *Sentinel*, March 3, April 8, 1856; Indianapolis *Journal*, May 1, 1856. Although the Indianapolis *Sentinel* makes many assertions to the contrary, Sheets was instrumental in securing the repeal of the "twelfth section." Cf. the references cited in the *Sentinel* to those in the *Journal* and the *Congressional Globe*.

<sup>7</sup> See the Indianapolis *Journal*, February 29, 1856, for the entire platform.

<sup>8</sup> Logansport *Journal*, March 1, 1856.

<sup>9</sup> Indianapolis *Sentinel*, March 3, 1856; Rockport *Democrat*, March 8, 1856.

<sup>10</sup> Indianapolis *Journal*, February 27, 1856.

from Iowa, Illinois, and Pennsylvania, withdrew from the convention.<sup>11</sup> The Indiana delegates retained their seats and did not join the bolters.<sup>12</sup> The convention then proceeded with the nominations. Sheets wished a nomination postponed, but was overruled.<sup>13</sup> Millard Fillmore, of New York, and Andrew J. Donelson, of Tennessee, were made the candidates for president and vice-president, respectively. The vote of the Indiana delegation stood, two for McLean and one for Fillmore, the latter vote being cast by Phelps.<sup>14</sup> Because of their failure to withdraw the Indiana delegates were regarded as being favorably disposed toward the South American faction.<sup>15</sup>

The seceders met at Merchants' hall with Lieutenant Governor Ford, of Ohio, presiding. Indiana was not represented among the sixty-seven delegates. They issued an address protesting against the nomination of Fillmore and the admission of the Catholic Louisiana delegates, and demanding the restoration of the Missouri Compromise line. Solomon Meredith was put on the executive committee for Indiana. He was not in the seceders' convention but had voted against the nomination of Fillmore.<sup>16</sup> The seceders, who were known as North Americans, issued a call for a convention to be held at New York, June 12, 1856.

Neither the platform nor the candidate of the convention aroused much enthusiasm in Indiana. The *Evansville Journal*, *Vincennes Gazette*, *Paoli Constitutionalist*, *Rising Sun Visitor*, and a few other papers were said to endorse the platform fully.<sup>17</sup> The *Indianapolis Journal* had been a strong sympathizer with American views but its attitude toward the platform reflects that held by the anti-slavery wing of the Amer-

<sup>11</sup> *Indianapolis Journal*, March 3, 1856; *Princeton Democratic Clarion*, March 1, 1856.

<sup>12</sup> *Richmond Jeffersonian*, April 10, 1856; *New Albany Tribune*, March 5, 1856; *Indianapolis Sentinel*, March 3, 1856.

<sup>13</sup> *Indianapolis Journal*, May 1, 1856.

<sup>14</sup> *New Albany Tribune*, March 5, 1856; *Richmond Jeffersonian*, April 10, 1856; *Indianapolis Journal*, May 1, 1856.

<sup>15</sup> *Madison Courier*, March 5, 1856.

<sup>16</sup> *Indianapolis Journal*, February 28; March 3, 1856. Indiana is not listed in any contemporary account, as represented in the convention, although the *Journal* of November 23, 1856, makes the statement that Sheets and Meredith were both present. Cf. the *Journal* for February 28, and March 3, 1856.

<sup>17</sup> *Indianapolis Journal*, March 3, 6, 1856.

icans, which was rapidly becoming identified with the Republican movement:

We find more to disapprove in what the platform leaves unsaid, than in what it says. The whole slavery question, its extension, nationalization, the fraud by which it gained entrance into and the violence by which it strives to keep its hold of, the new territories, are utterly ignored.<sup>18</sup>

Nativism was made the issue; there was a complete abandonment of all the Republicans were working for.<sup>19</sup>

The nomination of Fillmore upon such a platform was thought to be dictated by southern influence:

It is the work of Southern States and twelfth section delegates generally. It is a nomination by those favorable to the repeal of the Missouri Compromise and opposed to its restoration. It is a nomination of those advocating the Southern doctrine of the extension of slavery. We look upon the whole affair as most disastrous to the fair character and claims of Millard Fillmore. . . . No one can suppose that a nomination from such a source can be anything other than sectional.<sup>20</sup>

Such was the opinion of a paper favorable to Fillmore personally. Another American paper, the *Aurora Standard*, took somewhat the same stand:

At almost any other time we should have hailed the nomination of Millard Fillmore with delight. . . . But as he has been nominated upon a slavery extension platform we must wait until we hear from him before we promise him our unqualified support. If . . . he will come out firmly in opposition to slavery extension, we shall give him our hearty support, but if he does not, we shall have to look for some other candidate. The time has come when this issue must be met, and if possible, set at rest forever. It cannot be ignored and we will support no man who is disposed to ignore it.<sup>21</sup>

The *Richmond Palladium*, like other Republican papers whose affection for Know Nothingism had cooled since 1854, held that by the nomination the party was harnessed to a faction and committed to the propagandism of slavery, mak-

<sup>18</sup> *Indianapolis Journal*, February 29, 1856.

<sup>19</sup> *Indianapolis Journal*, March 1, 1856.

<sup>20</sup> *Terre Haute Wabash Courier*, March 1, 1856.

<sup>21</sup> *Indianapolis Journal*, March 14, 1856.

ing the north fight for the Fugitive Slave law and sustain the Kansas-Nebraska bill and the abrogation of the Missouri Compromise.<sup>22</sup>

The platform and nominee did please one political faction. A remnant of the old Whigs still existed, faithful to Whiggery and unidentified with the other movements of the time although they had long ceased to maintain an organization in Indiana. A portion of these now stood for the same principles as the Americans. They regarded the Philadelphia platform very favorably because it ignored the Kansas-Nebraska question.<sup>23</sup>

The main question before the Americans in the early part of 1856 was whether or not they would co-operate with the Republicans in the state campaign. Because of their own weakness and the increased strength of the latter, it was practically certain that they could not direct a fusion movement to their own ends as in 1854. The efficiency of the Know Nothing secret machinery was gone. Many of the lodges had disbanded and many of those who supported Fillmore were not willing to sacrifice their anti-slavery opinions to their Americanism. Yet they claimed to muster fifty thousand votes in the state, a number with which they could do nothing themselves, but without which the Republicans could not hope for victory.<sup>24</sup> It was plainly seen that united there was a chance to carry the state; if the Americans put their own ticket in the field, defeat was certain. On the other hand the party might lose its identity by fusing with a stronger movement. Also any union with the Republicans would be certain to incur the displeasure of the southern wing of the party.

The first step toward a fusion was taken by a convention of editors of the People's party at Indianapolis, December 18, 1855. Milton Gregg, of the *New Albany Tribune*, presided and many other American editors were present. The convention endorsed the People's platforms of 1854 and 1855 and recommended the calling of a nominating convention the following May.<sup>25</sup> The American papers took up the call and

<sup>22</sup> *Richmond Palladium*, March 6, 1856.

<sup>23</sup> *Indianapolis Journal*, March 12, 1856.

<sup>24</sup> *Indianapolis Journal*, March 7, 1856.

<sup>25</sup> *Indianapolis Sentinel*, December 20, 1855.

urged a full representation of their party at the convention, which was to be held May 1.<sup>26</sup>

The executive committee of the American state council held a meeting at Indianapolis, April 2, 1856, at which the question of co-operation with the Republicans was debated. The majority favored fusion, so the following circular was issued:

Indianapolis, April 2, 1856.

To the Members of the American Party of Indiana:

At a meeting of the executive committee of the State Council, held at Indianapolis, on the 2nd day of April, 1856, after a full expression of the members upon those questions that have divided and distracted the American party in other States, the committee unanimously adopted the following suggestions and earnestly request the true friends of Americanism to cooperate with them in carrying out the views of the committee: That as in 1854 we stand uncompromisingly opposed to the present corrupt national administration, and as a party we stand ready to cooperate with any party which aims to put an end to its misrule. And further: we regard the repeal of the Missouri Compromise as an infraction of the plighted faith of the nation. The same should be restored, and if efforts to that end fail, Congress should refuse, under all circumstances, to admit any State into the Union tolerating slavery, made free by that compromise. Therefore we approve of the call for a People's convention to be held on the first day of May next, and earnestly call upon the American party throughout the State to send a full delegation to that convention.

WM. SHEETS, Pres't.<sup>27</sup>

The order of President Sheets was regarded in some quarters as an attempt to sell out the Americans to the "abolitionist" Republican party, but the general temper of the former was favorable to a fusion and full delegations were appointed by the county councils.<sup>28</sup>

The platforms of former fusion conventions had invariably contained a temperance plank. This time the Harrison County council, desiring to avoid the temperance issue, instructed its delegates,

not to commit the American party to any state issue on temperance but to leave it in such a position that the counties may form their ticket to suit their particular localities.<sup>29</sup>

<sup>26</sup> *New Albany Tribune*, February 13, 1856.

<sup>27</sup> *Indianapolis Journal*, April 3, 1856; *Brookville Indiana American*, April 11, 1856.

<sup>28</sup> *Indianapolis Sentinel*, April 8, 1856.

<sup>29</sup> *New Albany Ledger*, April 30, 1856.

A preliminary meeting of the delegates was held April 30. William Sheets explained the American position: that he and those who had voted with him to repeal the "twelfth section," would do all they could to unite the Americans in the great People's movement of the north.<sup>30</sup>

The convention met, May 1, 1856. Solomon Meredith, of Richmond, and General G. K. Steele, of Rockville, were the Americans on the nominating committee. They reported a list of officers, naming Henry S. Lane for president. Milton Gregg of New Albany and James N. Ritchey of Franklin were among the vice-presidents.<sup>31</sup>

The harmony that nominally existed between the Republicans and the Americans was broken when David Kilgore, a former Know Nothing, introduced a resolution that the convention should nominate delegates to attend the Republican national convention, the following June. On behalf of the Americans, R. N. Hudson, of the *Terre Haute Express*, protested, saying that as the convention was not exclusively Republican, it could not nominate delegates. But loud cries of "Yes, it is," drowned out his voice and he sat down. Kilgore replied that he was an older and a better American than Hudson, but that Americanism could be postponed while the Kansas question could not, and he hoped that all would unite in securing a representation in the Philadelphia convention. He declared however that no nomination would be made which would "tread upon the toes of the Know Nothings." A Knox county Know Nothing spoke against Kilgore's resolution, but it was of no avail.<sup>32</sup> The incident showed the relative weakness of the Americans. The conditions of 1854 were reversed—the Americans were the tools of Republicans instead of vice versa. It showed that the Union between the two rested on a very slight foundation.

