

Personal Politics in Indiana 1816-1840

ADAM A. LEONARD

(Continued)

THE REACTION AND THE RISE OF THE WHIGS

The reign of terror, among office holders, instituted by Jackson had been anticipated by Indiana politicians more than a year before it began. The Terre Haute *Register* feared it, but the *Western Sun and General Advertiser* saw good reason for it. It said in reply to the *Register*:

Certainly there are many offices which cannot have the least bearing on the measures of the general government. But with some offices it is otherwise. As to such, perhaps distinction as to party, might now with propriety be made.¹

This feeling apparently was general among the followers of Jackson and no doubt the hope of appointment caused them to put forth more energy to secure a victory than otherwise they would. Jackson's declaration in January before he came into office, that

he has never been, and never would be the cause of the least heart burning, but when slander was resorted to, the country ransacked for secret tales and those promulgated to injure the feelings and character of anyone those capable of such conduct ought to be condemned by all high-minded, honest and honorable men,²

came as a welcome bit of information to them. The people of the state were made aware of what they were to expect, when in the first month of his administration Jackson dismissed Gen. William Henry Harrison, as minister to Columbia and appointed Thomas P. Moore. The memory of the Battle of Tippecanoe made Harrison a popular hero in the state and his dismissal brought a storm of protest. The *Western Sun*

¹ Feb. 16, 1828.

² *Western Sun and General Advertiser* Jan. 24, 1829.

*and General Advertiser*³ regretted the protests and thought that they could never be necessary in a good cause, and were in almost every case to be avoided, and saw in the fact that More had met almost unanimous abuse at the hands of the Adams party, an evidence of his qualifications and merit. The subject continued to be the basis of political controversy throughout the early months of the summer.⁴ The new administration was scarcely installed in office until Jackson began to reward the party leaders in the state. Gen. Jonathan McCarty, one of the Jackson electors in 1824, was made superintendent of the national road,⁵ while Samuel Judah, who wrote the platform declarations of the Jacksonian convention of 1824 and 1828, was made United States district attorney, vice Charles Dewey who had been removed,⁶ and Henry S. Handy, one of Judah's associates on the committee, was made postmaster at Salem instead of Dr. Bradley who had been removed.⁷ The *Indiana Palladium* saw better times ahead for editors because of the large numbers of them who were appointed to office.⁸ Throughout the year wholesale dismissals from office continued and each dismissal was followed by the appointment of a radical partisan. Partisan postmasters went into office in all towns the size of Vernon, Noblesville, Connersville, and Bloomington.⁹ The appointment at Rising Sun caused a bitter local controversy that ran throughout the summer.¹⁰ The list of appointees included Samuel Judah, William Hurst, John D. Wolvertson, James P. Drake, Arthur St. Clair, Israel T. Canby, Robert Breckenridge, Samuel Milroy, Jonathan McCarty, William Lewis, and many other prominent partisans.

The policy of removals was met by a universal condemnation by the old Adams and Clay adherents that at once put the Jacksonians on the defensive. This was the first time in their existence that they had had any policy other than one

³ April 4, 1829.

⁴ *Ibid.*, May 2, 1829.

⁵ *Indiana Palladium*, April 4, 1829.

⁶ *Western Sun and General Advertiser*, May 8, 1829.

⁷ *Ibid.*, May 20, 1829.

⁸ April 25, 1829.

⁹ *Western Sun*, June and July, 1829.

¹⁰ *Indiana Palladium*, July and August numbers, 1829.

¹¹ *Western Sun and General Advertiser*, April 24, 1830.

(No. 11 is omitted in text.)

of opposition. They regarded themselves as political reformers and attempted to justify the system of removals on the pretext of necessary reform. The *Western Sun* gave the clearest statement of conditions to be found. It said:¹² The various newspapers arrayed in opposition to the administration of General Jackson labored continually to mislead the public respecting those removals from office, which in the progress of that reform which is so essential to the prosperity and duration of our free institutions, the President has been compelled to make; the most inflammatory articles were circulated from one extremity of the union to the other; it was proper that correct information on the subject should be distributed, and proper that the whole business should be presented in its correct light and thenceforth a portion of that paper should be devoted to the subject. This declaration was followed by more than three columns devoted to an attempt to justify the removals. The next week in an editorial, it showed the general character of appointments and the characteristic method used by the ordinary politicians to justify the administration.