There is evidence that an agreement had been reached by the Republican and American leaders as to the state ticket, but in the convention the straight Republicans were in the ascendent and but one friend of Fillmore was given a place,

<sup>30</sup> *Indianapolis Journal*, May 1, 1856.

<sup>31</sup> *Indianapolis Journal*, May 8, 1856; *Princeton Democratic Clarion*, May 10, 1856.

<sup>32</sup> *Indianapolis Journal*, May 8, 1856; *New Albany Ledger*, May 7, 1856; *Logansport Democratic Pharos*, May 14, 1856.



John W. Dawson, of Allen, the nominee for secretary of state.<sup>33</sup> The remainder of the ticket consisted of Oliver P. Morton, of Wayne, governor; Conrad Baker, of Vanderburg, lieutenant-governor; William R. Noffsinger, of Parke, treasurer; E. W. H. Ellis, of Marion, auditor; John L. Smith, of Boone, superintendent of public instruction; James H. Cravens, of Ripley, attorney-general; John A. Stein, of Tippecanoe, reporter of supreme court; John A. Beal, of Miami, clerk of supreme court.<sup>34</sup> James H. Cravens had been vice-president of the Know Nothing order in the state in 1854-55, but was now fully identified with the Republican party. The Americans were thus frozen out. The party, which claimed to include from one-third to one-half of the Fusion strength in the entire state and nine-tenths of it in the southern part, was represented by one candidate among nine. The Americans had come to the convention to fuse, but the Republicans now took the stand that their own principles must be kept supreme.

A plank was inserted in the platform to placate the Americans. It read as follows:

*Resolved*, That we are in favor of the Naturalization Laws of Congress with the five years probation, and that the right of suffrage should accompany and not precede naturalization.<sup>35</sup>

A set of district electors was appointed, among whom were James C. Veatch and David Kilgore, of American sympathies. Among the delegates appointed to attend the Republican national convention were Jonathan S. Harvey, of Marion; James N. Ritchey, of Johnson; W. J. Peaslee, of Shelby; George K. Steele, of Parke; Godlove S. Orth, of Tippecanoe; and Charles H. Test, of Wayne; all former members of Know Nothing councils. On the state central committee were placed J. S. Harvey, James Ritchey and George K. Steele.<sup>36</sup>

The Fusion editors of the state took advantage of the nominating convention to hold another meeting. The proceedings were kept secret, but among the American editors present

<sup>33</sup> *New Albany Ledger*, May 12, 1856.

<sup>34</sup> *Indianapolis Journal*, May 8, 1856.

<sup>35</sup> *Indianapolis Journal*, May 8, 1856.

<sup>36</sup> *Indianapolis Journal*, May 8, 1856.

were R. N. Hudson, of the *Terre Haute Express*; J. Cox, of the *Paoli Constitutionalist*; John W. Dawson, of the *Fort Wayne Times*; W. H. Gregory, of the *Rising Sun Visitor*; and F. J. Waldo, of the *Vevay Reveille*.<sup>37</sup>

Although they had been rather coldly treated in the convention, the Americans as a whole were determined to support the ticket nominated there.<sup>38</sup> With but three or four exceptions the American press fell into line and placed the Fusion ticket in their columns below the names of Fillmore and Donelson. But the twelfth section "South" Americans could not stand by a ticket and platform that was so strongly Republican in color.<sup>39</sup> The *Vevay Reveille*, an ultra American paper, repudiated the convention and its platform *in toto*.<sup>40</sup> It could not support "Black Republican Abolitionism." Sheets was blamed for the failure of the Americans.

The officiating head of the American party in Indiana is rotten to the core! He has sold us to our enemies . . . there is not a single American editor at Indianapolis . . . who was not disgusted at the course pursued at that convention,

wrote the editor, F. J. Waldo.<sup>41</sup> Only on condition that the ticket be divided more equally between the Republicans and Americans would he support a Fusion ticket. Let Judge Jeremiah Sullivan, of Madison, be put in Morton's place, and give the latter the candidacy for attorney-general; give R. N. Hudson, of Terre Haute; T. A. Goodwin, of Brookville, and David Laird, of Perry county, places on the ticket, and then pure Americans could support it.<sup>42</sup> The *Rising Sun Visitor* said the Fusion ticket could not hope to receive the support of the American party. It favored a separate and independent organization of the American party on its own merits.<sup>43</sup> Likewise the *Rockford Herald* hoped that the American party would "cut loose from abolitionism and set up for itself," for Americanism had been entirely repudiated by the conven-

<sup>37</sup> *Indianapolis Journal*, May 8, 1856.

<sup>38</sup> *Wabash Intelligencer*, May 21, 1856; *New Albany Tribune*, May 14, 1856.

<sup>39</sup> *Princeton Democratic Clarion*, May 10, 1856.

<sup>40</sup> *New Albany Ledger*, May 21, 1856.

<sup>41</sup> *Rockport Democrat*, May 26, 1856, quoting the *Vevay Reveille*; *Indianapolis Sentinel*, May 19, 1856.

<sup>42</sup> *New Albany Ledger*, June 13, 1856.

<sup>43</sup> *Rockport Democrat*, May 24, 1856; *Madison Courier*, May 21, 1856.

tion.<sup>44</sup> Also the *Corydon Argus* and the *Paoli Constitutional-ist* refused to endorse the convention or put the nominees at the head of their columns because they would not support an "abolition" ticket.<sup>45</sup> But these were the exceptional instances.

The Americans and Republicans combined their forces for the city elections of April and May, 1856, but met with scant success. The fusion was successful in Crawfordsville and the Know Nothing strongholds, New Albany and Jeffersonville, but in the other cities the Old Line Democracy was uniformly victorious.<sup>46</sup>

The American state convention was called for July 16, 1856. Several of the pure American papers, such as the *Vevay Reveille* and the *Rising Sun Visitor*, agitated for a convention at New Albany on July 4 to nominate a separate state ticket and reorganize the American party.<sup>47</sup> Their object was to remove the convention from the influence of a People's convention which was to be held at Indianapolis, July 15, to ratify the nomination of Fremont and Dayton. They feared that the radical anti-slavery Fusionists would dominate the American convention to the exclusion of American principles. The *New Albany Tribune* and others who looked more favorably on the Fusionists opposed the idea of a pure American convention and proposed one at Indianapolis the same day that the People's convention met. This faction looked forward not only to the endorsement of the nominees of the convention of May 1, but also to a union electoral ticket. In the end the convention was called to meet at Indianapolis, July 16, the day after the Fusion convention.<sup>48</sup> It is noteworthy that the American convention now followed the People's instead of preceding it. The Know Nothings of 1854 and 1855 pursued a policy calculated to manipulate the People's movement to their own ends. The Americans of 1856 waited to see what the Fusionists did before they themselves acted. The call was issued by a committee of Americans, mostly from southeastern Indiana, appointed for that purpose, and was signed

<sup>44</sup> *Rockport Democrat*, May 24, 1856.

<sup>45</sup> *New Albany Ledger*, May 21, 1856.

<sup>46</sup> *New Albany Ledger*, April 9, 16, 1856; *Indianapolis Journal*, May 8, 1856; *Indianapolis Sentinel*, May 9, 1856.

<sup>47</sup> *New Albany Ledger*, May 23, 1856.

<sup>48</sup> *New Albany Ledger*, June 21, 1856.

by several hundred voters. It was addressed to Fillmore men and to national Whigs, who were invited to co-operate in the formation of a Fillmore electoral ticket and transact other business.<sup>49</sup> The Americans over the state proceeded to the nomination of delegates. In some cases, as in Harrison county, delegates were regularly nominated by American mass meetings;<sup>50</sup> in others, as at Terre Haute, "all who were friends of Fillmore and Donelson" were constituted delegates to the convention.<sup>51</sup>

The People's convention, or Republican, as it was frequently styled, met July 15, 1856. Among the delegates were Godlove S. Orth, Judge W. J. Peaslee, George K. Steele, J. C. Moody, and Berry Sulgrove, all formerly active Know Nothings. The convention did little more than make a great demonstration and ratify the nomination of Fremont and Dayton and the state ticket.<sup>52</sup>

The American convention met at Indianapolis the next day, July 16. The three or four hundred delegates that were present made but a feeble showing in contrast with the thousands that had attended the convention of the previous day.<sup>53</sup> The delegations, with the exception of those from New Albany, Jeffersonville, Terre Haute, Vevay, and a few other old Know Nothing strongholds, were not large.<sup>54</sup> Not more than ten counties from the entire state were represented by delegates properly appointed.<sup>55</sup> Only about one-fourth of the counties were represented at all. The entire Fifth district was unrepresented, and but one man was present from the Tenth. The delegates formed a procession and marched to the state house, where, in the hall of the house of representatives, the convention organized by calling General W. E. R. Armstrong, of Clark, to the chair, and appointing Squire Robinson, of Rush, to act as secretary.<sup>56</sup>

<sup>49</sup> *New Albany Tribune*, July 2, 9, 1856; *Logansport Democratic Pharos*, July 9, 1856; *Indianapolis Sentinel*, July 2, 1856; *Wabash Intelligencer*, July 9, 1856.

<sup>50</sup> *New Albany Ledger*, July 16, 1856.

<sup>51</sup> *Terre Haute Express*, July 9, 1856.

<sup>52</sup> *Indianapolis Journal*, July 16, 1856; *Terre Haute Express*, July 21, 1856.

<sup>53</sup> *Madison Courier*, July 23, 1856; *Terre Haute Express*, July 21, 1856; *Indianapolis Journal*, July 17, 1856; *Brookville Indiana American*, July 25, 1856.

<sup>54</sup> *New Albany Ledger*, July 17, 1856; *Indianapolis Journal*, July 17, 1856.

<sup>55</sup> *Terre Haute Express*, July 21, 1856.

<sup>56</sup> *Indianapolis Journal*, July 17, 1856.

After the organization a committee, consisting of one member from each congressional district which was represented, was appointed to report on a permanent organization. This committee consisted of John S. Hopkins, Jonathan Paine, R. N. Lamb, Thomas Poe, Henry Bradley, C. H. Bailey, A. W. Peyton, G. W. Blakemore, John H. Young, and Alfred Lyons. To this committee was also referred a resolution instructing them to report a state electoral ticket for Fillmore and Donelson.

A committee on resolutions was appointed, likewise of one member from each congressional district. The members were: James Harlan, George P. R. Wilson, F. J. Waldo, William H. Gregory, C. C. Butler, Richard W. Thompson, M. Bemis, A. L. Osborne and G. S. Rose.<sup>57</sup>

An attempt to prevent the nomination of a separate electoral ticket caused great confusion. John W. Ray, of Jeffersonville, proposed an endorsement of Fremont on grounds of expediency, but such a proposal received little encouragement.

Richard W. Thompson, of Vigo, was elected permanent chairman. A platform was reported, and adopted, which endorsed the nomination of Fillmore; opposed a sectional struggle for the presidency; and condemned the administration for countenancing the repeal of the Missouri Compromise and the agitation of the slavery question.<sup>58</sup>

A resolution was offered which endorsed the People's state ticket, but it was promptly and enthusiastically voted down. This brought a response from R. N. Hudson, of the *Terre Haute Express*, and Mr. French, of the *Jeffersonville Republican*, who declared that if the convention did not stand by the pledge the Americans, in common with the Republicans, had made to support the People's ticket, they would desert Fillmore and go for Fremont. Their efforts were not successful. Instead of endorsing the People's ticket, the following resolution was passed which did not even recommend that the Americans support the ticket:

*Resolved*, That this convention having assembled with reference to the election of President and Vice-President of the United States, deem

<sup>57</sup> *Indianapolis Journal*, July 17, 1856; *New Albany Tribune*, July 23, 1856.

<sup>58</sup> *Indianapolis Journal*, July 18, 1856.

it inexpedient at this time either to make or recommend any reorganization with reference to State or Congressional elections, having confidence that those who cooperate with us will so vote as to promote the welfare of the State and the Union.<sup>59</sup>

The following electoral ticket was reported: First district, James G. Jones, of Vanderburg; Second district, David H. Laird, of Perry; Third district, John Baker, of Lawrence; Fourth district, William E. White, of Dearborn; Fifth district, Frederick Jobsonbaugh, of Wayne; Sixth district, Henry Bradley, of Johnson; Seventh district, William K. Edwards, of Vigo; Eighth district, C. W. Prather, of Montgomery; Ninth district, Thomas A. Stanfield, of St. Joseph; Tenth district, John B. Howe, of Lagrange; Eleventh district, William R. Hale, of Wabash; for the state at large, George G. Dunn, of Lawrence, and Andrew Osborne, of LaPorte.<sup>60</sup>

The following committee was appointed to prepare an address to the people of Indiana: R. W. Thompson, of Vigo; Major A. H. Davidson, of Marion; W. G. Armstrong, of Clark; Dr. Joseph G. McPheeters, of Monroe; Jonathan Payne, of Orange; James G. Wright, of Jefferson; C. C. Butler, of Marion; John Van Tress, of Daviess; Milton Gregg, of Floyd; and William H. Gregory, of Ohio; after which the convention adjourned.<sup>61</sup>

The nomination of a separate electoral ticket, and the failure to endorse the People's candidates resulted in another secession from the American ranks. R. N. Hudson, of the *Terre Haute Express*, carried out the threat made on the floor of the convention by hauling down the Fillmore flag and hoisting that of Fremont and Dayton.<sup>62</sup> He was followed by Mason, of the *Vincennes Gazette*, and French, of the *Jeffersonville Republican*.<sup>63</sup> Three American organs were thus added to the ever increasing list of Republican papers.

The nomination of a separate electoral ticket met with the approval of the pure Americans, but was opposed by a strong

<sup>59</sup> *Terre Haute Express*, July 21, 1856; *New Albany Ledger*, July 22, October 8, 1856.

<sup>60</sup> *Indianapolis Journal*, July 17, 18, 1856.

<sup>61</sup> *Indianapolis Journal*, July 17, 1856.

<sup>62</sup> *Terre Haute Express*, July 21, 1856.

<sup>63</sup> *Madison Courier*, July 30, 1856; *Indianapolis Journal*, August 8, 1856.

faction. It was plainly recognized that alone the Americans could not hope to carry the state, but combined with the Republicans there was a strong probability of success. This faction did not cease to agitate the withdrawal of the separate ticket and the formation of a joint ticket of some sort.<sup>64</sup>

The Americans prepared for the campaign by a systematic reorganization of their councils throughout the state.<sup>65</sup> Fillmore clubs were formed in New Albany, Madison, Rushville, Washington, Terre Haute, Lafayette, Greencastle, Indianapolis,<sup>66</sup> and other centers of American sentiment.<sup>67</sup> It is noteworthy that there is mention of but one such organization north of the National road. Colonel R. W. Thompson, of Terre Haute, was prominent in the attempt to build up and organize the new third party.<sup>68</sup>

The strength of the American party was uncertain, but it was admitted to be much less than it had been in the winter of 1854-55, when a million and a half of voters were enrolled in the Know Nothing councils. It was then freely predicted and often conceded that they held the next presidential election in their hands.<sup>69</sup> The thirteen electoral votes of Indiana were regarded as certain to be cast for the American candidate.<sup>70</sup> The series of secessions had weakened them, but still they claimed to number between forty and sixty thousand in the state.<sup>71</sup> This strength was entirely in the southern and western portion of the state. Fremont was absolutely unknown in the "Pocket." The opposition in southern Indiana was practically all American. But even the staunchest Amer-

<sup>64</sup> Terre Haute *Express*, July 29, August 1, 1856, quoting the Salem *American Citizen*.

<sup>65</sup> Indianapolis *Journal*, July 7, 1856; Richmond *Jeffersonian*, February 14, 1856.

<sup>66</sup> The officers of the Indianapolis Fillmore Club were Zalmon P. Tousey, president; Charles Stewart, vice-president, and L. O. Milless, secretary. See the Indianapolis *Journal*, July 15, 1856.

<sup>67</sup> New Albany *Tribune*, August 6, 13, 20, September 10, October 1, 1856; Indianapolis *Journal*, July 12, 15, 1856.

<sup>68</sup> Lebanon *Boone County Pioneer*, September 15, 1856; New Albany *Ledger*, July 16, 1856.

<sup>69</sup> Rushville *Republican*, October 25, 1854.

<sup>70</sup> Appendix to *Congressional Globe*, 33 Congress, 2 Session, 270.

<sup>71</sup> The latter is an estimate in the Richmond *Jeffersonian*, January 31, 1856. The Indianapolis *Sentinel*, May 7, 1856, copies the former figure from the Cincinnati *Times*, an American paper. The New Albany *Tribune*, March 7, 1856, placed the number at fifty thousand, of whom one thousand five hundred were in Floyd county.

icans admitted that north of the National road Fillmore would receive scarcely a vote.<sup>72</sup> For at least a year the Know Nothings had been annihilated in that part of the state.

Mention has been made of the desertion of the *Terre Haute Express*, *Vincennes Gazette*, and *Jeffersonville Republican* following the last American convention. A number of other papers that had come out originally for Fillmore followed,<sup>73</sup> including the *Fort Wayne Times*, *Greencastle Banner*, *Rockford Herald*, and *Worthington Times*.<sup>74</sup> The desertion of John W. Dawson, the editor of the *Fort Wayne Times*, was a severe blow to the Americans.<sup>75</sup> He had been the only Fillmore man on the Fusion ticket. There was nothing left to induce them to support it except a desire to defeat the party in power. About the same time Godlove S. Orth and William Sheets, the two ex-presidents of the order in Indiana, and J. C. Moody, of Floyd, one of its active organizers, became fully identified with the Republican party.<sup>76</sup> The Fremont campaign continued to win away hundreds of Americans.<sup>77</sup>

There were signs of a rapprochement between the Democratic party and the Americans. The state platform of the former contained a condemnation of all secret political organizations,<sup>78</sup> which was aimed at the Americans, although that description no longer fitted their organization. But as the campaign progressed the Americans were encouraged in order to draw off support from the Republicans. The Democratic papers now kindly opened their columns for American notices and items. The conservative Americans were cordially invited to join the Democratic ranks where a few months before only the bitterest invective had been employed against them.<sup>79</sup> American newspapers were said to be supported by Old Line

<sup>72</sup> *Terre Haute Express*, July 23, 1856, quoting the *New Albany Tribune*.

<sup>73</sup> *Indianapolis Journal*, August 8, 29, 1856.

<sup>74</sup> The following papers supported Fillmore throughout the campaign; *New Albany Tribune*, *Corydon Argus*, *Evansville Journal*, *Paoli Constitutionalist*, *Washington Telegraph*, *Rising Sun Visitor*, *Vevay Reveille*, *Newburg Tribune*, *Terre Haute Union*.

<sup>75</sup> *New Albany Ledger*, June 25, 1856.

<sup>76</sup> *New Albany Ledger*, June 27, July 24, 1856; Appendix to *Congressional Globe*, 34 Congress, 1 Session, 1153.

<sup>77</sup> *Indianapolis Journal*, September 29, 1856.

<sup>78</sup> *Indianapolis Journal*, January 9, 1856.

<sup>79</sup> *Indianapolis Sentinel*, April 30, July 2, 1856; *Indianapolis Journal*, October 6, 1856.



financial aid.<sup>80</sup> The speeches of Richard W. Thompson, who stumped the state for Fillmore, denouncing the Republicans as "Abolitionists, disunionists and incendiaries," were so Old Line in character that they gave rise to the belief that he was a stipendiary of the Democrats.<sup>81</sup>

The advances of the Democracy did not shake the determination of the "North" Americans to support the People's state ticket. The fact that Willard, the Democratic candidate for governor, had denounced the Know Nothings as illiberal and proscriptive, was not forgotten by the New Albany *Tribune*, which called upon the Fillmore men to vote for Morton.<sup>82</sup> The Fillmore club of the same city passed resolutions to support the state, congressional and county candidates of the People's party at the October election.<sup>83</sup> The Fusion managers were somewhat careful in their efforts to keep them loyal. Anti-slavery speakers were kept out of the districts that were strongly "South" American.<sup>84</sup>

The few Old Line Whigs who still remained, unattached to any other party, occupied a political position almost identical with that of the American party on the slavery question. It was not surprising then, that in their national convention at Baltimore, September 18, 1856, the nominations of Fillmore and Donelson were endorsed. W. K. Edwards, of Terre Haute, an elector on the American ticket, was one of the Indiana delegates to the convention and there voted for Fillmore.<sup>85</sup> Although on the Fillmore electoral ticket he was there as an old Whig and nothing else, as he never had been a Know Nothing.