Horrible; an eastern editor complains that a certain postmaster has been removed and a shoemaker appointed in his place. It is monstrous in the estimation of the ruffled shirt man that a mechanic should be appointed to office. Only think what an enormity it is that a shoemaker should be appointed postmaster.¹³

The attempt to justify Jackson continued throughout the year, but apparently they did not satisfy the opposition. The removals continued the next year and the opposition became so strong that William Hendricks found it necessary to explain his position in making appointments.¹⁴ He had always opposed removals and believed them to be the chief cause of all the murmurings against the existing administration, but when he found the offices about to become vacant it was in his judgment his constitutional duty to vote that they should be filled if in all cases names of men of good moral character and qualifications were presented. The opposition to the policy never died out but was finally lost in the bank controversy and later,

¹² June 20, 1829.

¹³ June 27, 1829.

¹⁴ *Indiana Republican*, July 15, 1830, also *Western Sun*, July 3, 1830.

furnished one of the breakers upon which the Jacksonian party in the state was wrecked.

The questions of tariff and internal improvements that had been so prominent in the campaign proved to be mere political shadows, cast for the moment to secure votes. The Adams administration turned the question of internal improvements from a national to a state issue. By an act of congress approved March 2, 1827,¹⁵ the nation granted to the state, for the purpose of aiding to build a canal, uniting at navigable points the waters of the Maumee and Wabash rivers a strip of land one half of five sections wide on either side of the canal, and reserving alternate sections to be selected by a land commissioner under direction of the president. This placed the burden of responsibility upon the state, with the nation a mere auxiliary. The interest in internal improvements became greater. The state increased its activity to include not only canals, but turnpikes and railroads. For the next twelve years it continually increased its activity until the state went bankrupt and the system was brought to a sudden standstill in 1839-1840.¹⁶ The tariff question became a dead issue as soon as the election was over, so far as any political or economic effect was concerned. Ratliff Boon, the representative of the First district in congress was severely criticized for voting for a reduction of the sugar tariff.¹⁷

The fact that he had difficulty in justifying his position shows that O. H. Smith was right in his declaration, noticed elsewhere, that the tariff was understood by few. In fact, it is rather difficult today to understand why the people of the west should be so strongly in favor of a tariff where the effect upon them was so very remote. Had it not been that the Jacksonians needed an issue the tariff would have been almost an unknown thing in the west at this time. When it had served its purpose as a campaign issue it ceased to excite public attention.

The campaign for a second election of Jackson began almost as soon as he was in office. The Jacksonian newspapers expressed unusual satisfaction with his inaugural address. His

¹⁵ *United States Statutes at Large*, IV 236.

¹⁶ Logan Esarey, *Internal Improvements in Early Indiana*.

¹⁷ *Western Sun*, Mar. 12, and April 2 and 23, 1831.

administration was barely in good working order when it was announced that Jackson intended paying the public debt and giving the country its first real independence,¹⁸ at the same time the renomination and election of Jackson were predicted.¹⁹

With this prediction the principles of the Republican party were declared to be: The constitution truly defended; the payment of the national debt; the distribution of the surplus revenue; the requirement of a strict accountability from the subordinate officers of the government. It was rather remarkable that the issues of 1828 should not be noticed. The "Federalist" principles were given us: Internal local improvements at the expense of the nation; indefinite postponement of the payment of the national debt; a breach of the national faith with white citizens of the south to enable us to preserve the national faith with a remnant of uncivilized Indians. The energies of the Jacksonians were exerted to make the administration popular. A black-list of abuses that were committed under Adams but remedied under Jackson was published by the administration papers.²⁰ Jackson was again likened to Jefferson²¹ and the merits of the administration were discussed in open letters signed with fictitious names.

The attempts of the Anti-Jackson forces to discredit the administration began just as early and were just as vigorously prosecuted as were the attempts of the Jackson men to make the administration popular. The *Richmond Enquirer* complained:

let General Jackson take whatever course he pleases; he may now expect the most extravagant denunciation. War was declared against him on the very threshold and war he will have to the very knife.²²

The attacks on the spoils system, that began with the removal of General Harrison continued throughout the administration. There was a general feeling that the policy of removals would not continue long. The *Indiana Journal* thought that the practice of proscribing individuals would

¹⁸ *Western Sun*, Aug. 4, 1830

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, Aug. 21, 1830.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, Aug. 2, 9, 16, 1830.

²¹ *Ibid.*, Oct. 9, 1830.