<sup>80</sup> Indianapolis *Journal*, October 28, 1856; Franklin *Republican*, April 3, 1857.

<sup>81</sup> Julian, *Recollections*, 155. Indianapolis *Journal*, October 1, 2, 1856. The belief still exists among old Republicans that "Dick" Thompson was paid by the Democrats to keep the American ticket in the field, and to him was due the defeat of the Republicans in Indiana in 1856. No proof was ever advanced. Soon after the election he received the sum of \$40,000 from the government for legal services rendered to the Indians. This probably caused the story to be so widely believed. See also the New Albany *Ledger*, September 13, 1858.

<sup>82</sup> New Albany *Ledger*, October 8, 1856.

<sup>83</sup> Indianapolis *Journal*, August 16, 1856.

<sup>84</sup> Julian, *Speeches*, 134.

<sup>85</sup> Indianapolis *Journal*, September 20, 1856; Terre Haute *Express*, September 22, 1856.

While the Democrats were well pleased at the prospect of a divided opposition, the Republicans were making every effort to discourage the support of a third ticket. With such Americans as Milton Gregg, of the *New Albany Tribune*, they might meet with some success, but most of the Americans were determined to support Fillmore. The Fillmore club at Indianapolis passed resolutions not to coalesce with either of the old parties.<sup>86</sup> Likewise the club at Terre Haute resolved that they would "neither desire, seek, claim or court any alliance with the Democrat or Republican parties . . . that we are for Millard Fillmore unto the end."<sup>87</sup> Veatch, the Fusion nominee for congress in the First district, was not acceptable to all the Fillmore men because of his support of Fremont. A Fillmore mass meeting at West Franklin, Posey county, resolved not to support any candidate (i. e., Veatch) who did not adhere to Fillmore and Donelson.<sup>88</sup> There would be no supporters of Fremont or a fusion electoral ticket among these Americans. The matter was finally set at rest by the American state central committee, which met at Indianapolis, September 24, and issued the following statement:

That the statement made by some papers that the Americans will support the Republican electoral ticket is untrue; on the contrary they have their own ticket composed of Fillmore men and intend to support it, without union or fusion with any other party.

A. H. DAVIDSON, Chairman.<sup>89</sup>

The Americans conducted a vigorous campaign in southern Indiana, but abandoned the northern portion to the Democrats and Republicans. Fillmore rallies, barbecues, and mass meetings were numerous and well attended in the counties along the Ohio and the Wabash.<sup>90</sup> R. W. Thompson bore the burden of the speaking campaign, and American orators from Kentucky assisted. One of the latter, Judge Yeaman, of Owensborough, at a barbecue at Enterprise, Spencer county, advo-

<sup>86</sup> *Indianapolis Journal*, July 25, 1856.

<sup>87</sup> *Terre Haute Express*, July 30, 1856; *New Albany Ledger*, August 2, 1856.

<sup>88</sup> *New Albany Ledger*, August 6, 1856.

<sup>89</sup> *New Albany Tribune*, September 17, 1856; *Indianapolis Journal*, September 29, 1856.

<sup>90</sup> *New Albany Tribune*, August 13, October 1, 15, 1856; *New Albany Ledger*, July 16, 1856; *Terre Haute Wabash Courier*, July 12, 1856.

cated a period of probation of forty-two years for foreigners in the United States.<sup>91</sup> The Americans of Indianapolis sent a delegation to attend a great mass meeting at Cincinnati, but its small size aroused only the derision of the other parties.<sup>92</sup> There was one riot between Democrats and Americans, at Henryville, Clark county, and two of the latter were killed.<sup>93</sup> Other disorders occurred in New Albany, where the Republicans charged the Americans of using violence to break up Fremont meetings.<sup>94</sup>

The state election was held October 14, 1856. The contest was very close and not until the last returns were in was it known who was elected, but Willard received a plurality of 5,842 votes over Morton and carried the entire ticket with him.<sup>95</sup> John M. Dawson, the People's candidate for secretary of state, ran somewhat behind the rest of his ticket, which was taken to indicate that the Americans had scratched him in return for his desertion of their cause.<sup>96</sup> The Americans would be represented in the next state legislature by two representatives, John W. Wright and John J. Hayden, elected from Ohio and Switzerland counties, and by two hold-over senators, P. S. Sage, from the same counties, and David Crane, of Floyd.<sup>97</sup>

The Fusionists secured control of the house, but the senate was Democratic. In Vigo county each party had brought out a candidate for representative and the result displayed the weakness of the Americans in that county, which was supposed to be a hot-bed of Americanism. The vote stood: Democrat, 1,796; Republican, 1,435; American, 547.<sup>98</sup> The "South" Americans of Vigo would not fuse on their candidate, as had been done in most of the other counties.

The Republicans were bitterly disappointed at the result and sought to lay the responsibility for the defeat upon the Americans, whom they accused of double-crossing. Governor-

<sup>91</sup> Rockport *Democrat*, October 4, 1856.

<sup>92</sup> Indianapolis *Journal*, August 28, 1856.

<sup>93</sup> Indianapolis *Journal*, September 12, 1856.

<sup>94</sup> Indianapolis *Journal*, December 27, 1856.

<sup>95</sup> For the official vote see the Indianapolis *Journal*, December 3, 1856.

<sup>96</sup> Indianapolis *Journal*, October 18, 1856.

<sup>97</sup> Indianapolis *Journal*, November 8, 1856.

<sup>98</sup> Terre Haute *Express*, October 25, 1856.

elect Willard, in a speech soon after his victory, remarked that the Know Nothings had voted for him because they did not wish to add abolitionism to Know Nothingism.<sup>99</sup> This gave color to the charge that nine out of ten Fillmore men had deserted Morton.<sup>100</sup> Every county in the state in which there was a large American element had gone heavily against Morton. The counties along the Ohio, in the "pocket" and on the Wabash had given Willard majorities.<sup>101</sup> It was reported that Fillmore men had everywhere voted openly for Willard; that the Americans of Knox and Vigo counties had gone in a body into the Democratic ranks. In Decatur county a council of the entire party was said to have been called upon the eve of the election and there it was decided to cast their vote solidly for the Old Liners.<sup>102</sup> Such were the charges made by the Republicans over the entire state against their allies. They found one grain of consolation however. If the Americans had gone in a body for Willard, that vote would be drawn off for their own candidate in the November election, and Fremont, if such were the case, would be certain of carrying Indiana.<sup>103</sup> Therein may lie the explanation of the charges. The Republicans made great political capital out of them for the next month and on them based their hope of success.

The Americans of course were indignant. They claimed to have kept their promises and to have supported the ticket in spite of the treatment received at the last Fusion convention. At any rate, a comparison of the vote with that in the coming November election would show where the American vote had gone.<sup>104</sup>

<sup>99</sup> *Indianapolis Journal*, October 17, 1856.

<sup>100</sup> *Brookville Indiana American*, October 24, 1856.

<sup>101</sup> *Indianapolis Journal*, October 18, 20, 21, 1856.

<sup>9</sup> *Indianapolis Sentinel*, March 3, 1856; *Rockport Democrat*, March 8, 1856.

<sup>103</sup> *Indianapolis Journal*, October 28, 1856.

<sup>104</sup> The following story appeared in the *Lafayette Courier* and was copied by the *Indianapolis Journal*, October 30, 1856. It is interesting, but there is no other evidence as to its truth.

The terms of a Democratic and Know Nothing coalition were claimed to have been learned by a Republican, who gained access to an American council. The Americans had made a proposition to the Republicans, it was said, to vote the Republican ticket in October, provided that "Dick" Thompson would be elected United States senator, but the Republicans refused. The proposition was then made to the Old Liners and accepted. The Americans then voted the Democratic ticket in October, but the combination failed to secure control of the state senate.

This soreness put an end, at least for the time being, to the alliance that had begun between the Know Nothings and the anti-Nebraska men in 1854. With the single exception of a Republican and American meeting in Vevay, Switzerland county, not a proposal was to be heard for a fusion electoral ticket.<sup>105</sup> The Republican cry now was that the day for fusion had passed, the pandering to the Fillmore element was over.<sup>106</sup> There must be no more affiliation with Fillmoreism. It had retarded—not helped—the growth of Republicanism in the southern half of the state.<sup>107</sup> The “treacherous” Know Nothings were supposed to be determined to defeat Fremont if they had to elect Buchanan to do so.<sup>108</sup>

Three of the Fillmore electors followed Orth and Sheets in their desertion of the American party and announced their intention of supporting Fremont and Dayton. They were Andrew Osborne, elector-at-large; Thomas A. Stanfield, in the Ninth district, and John B. Howe, in the Tenth. The American attitude on the slavery question was given as the reason for their action.<sup>109</sup> Their places were taken by Richard W. Thompson, George W. Blakemore, and J. McNutt Smith, respectively.<sup>110</sup>

The Americans realized that their candidate could not hope to carry the election, but they did believe that Fillmore would carry enough states to prevent either Buchanan or Fremont from securing a majority in the electoral college. The Demo-

Again the Americans proposed to J. D. Defrees, chairman of the Republican state central committee, to form a fusion electoral ticket, on which there were to be three or four Americans. Defrees refused, whereupon the same plan was laid before the Democrats and accepted.

Such a story might appear plausible at the time, but no such Democratic-American fusion ticket appeared, and it will be shown that the Americans, as a whole, did support the People's ticket in October, 1856.

<sup>105</sup> *Indianapolis Sentinel*, October 22, 1856; *Madison Courier*, October 23, 1856.

<sup>106</sup> *Indianapolis Journal*, October 25, 1856, from the *Terre Haute Express*.

<sup>107</sup> *Indianapolis Journal*, October 28, 29, 1856.

<sup>108</sup> *Indianapolis Journal*, October 30, 1856.

<sup>109</sup> *Indianapolis Journal*, July 31, 1856; *Terre Haute Express*, August 4, 1856.

<sup>110</sup> *New Albany Ledger*, Nov. 1, 1856. The Fillmore electors in the Fourth and Eighth districts, Colonel William E. White and C. W. Prather, were doubtful in their support of the American candidate. The former was said to favor Buchanan, the latter, Fremont. But their names remained on the electoral ticket. See the *Rockport Democrat*, August 2, 1856, and the *Terre Haute Express*, August 14, 1856.

crats were expected to carry most of the southern states, the Republicans the north, and the Americans the border states. If those circumstances came to pass the election would be thrown into the house of representatives. It was regarded as certain that neither Fremont nor Buchanan, as sectional candidates, could command the support of the house. Fillmore then would be the logical compromise candidate whom both sections could support.<sup>111</sup>

An attempt, based upon such calculations, was made to withdraw the Fillmore ticket in Indiana. On October 29, J. R. Thompson, a Fillmore man of New York, brought letters from Mr. Jewett, of the New York state council, and from the president of the American national council to Colonel R. W. Thompson of Terre Haute. He called on Major A. H. Davidson, of the Indiana state central committee, and presented the letters. It was the desire of Fillmore and the New York Americans to give Indiana to Fremont, which would increase Fillmore's chances of throwing the election into the house of representatives. Major Davidson said it could be done by the concurrence of the American state central committee, and advised Mr. Thompson to see Colonel R. W. Thompson on the subject. He did so, but the latter declined to withdraw the ticket on the ground that it was too late to do so and swing the Fillmore vote to Fremont.<sup>112</sup> Rumors spread that the ticket had been withdrawn. The state central committee met November 3, and issued a statement, signed by A. H. Davidson, William G. Armstrong, and Milton Gregg, which denied the rumors to that effect, or that there had been any fusion with either of the other parties, and called on the Americans to stand firm in support of their candidate.<sup>113</sup>

A few days previous to the presidential election the American state central committee issued a circular, signed by A. H. Davidson, William G. Armstrong, Milton Gregg, C. C. Butler, J. W. Stratton, and G. W. Blakemore, which defined for the

<sup>111</sup> Brookville *Indiana American*, August 8, 1856; New Albany *Tribune*, October 22, 1856.

<sup>112</sup> Terre Haute *Express*, November 4, 1856; Indianapolis *Journal*, November 6, 1856; Madison *Courier*, November 12, 1856.

<sup>113</sup> Indianapolis *Sentinel*, November 4, 1856.

voters of Indiana the American position on the slavery question. On the repeal of the Missouri Compromise it stated:

The men in Indiana, who support the election of Fillmore and Donelson, regard the repeal of the Missouri Compromise by the party now in power, as unwise and deserving the condemnation of the American people. It was a measure adopted for party purposes, unjust in its conception, and fraught with imminent danger to the integrity of the union. It has produced discord, sectional strife, and internal war, and the extent of evil consequent upon its repeal is impossible now to determine.

The address proceeded to urge the freemen of Indiana to vote for Fillmore in preference to Fremont because:

Should Mr. Fillmore be president, the probability for a restoration of the Compromise, or an equivalent measure, would be far more likely to take place, because a recommendation from him would have weight, and receive consideration from members of Congress representing all portions of the Union.

The position was made still stronger by the following declaration:

We are opposed to the extension of the Missouri Compromise line. We are opposed to any interference with the existing institutions of our sister State.<sup>114</sup>

The position assumed by the central committee in this statement was almost identical with that of the Republicans. It represented the attitude of Milton Gregg and others of his stamp on the committee, but it certainly did not reflect the opinions of the South Americans of the "Pocket." The purpose of the circular is not stated, but the time of its appearance and its character would suggest that it was intended for the consumption of the voters of central Indiana and was designed to stop the secession to the ranks of the Republicans that was constant there.

As the election drew near it was seen that, while the struggle between Buchanan and Fremont would probably be close, Fillmore would run a poor third in the state. Practically all the straw votes taken forecast the result. The election came

<sup>114</sup> *Indianapolis Journal*, December 15, 1856.

on November 4. The Americans of New Albany were charged with a trick commonly practiced in that day. They printed a peculiarly spotted ballot in order to detect any American who did not vote for Fillmore.<sup>115</sup>

The votes for Fillmore amounted to 22,386 out of an aggregate vote of 235,434. Following is the official vote by counties for the leading elector on each ticket.<sup>116</sup> The result of the October state election is given also,<sup>117</sup> so that by a comparison of the vote it may be shown whether or not the Americans supported the People's ticket in 1856.

## VOTE OF 1856

County	Willard	Morton	Buchanan	Fremont	Fillmore
Adams -----	763	372	847	413	69
Allen -----	3,029	1,711	3,211	1,593	145
Bartholomew ---	1,855	1,410	1,844	1,292	142
Benton -----	223	313	217	315	8
Blackford -----	404	267	404	238	47
Boone -----	1,495	1,349	1,493	1,299	81
Brown -----	773	220	681	148	90
Carroll -----	1,311	1,270	1,344	1,261	22
Cass -----	1,550	1,503	1,539	1,504	40
Clark -----	1,799	1,485	1,950	492	1,074
Clay -----	1,057	607	1,108	365	296
Clinton -----	1,332	1,279	1,364	1,261	34
Crawford -----	745	596	735	24	509
Daviess -----	1,137	912	1,115	26	939
Dearborn -----	2,636	1,867	2,619	1,573	297
Decatur -----	1,667	1,800	1,639	1,718	61
DeKalb -----	1,191	1,111	1,247	1,097	75
Delaware -----	965	1,587	992	1,736	32
Dubois -----	1,024	226	1,191	21	236
Elkhart -----	1,494	1,809	1,651	1,971	18
Fayette -----	1,001	1,211	1,002	1,189	40
Floyd -----	1,833	1,481	1,767	228	1,262
Fountain -----	1,623	1,669	1,588	1,606	36
Franklin -----	2,241	1,479	2,259	1,437	41
Fulton -----	849	798	835	822	9
Gibson -----	1,218	1,047	1,286	365	766
Grant -----	1,050	1,404	1,035	1,395	99

<sup>115</sup> Indianapolis *Journal*, December 17, 1856.

<sup>116</sup> Indianapolis *Journal*, November 26, 1856.

<sup>117</sup> Indianapolis *Journal*, December 3, 1856.



County	Willard	Morton	Buchanan	Fremont	Fillmore
Greene -----	1,232	1,051	1,129	379	533
Hamilton -----	1,123	1,710	1,185	1,748	38
Hancock -----	1,325	1,074	1,343	962	24
Harrison -----	1,642	1,432	1,681	773	623
Hendricks -----	1,410	1,606	1,378	1,680	74
Henry -----	1,188	2,489	1,229	2,741	49
Howard -----	693	1,019	686	1,057	33
Huntington -----	1,211	1,199	1,181	1,232	58
Jackson -----	1,565	694	1,700	299	516
Jasper -----	536	652	548	633	63
Jay -----	867	884	880	883	54
Jefferson -----	1,994	2,476	1,936	2,314	425
Jennings -----	1,126	1,391	1,159	1,293	172
Johnson -----	1,660	1,204	1,608	1,095	153
Knox -----	1,544	1,109	1,512	557	535
Kosciusko -----	1,029	1,566	1,075	1,662	13
Lagrange -----	633	1,302	640	1,406	6
Lake -----	292	893	346	923	3
Laporte -----	2,222	2,332	2,239	2,533	45
Lawrence -----	1,079	1,061	1,126	480	660
Madison -----	1,578	1,321	1,603	1,309	84
Marion -----	3,642	3,737	3,738	3,696	205
Marshall -----	1,044	932	1,039	927	-----
Martin -----	777	466	769	76	350
Miami -----	1,532	1,435	1,513	1,390	38
Monroe -----	1,133	801	1,191	498	392
Montgomery -----	2,109	2,037	2,088	1,910	142
Morgan -----	1,644	1,652	1,528	1,573	68
Noble -----	1,249	1,257	1,198	1,257	48
Ohio -----	505	465	505	104	379
Orange -----	1,116	614	1,207	49	606
Owen -----	1,223	1,066	1,239	487	586
Parke -----	1,331	1,682	1,283	1,494	192
Perry -----	1,047	742	1,066	96	632
Pike -----	802	608	772	80	574
Porter -----	704	997	614	847	10
Posey -----	1,750	833	1,819	306	625
Pulaski -----	577	356	557	341	27
Putnam -----	1,937	1,766	1,882	1,345	423
Randolph -----	1,233	1,901	1,253	2,042	59
Ripley -----	1,721	1,579	1,661	1,425	184
Rush -----	1,707	1,827	1,685	1,644	83
Scott -----	710	557	693	278	264
Shelby -----	2,053	1,604	2,075	1,510	142
Spencer -----	1,295	1,083	1,260	235	808

County	Willard	Morton	Buchanan	Fremont	Fillmore
Starke -----	177	132	155	112	7
Steuben -----	546	1,133	553	1,215	19
St. Joseph -----	1,460	1,789	1,509	1,812	6
Sullivan -----	1,618	639	1,650	257	397
Switzerland ----	1,133	1,127	1,121	228	1,040
Tippecanoe ----	2,335	2,659	2,307	2,778	45
Tipton -----	687	558	738	546	14
Union -----	741	773	710	763	19
Vanderburg ----	1,747	1,167	1,880	372	840
Vermillion ----	837	943	824	866	80
Vigo -----	1,901	1,811	1,808	1,165	883
Wabash -----	1,168	1,725	1,096	1,785	108
Warren -----	790	1,136	767	1,167	76
Warrick -----	1,409	554	1,506	107	480
Washington ----	1,643	1,021	1,778	331	691
Wayne -----	1,994	3,371	1,958	3,688	100
Wells -----	890	733	931	726	16
White -----	762	744	746	703	42
Whitely -----	858	783	851	797	57
Total -----	117,981	112,139	118,672	94,376	22,386

The Americans supported the Republican nominees for congress and the Fusion carried five out of the eleven districts.<sup>118</sup>

The results of the election disproved the assertion that the Americans had not supported Morton in October. Buchanan received but 691 votes more than Willard. Morton received 17,763 votes more than Fremont. The Fillmore vote of 22,386 had evidently been subtracted from the strength of Morton, not of Willard. In twenty counties of southern Indiana<sup>119</sup> the Willard and Buchanan strength remained practically the same, 25,761 and 26,528. Morton received 18,536 votes in the same counties, which was approximately the sum of the number polled by Fillmore, 13,229, and Fremont, 6,038. A study of the figures in some counties gives even more interesting results. In Daviess county Fremont polled but 26 votes; the 912 of Morton must have come from the 939 received by

<sup>118</sup> Indianapolis *Journal*, November 6, 1856.