²² *Ibid.*, Nov. 7, 1829.

grow odious as time and circumstances developed its true character; and that, unrelenting as the feelings of those were, whose ideas were contracted to the narrow sphere in which they had been accustomed to move they ought nevertheless to expect more candidness and a nearer approach to justice from aspirants of high pretensions elevated to the first place of honor in the government.²³ The *Madison Republican* thought that the Clay folks notwithstanding they were proscribed, so as not to be permitted even to pick the government crumbs, had a chance among the Jackson men.²⁴ The real concentrated opposition began in the latter half of the year 1831. On November 7 and 8 a convention of National Republicans met in Indianapolis.²⁵ Their preamble stated that the motive behind the convention was a desire to see the vital interests of domestic industry and internal improvement rescued from their present state of jeopardy and fostered and maintained with unabated zeal. They were especially desirous to witness a correct, honorable and successful administration of the general government. They declared that the captivating promises of retrenchment and reform in which the friends of General Jackson so copiously indulged previous to the last election had not been realized. They charged that the alleged abuses of the former administration had been copied and recopied so often by the present that if their number and magnitude had not destroyed the resemblance they should have been led to imagine that the defects of the administration of Mr. Adams had been selected as the models for that of General Jackson.

Among the examples they pointed out the fact that under the Adams administration one of the prominent subjects of complaint was the appointment of members of congress to office and the choosing of printers favorable to the administration to print the laws; and that foreign representatives were appointed without the sanction of the senate; while under the Jackson administration more members of congress were appointed to office, more partisan editors were given printing contracts than ever before and Jackson had not only

²³ November 5, 1831.

²⁴ February 2, 1832.

²⁵ Logansport, *Cass County Times*, November 23, 1831.

appointed officers without consulting the senate, but he had removed from office men who were appointed by a senate strongly favorable to Jackson and during recess in congress he had put into office men whose appointments the senate had refused to ratify while in session. It was charged that during his candidacy he declared for a single term for the president, and even after his election he had sent messages to congress recommending constitutional amendment to that effect, and now he had proven his inconsistency by declaring himself a candidate for a second term. They lamented and deplored the circumstance of cabinet dissolution. They condemned the action of the administration toward Georgia and the Indian troubles as disgraceful to a civilized people. They condemned the attacks of Jackson upon the banking system and finally recommended as a remedy for the evils, the political elevation of Henry Clay. They declared that they had numbers, a common interest, the voice of an immense majority of the people, and every tie of patriotism local and national on their side and that union and concert alone were lacking to insure the triumph of principle.

In their resolutions they declared protective tariff duties to be constitutional, expedient, and necessary to the prosperity and happiness of the people; that liberal encouragement of internal improvements was constitutionally expedient and necessary to the union of the states and the welfare of the people; that Henry Clay was preeminently calculated to redress existing grievances and to sustain the principles of their American system; that the most painful and successful opposition to the present administration could be centered upon him; that they approved of the proposed conventions of National Republicans at Baltimore in the next December and provided for the sending of three delegates.

They also appointed a correspondence committee of one member from each county. This committee was authorized to superintend the general interests of the National Republicans of the state to take such steps from time to time as in their opinion would promote the success of the cause in which they were engaged.

In nominating Clay at this time the Anti-Jackson men of Indiana were merely drifting with the political current in

both parties. The national convention had not yet attained a place in our political system and since the caucus was discredited the state nomination was the most far-reaching method of expressing a preference for a candidate. Clay had more than a year before been nominated by a convention at Hartford, Conn.²⁶ Jackson had been nominated by the Herkimer convention,²⁷ by the Alabama house of representatives,²⁸ by the New York assembly,²⁹ by the Democratic Republicans in Washington City,³⁰ and by the citizens of Louisville, Kentucky.³¹ Jackson had already announced that if offered the presidency for the second time he would not decline.³² The Ohio legislature had asked Jackson to be a candidate for a second term and he had answered that he felt it his duty to comply with the wishes of his friends.³³ Such a nomination then meant about the same as an instructed delegation to a modern nominating convention. It gave an indication of the wishes of the people, and gave direction to the work of the national conventions that were to meet later. With this convention of 1831 the political lines were drawn about the personalities of Jackson and Clay.

The only independent faction within the state was the Anti-Masons. They, like most minor parties, were ready to pay their respects to and receive concessions from the one of the larger parties that chanced to be out of favor. The first notice of them that we have in a political sense is copied from the *National Intelligencer* in the *Indiana Journal* of November 2, 1831. It calls them political *regraters*, accuses them of not being Anti-Masons at heart and insists that they are in that party as the road to political advancement. Later in the summer of 1831 they held a meeting in Hanover and appointed a committee composed of James A. Watson, Noble Butler, and Jesse H. Thompson to correspond with Henry Clay and find out his sentiments on the subject of masonry. This committee wrote to Clay under date of September 2, 1831.³⁴ They

²⁶ *Western Sun*, Oct. 22, 1830.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, Oct. 23, 1830.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, Dec. 11, 1830.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, June 18, 1831.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, June 25, 1831.