<sup>119</sup> Floyd, Clark, Harrison, Washington, Crawford, Scott, Orange, Ohio, Switzerland, Vanderburgh, Knox, Daviess, Posey, Gibson, Warrick, Owen, Sullivan, Lawrence Monroe and Martin.

Fillmore. In Ohio county Morton had received 465 votes; Fillmore received 370, and Fremont 104, while Buchanan and Willard polled the same number, 505. A study of the figures in Clark, Floyd, Gibson, Harrison, Spencer, Orange, or any county where there was an appreciable American element, leads to but one conclusion, namely, the supporters of Morton were those of Fremont plus those of Fillmore.

It is a question whether or not the presence of the American ticket in the campaign led to the loss of the state for Fremont. The *Louisville Journal*, a South American organ, claimed that the Fillmore party performed a service by defeating a sectional party in the state. Many supporters of Fillmore in Indiana believed the same thing.<sup>120</sup> From the radical wing of the Republicans came the statement that if they had not shown so much deference to Know Nothingism and had made a bold fight in southern Indiana instead of abandoning it to Fillmore, the state would have been saved for Fremont.<sup>121</sup> But Buchanan received a majority over both candidates of 1,910. The question arises also that even if the American ticket had been withdrawn according to the scheme referred to above, would the pure Americans of the river counties and the "Pocket" have voted for the "abolitionist," Fremont? It is not probable.

The *New Albany Tribune* and the moderate Americans generally laid the responsibility for the loss of the second great battle of the People upon the ultra fanaticism of the *Indianapolis Journal* and other papers that bore the stamp of sectionalism.<sup>122</sup>

The American party as a factor in national politics ended with this campaign, its first and last. Fillmore received a large vote, but carried the single state of Maryland with its eight electoral votes. For some time it remained a factor in Indiana state politics, but with ever decreasing importance. American sentiment lingered in the southern portion of the state until, in the face of the question of union or disunion, it disappeared.

<sup>120</sup> *Indianapolis Journal*, November 10, 1856.

<sup>121</sup> Julian, *Speeches*, 134.

<sup>122</sup> *Indianapolis Journal*, November 14, 1856.

## DECLINE OF THE AMERICAN PARTY

There remains the task of tracing the fortunes of the remnant of the American party which still persisted in southern Indiana, nominally at least a factor in local politics. It was recognized that their importance as a power in politics was gone, and evidence of the fact was not lacking.

The American Union club, as the Fillmore club of Indianapolis was called, announced that it would support Thomas E. Holbrook for mayor, and John D. Perrine for clerk, at the city election, which was to be held November 22, 1856. The former declined to run, but Perrine received 73 votes.<sup>1</sup> In practically the same territory Fillmore had received 152 votes, which showed a falling off of over half from his strength.<sup>2</sup> The Americans supported the Republican candidate for mayor, who was successful. This was the only time the Americans ever contested a city election in Indianapolis.

The Americans in the state legislature acted and voted generally with the Republicans, but in some instances with the Democrats.<sup>3</sup> Although but few in number, their support was essential to the Republicans. This was especially true in the Senate, where the Americans and the Anti-Lecompton Democrats held the balance of power. In the election of United States senators the Fillmore men in the house cast two votes for George G. Dunn and Richard W. Thompson. In the senate the Americans acted with the Republicans by refusing to go into a joint session. The result was the election of two Democratic senators, Graham N. Fitch and Jesse D. Bright, although there was no quorum present.<sup>4</sup>

The American newspapers began an agitation for a state convention in order to determine the course they should pursue in regard to state and national policy.<sup>5</sup> In response to the demand the state central committee issued a call for a con-

<sup>1</sup> Indianapolis *Journal*, November 17, 20, 25, 26, 1856.

<sup>2</sup> Indianapolis *Journal*, November 10, 1856.

<sup>3</sup> Indianapolis *Sentinel*, April 21, 1857; Terre Haute *Union*, April 25, 1857.

<sup>4</sup> Indianapolis *Journal*, January 7, February 5, 6, 1857.

<sup>5</sup> Indianapolis *Sentinel*, January 28, 1857; New Albany *Tribune*, January 28, 1857.

vention to be held at Indianapolis February 17, 1857.<sup>6</sup> In some instances, as at Terre Haute, delegates were appointed by American mass meetings, but generally no primary was necessary. Every member choosing to go was recognized as a delegate.<sup>7</sup>

A scanty handful of delegates answered the call and appeared in the supreme court room on the day designated. An organization was there effected and a committee on resolutions appointed, consisting of R. W. Thompson, Milton Gregg, P. S. Sage, Zalmon Tousey, and Lewis Holmes, after which the convention adjourned to the hall of the house of representatives.<sup>8</sup> There Colonel William E. White, of Aurora, was appointed president, with William H. Gregory, of the *Rising Sun Visitor*, and F. Y. Carlisle, of the *Evansville Journal*, secretaries.<sup>9</sup> After addresses by R. W. Thompson and Milton Gregg, a series of resolutions was reported by the committee. This platform declared for the preservation of the Union; opposed all interference with the institutions of the states, but at the same time opposed the further extension of slavery; favored internal improvements and a protective tariff; would limit suffrage and office-holding to citizens; and opposed foreign influence, religious or political, with the affairs of this government.<sup>10</sup> After the adoption of this platform the body adjourned. This convention represented the last effort at united action by the Americans in Indiana. It accomplished nothing, but displayed their weakness. It excited little interest and but few mass meetings were held to ratify its work.<sup>11</sup>

The national council assembled at Louisville, June 2, 1857. The executive committee of the Indiana state council had met at Indianapolis in May and appointed a number of delegates,

<sup>6</sup> *Indianapolis Journal*, January 31, 1857; *Brookville Indiana American*, January 30, 1857.

<sup>7</sup> *Terre Haute Union*, February 3, 1857; *New Albany Tribune*, February 25, 1857.

<sup>8</sup> *Indianapolis Journal*, February 18, 1857; *New Albany Ledger*, February 25, 1857; *Wabash Intelligencer*, February 25, 1857; *Brookville Indiana American*, February 27, 1857.

<sup>9</sup> *New Albany Tribune*, February 25, 1857; *Indianapolis Sentinel*, February 18, 1857.

<sup>10</sup> *Indianapolis Journal*, February 18, 1857; *Terre Haute Union*, February 19, 1857.

<sup>11</sup> *New Albany Tribune*, March 31, 1857.

perhaps two from each congressional district.<sup>12</sup> How many of those attended is uncertain, as mention is made of R. W. Thompson only. He, however, played a very prominent part in the convention as one of the principal speakers and a member of the committee on resolutions.<sup>13</sup> The usefulness of the national council had ended with the defeat of Fillmore, so the members now decided to adjourn it forever. A new plan of organization was adopted in which there was no provision for a grand council. The party in each state and territory was left to organize as it saw fit. The national officers were elected for the ensuing year and a national central committee of thirteen was provided for, with power to reconvene the council if the need for it arose.<sup>14</sup> On June 3 the council adjourned, and as it never met again, its career came to an end, after a life of but three years.

With the national and state organizations defunct the American party was, as the *New Albany Tribune* said, "dead if not damned." It was regarded as a thing of the past. Some of its chief organs, as the *Vevay Reveille*, dropped politics and concluded to be neutral.<sup>15</sup> The election of 1857, in which Kentucky and Tennessee were both lost, demonstrated that their political power was gone. With the exception of a few city officers in New Albany and Jeffersonville, the Americans won no successes in the city elections of 1857. Even in the former place, the center of Know Nothingism in the state, some of their candidates were defeated.<sup>16</sup>

The Americans felt themselves helpless. Fortunately there would be no important election until the next year, 1858, so there was no motive for immediate action. The best policy, as they felt, was to remain quiet, watch the movements of parties and strike at the first favorable opportunity.<sup>17</sup> In some quarters a union with the Republicans was favorably considered. Certainly neither party would relinquish its

<sup>12</sup> *Terre Haute Union*, May 30, 1857; *New Albany Tribune*, June 1, 1857.

<sup>13</sup> *Indianapolis Journal*, June 4, 6, 1857; *Terre Haute Union*, June 4, 7-8, 1857.

<sup>14</sup> *New Albany Tribune*, June 4-5, 1857; *Terre Haute Union*, June 3-9, 1857.

<sup>15</sup> *Indianapolis Sentinel*, June 29, 1857.

<sup>16</sup> *New Albany Tribune*, May 8, 1857, June 26, 1858.

<sup>17</sup> *New Albany Tribune*, May 6, 1857.

cherished principles for the sake of a coalition, but the platform of the old Whig party was put forward by Milton Gregg as a common ground upon which all might unite.<sup>18</sup> But however favorable the more liberal Americans might be toward a union, those of Vigo were not disposed to any fusion, but believed in sticking to straight American principles. At a meeting at Terre Haute in May, 1857, resolutions were adopted not to affiliate with any party, to make no nominations, to leave each American voter to act as he saw fit; and, in Vigo, the party would resume action in a national or state canvass.<sup>19</sup> Likewise the American party in Lafayette refused to affiliate with the Republicans.<sup>20</sup>

Non-attention to the slavery question was made the leading issue of Americanism.<sup>21</sup> They purposed to establish a party having a higher mission than to excite hatred between north and south. Slavery, where it existed, or in the District of Columbia, or the interstate slave trade, did not concern the free states. The policy of the Americans was to take the question out of congress and out of political contests; to let it alone entirely. To uphold those principles the party would refuse to unite with any sectional party. Such was their stand as expressed by R. W. Thompson.<sup>22</sup> The *Terre Haute Union*, now the chief organ of the straight Americans, lamented the fact that so many had fallen away from those principles. The third degree had been adopted to get rid of the slavery question, and many had bound themselves by the oath to let it alone. "Some have remained true to the pledge. Where are the remainder? Echo answers—where?"<sup>23</sup> Upon the question of the right of congress to legislate upon the slavery question the Americans disagreed. The *New Albany Tribune* opposed the stand of the Vigo Americans and held that it had constitutional right to do so.<sup>24</sup>

The Republicans were divided upon the question of conciliating the Americans. The feeling of the majority was

<sup>18</sup> *New Albany Tribune*, November 16, 1857.

<sup>19</sup> *Madison Courier*, April 22, 1857; *Terre Haute Union*, May 2, 1857.

<sup>20</sup> *Terre Haute Union*, May 5, 1857.

<sup>21</sup> *Terre Haute Union*, August 19, September 2, October 3, 6, 23, 1857.

<sup>22</sup> *Indianapolis Sentinel*, April 29, 1858.

<sup>23</sup> *Terre Haute Union*, October 3, 1857.

<sup>24</sup> *New Albany Tribune*, April 6, 1858.

that they had conceded too much in the past. Accusations were still made that the Americans had double-crossed them in the election of 1856 and were still in active alliance with the Democrats.<sup>25</sup> The Fillmore men were said to show even less feeling than many Democrats against the Lecompton swindle.<sup>26</sup> A majority of the Republican papers called for a straight out Republican convention to nominate candidates for the state campaign of 1858. Very few proposed another fusion convention.<sup>27</sup>

The Republican convention was held at Indianapolis, March 4, 1858. No tenders were made to the Americans to attend, and while the convention was full of former Know Nothings, they were present as full-fledged Republicans.<sup>28</sup>

Not a single concession on the ticket was made to the Americans, although a fair ratio would have given them one or probably two of the nine candidates, and no plank was incorporated in the platform that hinted of Americanism.<sup>29</sup> Quite unlike the convention of 1854, naturalized Germans took prominent parts and a German and an Englishman were placed upon the ticket. It was evidently more profitable to bid for the foreign than the nativist vote.

Although the Americans had received little or no consideration from the convention, the *New Albany Tribune* believed that the principles avowed could be supported by them. Milton Gregg decided to work for the election of the ticket and called upon the Americans to do so. But their support should be given as individuals; as a party they should not commit themselves.<sup>30</sup> The party virtually took this position in the campaign.

A few local elections were held in the spring of 1858. The Americans won partial victories in New Albany, Terre Haute, and other towns of southern Indiana, but the trend even there showed they were still losing strength.<sup>31</sup>

<sup>25</sup> *Indianapolis Journal*, May 5, 1857; *Franklin Republican*, April 3, 1857.

<sup>26</sup> *Indianapolis Journal*, February 9, 1858.

<sup>27</sup> *Madison Courier*, April 22, 1857.

<sup>28</sup> *New Albany Ledger*, September 15, 1858; *Indianapolis Journal*, March 5, 1858.

<sup>29</sup> *New Albany Ledger*, March 24, 1858.

<sup>30</sup> *New Albany Tribune*, April 6, 1858.

<sup>31</sup> *New Albany Ledger*, April 14, 1858; *Indianapolis Journal*, May 7-8, 1858; *Indianapolis Sentinel*, May 6-7, 1856.



Know Nothingism had fallen into disrepute in central and northern Indiana by 1858. The term became one of opprobrium and to prove that a candidate was a "Know Nothing of 1854" would hurt his chances for election.<sup>32</sup>

The Know Nothings in 1858 were looked upon with somewhat the same disfavor as were the Harford convention Federalists in 1830.

The American party of Terre Haute held a meeting March 29, 1858, to determine which of the two state tickets they should support.<sup>33</sup> Under the influence of R. W. Thompson and William K. Edwards they took a conservative, national stand and did not commit themselves to the support of either state ticket. An American state convention to be held at Indianapolis, July 2, was suggested, but as there was little enthusiasm in the American cause no notice was taken of the proposal.

In other parts of the state the desire to defeat the Lecompton Democrats made the Americans more favorable toward fusion. In Ohio, Switzerland, Spencer, and other counties they united with the Republicans upon their candidates.<sup>34</sup> In other counties, such as Clay and Lawrence, the opposition put both Americans and Republicans upon a joint ticket.

Further testimony of the more liberal spirit pervading Americanism is furnished by the fact that the Seymour *Times* recommended the support of the opposition state ticket, even though there were some citizens of foreign birth or descent upon it.<sup>35</sup>

In the same spirit the New Albany *Tribune* hoped that no American would scratch Judge Otto merely because he was of German blood.<sup>36</sup>

The Democrats who had joined the Know Nothing councils in 1854 had generally gone back to their own party. W. M. Ray, the Lecompton candidate for congress in the Sixth district, had been a Know Nothing.<sup>37</sup>

<sup>32</sup> Indianapolis *Journal*, April 1, 13, 23, 28, May 1, 5, 8, 1858.

<sup>33</sup> New Albany *Ledger*, March 31, April 7, 1858; New Albany *Tribune*, April 6, 14, 1858.

<sup>34</sup> Indianapolis *Journal*, July 30, September 15, 1858; New Albany *Ledger*, July 28, 1858; Madison *Courier*, September 17, 1858.

<sup>35</sup> Indianapolis *Journal*, October 9, 1858.

<sup>36</sup> New Albany *Tribune*, October 12, 1858.

<sup>37</sup> Indianapolis *Journal*, August 23, 1858.

The combined efforts of the Republicans, Americans, and anti-Lecompton Democrats succeeded in electing eight out of eleven congressmen, but the state ticket was defeated.<sup>38</sup> The combination elected one American state senator, Benjamin Robinson, of Ohio and Switzerland, and at least six Americans to the house, namely, William K. Edwards and John P. Baird, of Vigo; James E. Blythe, of Vanderburg; R. Boyd, of Lawrence; William H. Gregory, of Ohio and Switzerland, and Smith Jones, of Bartholomew.<sup>39</sup> Some local victories were won by the Americans in Lawrence county and elsewhere, but as a separate party they usually ran third.<sup>40</sup>

A study of the vote in those counties where the Americans were strong shows that they had voted almost unanimously for the opposition ticket.<sup>41</sup> The success of the Republicans and Americans brought out pleas for a closer union from the *New Albany Tribune*. Now that the platform of the two parties was almost the same, there was no necessity for their remaining apart. The lesson of the election should not be lost.<sup>42</sup>

The Americans and Republicans in the legislature could do little, as they were in the minority. William H. Gregory, American-Republican from Ohio county, introduced a bill contemplating an amendment to the state constitution that would limit the right of suffrage to those who are citizens of the United States either by birth or naturalization. Such a bill

<sup>38</sup> *New Albany Tribune*, October 15-16, 1858.

<sup>39</sup> *Indianapolis Sentinel*, October 19, 27, 1858; January 7, 1859; *Madison Courier*, December 27, 1858.

<sup>40</sup> The falling off of the American vote is shown by the vote in Spencer county, where Fillmore had polled 808 votes. In 1858 the vote on county treasurer stood: Lecompton, 986; Anti-Lecompton, 882; American, 216. For sheriff: Lecompton, 814; Anti-Lecompton, 770; American, 426; Republican, 86. From the *Rockport Democrat*, February 4, 1860.

<sup>41</sup> For example the vote of the following counties taken at random from among those where the Americans were numerous, shows that the vote for Peele, the Opposition candidate for secretary of state, is the sum of the vote for Fremont in 1856, plus that for Fillmore.

County	Fremont	Fillmore	Peele
Floyd -----	228	1262	1534
Harrison -----	773	623	1340
Switzerland -----	228	1040	1129
Ohio -----	104	379	425

See the *New Albany Ledger*, November 4, 1858.

<sup>42</sup> *New Albany Tribune*, October 15, 20, 1858; *Madison Courier*, November 17, 1858.

had been introduced in the legislature of 1855, but as in that case, nothing was done with it.<sup>43</sup>

Throughout the year 1859 the Americans were maneuvering for a recognition which the Republicans were unwilling to concede. While sympathizing with the aims of the latter party, they stood aloof and watched the progress of events. The Americans would continue to pursue a policy of masterly inactivity because the Republicans were too sectional. Yet harmonious action was necessary because the latter could not succeed without American aid. If the Republican party would pursue a more liberal policy and plant itself upon a platform upon which all the elements of the opposition could stand, the Americans gave assurance of hearty co-operation. Such a combination would be necessary to carry Indiana and the few other doubtful states which were necessary for success.<sup>44</sup>

Without a distinct renunciation of some of the leading objects of Republicanism, and a stop to the agitation of the slavery question by the Republicans, there can be no union—no coalition with the elements of the opposition,

was the stand of the *Evansville Journal*. The Americans would insist that all useless agitation should cease and that extreme views should be repudiated. On the other hand, they would just as firmly resist the aggressions of the slave power and they repudiated the heresy that the constitution carried slavery into the territories.<sup>45</sup>

The Americans, in the belief that they held the balance of power in the state, threatened to put out a separate ticket unless the Republicans gave them and the old Whigs some recognition in the state convention. The *New Albany Tribune* formulated a series of demands which represented the views of the Americans. They were as follows:

1. That an 'Opposition' convention be called in which Republicans, Americans and Whigs shall participate, fully, freely, and fairly.

<sup>43</sup> *New Albany Tribune*, December 14, 1858. Mention is made in the *Indianapolis Sentinel*, February 4-5, 1859, of a convention supposed to have been held at Indianapolis, February 3, of Americans, Whigs and conservative men. The *Sentinel* says that the convention must have been small for its reporter could not find it. Whether such a convention or meeting was ever held is uncertain for there is no other mention of it anywhere.

<sup>44</sup> *New Albany Tribune*, January 25, 1859.

<sup>45</sup> *New Albany Tribune*, April 21, 1859.

2. That no man entertaining ultra views upon the slavery question shall be nominated for any office.
3. That the platform adopted shall be national, and not sectional—conservative and not radical.
4. That the delegates to the National Convention shall be instructed to vote for Bates, Bell or Corwin for President.<sup>46</sup>

The Americans demanded to enter the partnership upon equal terms or not at all. If the Republicans merely gave them and the Whigs a cold invitation to participate in a "Republican" convention, there would be no fusion and the success of the Democrats was assured.

The first demand of the *Tribune* was complied with. A "Mass State Convention" was summoned to meet at Indianapolis, February 22, 1860. The term Republican was studiously avoided. The call was signed by Thomas C. Slaughter, of Harrison, and Godlove O. Behm, of Tippecanoe, both Know Nothings of 1854.<sup>47</sup> The Americans responded generally to the call. In Ohio county the first Fusion convention since 1854 was held to send delegates to the state convention. The *Rising Sun Visitor* said:

In this state we are glad to perceive that the Republicans have been growing more liberal, while the Americans, knowing that there is no affinity between them and the Democrats, are now willing to stand upon common grounds with the Republicans.<sup>48</sup>

The Americans hoped to be represented upon the ticket by one or possibly two candidates. The *Terre Haute Union* suggested R. W. Thompson as a suitable candidate for governor. While he might not be acceptable to the radical Republicans, he would gain many conservative votes.<sup>49</sup> William H. Gregory, of *Rising Sun*, was to be supported by the Americans for secretary of state.<sup>50</sup> But as the convention drew near the Americans began to doubt that they would be given any consideration. The *New Albany Tribune* complained that Gregory had received no support; only straight Republicans had a

<sup>46</sup> *New Albany Tribune*, December 31, 1859.