³¹ *Ibid.*, July 30, 1831.

³² *Ibid.*, Feb. 12, 1831.

³³ *Ibid.*, Mar. 19, 1831.

³⁴ *Western Sun*, Dec. 3, 1831, also *Indiana Journal*, Dec. 3, 1831.

told him that by some it was asserted that he was a mason of the highest order, while by others, it was claimed that he had been a mason but had left the society and was now opposed to it; they were unable to find out the truth of the matter, and as they were soon to vote for presidential electors, and as he was one of the candidates for the presidency they desired from him a frank and candid statement on the subject. Mr. Clay replied under date of October 8, 1831, that the constitution gave the executive no authority to interfere on the subject, therefore it must not be considered, and he would not express his personal opinion until it is shown him how the subject is one that the government must meet.³⁵ This reply of Clay's, while not in the least favorable to their desires, apparently ended the agitation. In a few weeks the *Indiana Journal*³⁶ commented that the friends of Mr. Wert (the anti-masonic candidate for president) had concluded to sail under the broad banner of Clay and the constitution. A month before the election the same paper urged the Anti-Masons, in the absence of an electoral ticket of their own to vote for Clay.³⁷ It had carried the names of Wert and Ellmaker, the Anti-Masonic candidate for president and vice-president upon its list of candidates throughout the year, but dropped them when it appeared that the Anti-Masons would vote for Clay.³⁸

The entrance of a financial issue into the campaign of 1832 was quite as abrupt as the entrance of the "judicious tariff" measure. The bank question was scarcely noticed in the newspapers until October, 1831. On the first day of the month the *Western Sun* published a two-column attack on the Bank of the United States, copied from the *Albany Argos*. It showed why the bank should not be rechartered. At the same time the *Indiana Journal* published Jackson's statement:

Sir, I have entered for the next presidential heat upon the principle of opposition to that Bank and I mean that the people shall decide whether they will have General Jackson and no Bank or the Bank and no General Jackson.³⁹

³⁵ *Indiana Journal*, Dec. 3, 1831.

³⁶ Jan. 21, 1832.

³⁷ Sept. 27, 1832.

³⁸ October 4, 1832.

³⁹ October 3, 1831.

No better issue could have been found to attract the voters of Indiana. Their entire experience with a bank had been bad. For a time while Crawford was fostering the banking industries of Indiana he had been popular and banks had been looked upon as the pioneer's friend.⁴⁰ With the failure of the banking system the popular esteem for Crawford and the bank turned into hatred and everything associated therewith became obnoxious and to oppose Crawford and the bank was a sure start to public favor. The people had no means of knowing the qualities of the bank except by their meager experience and that having been unfortunate Jackson struck a popular chord with the masses when he declared hostilities on the bank. From the first of October, 1831, throughout the campaign the administration papers kept up a constant attack upon the bank.

Jackson's policy seemed always to be antagonism to existing conditions and rarely constructive. By choosing to make the race upon an opposition to the bank he put his opponents clearly on the defensive. The established opinions concerning the bank made that defense extremely difficult. The first action on the subject by the National Republicans was early in December, 1831, when the legislature by a joint resolution petitioned our senators and representatives in congress to sanction the extension of the unexpired time of the existing charter of the United States Bank with or without amendment.⁴¹

The National Republicans became just as active in upholding the bank as the Jackson press was in trying to destroy it. Such authorities as Ex-Secretary Crawford,⁴² and Secretary McLean⁴³ were quoted to show the efficiency of the bank while the editorial columns predicted:

Let Congress refuse to recharter the Bank of the United States and compel that institution to collect its debts and the merchants throughout the country to collect theirs and we shall be in all probability left almost without a circulating medium.⁴⁴

Not only did the legislature and the press favor the bank but in the anti-Jackson strongholds the citizens took an active

⁴⁰ Logan Esarey, *State Banking in Indiana*, ch. II.

⁴¹ *Indiana Journal*, Dec. 14, 1831.

⁴² *Indiana Journal*, Jan. 14, 1832.

⁴³ *Ibid*, Dec. 31, 1831.