<sup>47</sup> *New Albany Tribune*, January 13, 1860.

<sup>48</sup> *Madison Courier*, February 16, 1860.

<sup>49</sup> *New Albany Tribune*, February 28, 1859.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid*, Jan 24, 1860.

chance; the Republican leaders were preparing to control the convention; and the American delegation would be wholly powerless.<sup>51</sup>

The ticket nominated by the convention was but partially acceptable to the Americans, according to the *Tribune*.<sup>52</sup> Henry S. Lane would receive their cordial support for governor, but they had no use for Oliver P. Morton, a Loco-Foco. Because William H. Gregory, the American choice, had received no consideration from the convention, his successful opponent, W. H. Peele, of Randolph, could not be supported. Albert Lange, of Vigo, and Jonathan S. Harvey, of Clark, might expect American votes. But the candidate that saved the ticket was James G. Jones, of Vanderburg, a "Bloody K. N." Fillmore elector of 1856, and a firm and consistent American, who was nominated for attorney-general. The Republicans overshot their mark, however, when they attempted to convert Americans into Republicans by wholesale. The nominees of an "Opposition" convention were labelled a "Republican" ticket.<sup>53</sup>

The American party, by contesting neither the state nor national elections, lost its identity and disappeared during the campaign. Its members were merged into other parties and the issues of Americanism were swallowed up by the greater ones of slavery and secession.

Those who still sought to escape the slavery question took refuge in the Constitutional Union movement which originated in the first months of 1860.<sup>54</sup> The membership of this party consisted almost entirely of former Americans. The machinery of the American party in Indiana became that of the Constitutional Union party.

A. H. Davidson, chairman of the American executive committee in 1856, called a meeting of the general committee of the Constitutional Union party to be held at Indianapolis, April 12, 1860. True, his action was somewhat presumptive, for the new party was not identical with the old American

<sup>51</sup> New Albany *Tribune*, February 7, 1860.

<sup>52</sup> New Albany *Tribune*, February 28, 1860; Madison *Courier*, March 14, 1860.

<sup>53</sup> New Albany *Tribune*, February 28, 1860.

<sup>54</sup> New Albany *Tribune*, February 2, 1860.

party, according to the *New Albany Tribune*.<sup>55</sup> A number of former Americans answered the call. The convention selected delegates to attend the Baltimore national convention,<sup>56</sup> most of whom have been mentioned as members of the American party, namely, R. W. Thompson, of Vigo; J. J. Hayden, of Ohio; Samuel Hall, of Gibson; John W. Wright, of Switzerland; Marcellus Calvert, of Ohio; John A. Bridgeland, of Wayne; A. H. Davidson, of Marion; Samuel S. Early, of Vigo; Dr. M. Herndon, of Montgomery; John P. Early, of Laporte; and John W. Dawson, of Allen.<sup>57</sup> The executive central committee likewise consisted largely of former Americans, as follows: Lewis Howes, of Vanderburg; Dennis Gregg, of Floyd; J. D. Thomasson, of Lawrence; J. J. Hayden, of Ohio; A. H. Davidson, chairman, H. O'Neal, and W. H. Wright, of Marion; James L. Bradley, of Johnson; Walter S. Cooper, of Vigo; Dr. C. W. Prather, of Montgomery; John P. Early, of Laporte; and J. McNutt Smith, of Allen.

The *Rising Sun Visitor* and the *Seymour Times*, two of the few remaining American papers, refused to support the Bell-Everett movement on the ground that it would merely serve to divide the opposition and keep the Democrats in power.<sup>58</sup>

The state convention of the new party was held at Indianapolis, August 15, 1860. Among the old Americans present were: A. H. Davidson and Zalmon Tousey, of Marion; J. J. Hayden, of Ohio; J. D. Thomasson, of Lawrence; Captain Meekin and Dennis Gregg, of Floyd; F. Y. Carlisle and J. E. Blythe, of Vanderburg; R. W. Thompson and W. K. Edwards, of Vigo. An electoral ticket and a platform were put out, but no state ticket was nominated.<sup>59</sup>

Most of the American leaders went into the new party, but not all. David T. Laird became a Democrat and was a candi-

<sup>55</sup> *New Albany Tribune*, April 25, 1860. The *Tribune* was now a Republican paper.

<sup>56</sup> *Indianapolis Journal*, April 12, 1860; *New Albany Tribune*, April 18, 1860.

<sup>57</sup> But two delegates attended the convention and only R. W. Thompson played a prominent part there. He was one of the vice-presidents and a member of the committee on resolutions. See *Indianapolis Journal*, May 10, 1860.

<sup>58</sup> *Indianapolis Journal*, May 22, 1860; *Madison Courier*, May 30, 1860.

<sup>59</sup> *Indianapolis Journal*, July 12, August 16, 1860; *Indianapolis Sentinel*, August 16, 1860; *Rockport Democrat*, August 18, 1860.

date for representative of Spencer county.<sup>60</sup> The Douglas Democrats, who had combined with the Americans in certain southern states, made persistent efforts to secure American support in Indiana, but met with little success.<sup>61</sup> R. W. Thompson was opposed to any such union on the ground that it would swallow up Americanism.

The Americans in many portions of the state came out for Lincoln.<sup>62</sup> The New Albany *Tribune* advised Fillmore men to vote for Lincoln because he opposed negro equality or interference with slavery in the District of Columbia; opposed the extension of slave territory; and favored the enforcement of the fugitive slave law.<sup>63</sup>

At the state election, which came in October, the Americans supported the Opposition ticket almost unanimously, as the vote of the various counties shows. Taking those counties where the Americans had polled a large vote in 1856, the result in 1860 shows that Lane received a vote approximately equal to that of both Fremont and Fillmore, while Hendricks received practically the same as Willard. The greater portion of Lane's vote in southern Indiana must have come from former Americans.<sup>64</sup>

The Constitutional Union party polled but 5,306 votes in the entire state, practically all of which came from the American districts. This party's strength in 1860 was in each county about twenty-five per cent of the American strength in 1856. This leads to but one conclusion—the Constitutional Unionists were practically all former Americans and about one-fourth of the Fillmore vote went to Bell and Everett.

<sup>60</sup> Rockport *Democrat*, July 21, 1860.

<sup>61</sup> Madison *Courier*, October 3, 10, 1860; Indianapolis *Journal*, August 8-9, 1860.

<sup>62</sup> Indianapolis *Journal*, June 6, 1860.

<sup>63</sup> New Albany *Tribune*, June 11, 1860.

<sup>64</sup> For example compare the following:

County	Fremont	Fillmore	Lane
Clark .....	492	1074	1578
Dubois .....	21	236	234
Floyd .....	228	1262	1676
Harrison .....	773	623	1691
Lawrence .....	480	660	1272
Ohio .....	104	379	464
Posey .....	306	625	993
Switzerland .....	228	1040	1081

See the Indianapolis *Journal*, December 4, 1860, for the official vote of all counties.

In the presidential election in November Lincoln made tremendous gains over the Fremont vote in southern Indiana. Three-fourths of the Fillmore men must have voted for him. The old Know Nothings of 1854 were becoming Republicans in 1860. The figures for the election show this conclusively. While the combined vote of Douglas and Breckenridge varied little from that of Buchanan, the Lincoln and Bell vote equaled that of Fremont and Fillmore, but the proportions were reversed.<sup>65</sup>

Most of the Know Nothings of 1854, as we have seen, sooner or later found their way into the Republican party. Those with the most pronounced anti-slavery views had followed Orth, Colfax, and Cumbach, in the first secession, which came after the introduction of the third degree and the adoption of the "twelfth section" platform in 1855. The long alliance with the Republicans in the Fusion movements, 1854-60, made the step easier after the defeat of Fillmore. Those who still remained too conservative went to the Republicans by the way of the Constitutional Union party. Among the last were many of the leaders, including R. W. Thompson, who became active and prominent as a Republican.

Thus the Know Nothing party passed quietly out of existence. Its career had been as stormy as it had been brief. But the Know Nothings were not to blame, for they must be judged by the standards of the time. They engaged in riots, but this was the period of Civil war in Kansas and of John Brown's raid. Politics never were more bitter than in those years, 1854-60. They hated their opponents and were as cordially hated in return.

It is difficult to justify their principles. But as it is still

<sup>65</sup> The result in the following counties is illustrative:

County	Fremont	Fillmore	Lincoln	Bell
Clark -----	492	1074	1369	316
Dubois -----	21	236	301	20
Floyd -----	228	1262	1151	320
Harrison -----	773	623	1593	17
Lawrence -----	480	660	1158	208
Ohio -----	104	379	301	174
Orange -----	49	606	849	85
Pike -----	80	574	894	39
Posey -----	306	625	1055	168
Switzerland -----	228	1040	734	510

See the *Indianapolis Journal*, December 14, 1860, for the vote in all counties.



possible to arouse religious prejudice and the fear of "pauper foreigners," can we wonder that in those trying times our countrymen became alarmed? There are still believers in great conspiracies.

The most repellant feature of the organization was its secret political method. Such methods are certainly incompatible with Democratic ideals. They can be justified only in the case of a downtrodden people struggling for their rights.

The Know Nothing order left but a slight impress upon our politics or institutions. It served as a demonstration that any attempt at ecclesiastical control would be successfully resisted. In the same way it was a protest against immigrants who refuse to become Americanized—by no means a dead issue in this day of the "hyphenated" American. The Know Nothing movement served as a convenient means to bridge over the gap made by the disappearance of the Whig party until the time was ripe for the appearance of the Republican party. The long association with the latter party, and the fact that most of the northern Know Nothings later joined it, was a great factor in determining the policy of that party with respect to the period of naturalization.

In conclusion we may say that the sincerity of the men who joined the order of the Star-Spangled Banner can not be questioned. They believed that they were combatting great dangers which threatened our freedom and they made use of the means which seemed most likely to insure success.