⁴⁴ *Ibid*, April 7, 1832.

part in the agitation. The citizens of Marion county sent a memorial to congress requesting the Indiana members to vote for rechartering the bank. When the bank bill came up in congress and both majority and minority committee reports were filed the press on both sides made use of these reports as a basis for their positions on the subject. The claim of the minority report that Jackson's opposition to the bank was because it was opposed to him politically, and had refused to become an agent in his favor when he had attempted to make it such became the basis of an attack that the Jackson men found safer to avoid than to attempt to refute.⁴⁵ When Jackson vetoed the bank bill the force of the denunciation for the act fell on Martin Van Buren who was never popular in Indiana. It was charged that Jackson vetoed the bill at the instigation of Van Buren, that Van Buren was living in the executive mansion at the time and that the veto message was written by another person than the one who had written the former messages.⁴⁶

The opposition press claimed that at the time of the veto plans had already been concocted in Indianapolis and rumors were in the field in order to marshal the Jackson forces in the state in favor of the veto.⁴⁷ Jackson's act was declared to be the very essence of despotism, the will of a sovereign dictator and the people were called upon to resent such high-handed acts.⁴⁸ The friends of the bank, by means of a petition signed by almost three hundred people called a meeting in Indianapolis for Saturday, September 8, 1832, to take into consideration the policy and propriety of that measure.⁴⁹ The petition declared that the abolition of the bank would have a tendency to drain the country of money, stop the improvement and blight the prospects of the west, creating great sacrifice and embarrassment. Similar meetings were called for all parts of the state. When the meeting was held the National Republican press claimed that it was the largest public meeting ever held in the country, while the Jacksonian press claimed that it was attended by only a few farmers and

⁴⁵ *Indiana Journal*, June 23, 1832.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, July 21, 1832.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, July 23, 1832.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, July 4, 1832.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, August 25, 1832.

mechanics.⁵⁰ The Jacksonians also held a mass meeting in Indianapolis to express approval of the veto.⁵¹ The *Indiana Journal* called it "A meeting got up by office holders and office hunters." The orators tried to justify the veto by the fact that Madison vetoed a similar bill in 1811.⁵² This was turned into ridicule by the opposition who showed that the bill of 1811 was killed in the senate. Business men were warned to curtail their business and pay their debts.

The strongest argument for the veto was made by Col. Richard M. Johnston who crossed the state on a speaking tour. He was extremely popular in Indiana on account of his activities in Indian troubles, and had been the choice of the state for vice-president.⁵³ He condemned the bank for taking part in elections and declared that a foreign enemy had just as much right to do so.⁵⁴

The fact that there were to be national conventions in 1832 excited but very little comment in Indiana either favorable or adverse. State sovereignty was an inborn principle with the mass of the people. They did not proclaim it as did their southern brethren but they acted it, and when once their state had determined an issue, that settled it for the citizens of the state. Thus when the National Republican convention in Indianapolis nominated Henry Clay for the presidency he became the candidate of that party so far as Indiana was concerned. When the national convention in Baltimore nominated Clay and Sargent it drew from the National Republican press of the state, only the comment that Clay had been nominated⁵⁵ and the statement that Mr. Sargent was the avowed friend of a regular system of efficiently operated banks to equalize and diffuse the profits and blessings of trade.⁵⁶ The Jacksonian press subjected the address of the convention to a rather severe criticism but it received nothing like the attention given to a modern party platform.⁵⁷

When Jackson announced that he would make the race for

⁵⁰ *Indiana Journal*, Sept. 15, 1832.

⁵¹ September 1, 1832.

⁵² *Ibid.*

⁵³ *Ibid.*, June 7, 1832.

⁵⁴ *Western Constellation*, (Covington) June 31, 1836, and Sept. 23, 1832.

⁵⁵ *Indiana Journal*, Dec. 24, 1831.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, Jan. 10, 1832.

⁵⁷ *Western Sun*, Jan. 21, 28, 1832.

re-election he became at once the recognized candidate in Indiana. Richard M. Johnson was the choice of the Jacksonians as a candidate for the vice-presidency but when the Baltimore convention, in May, nominated Martin Van Buren, Samuel Milroy, one of the Indiana delegates to the convention, assured the convention⁵⁸ that the nomination of Martin Van Buren, as a candidate for the vice-presidency had the approbation of the Indiana delegation and would have their cordial support, and that although Richard M. Johnston of Kentucky received their vote, so soon as the will of the majority of the convention was indicated they had been disposed cheerfully to yield their preference, for the favorite son of the west, whose claims to the rewards of his country, they believed to be second to those of none, and to unite with the older states of the union in support of Mr. Van Buren, whom they hesitated not to say, would receive the electoral vote of Indiana in consequence of his nomination by the convention. The opposition, however, were not so ready to acquiesce in the nomination of Van Buren. Before the convention met and when it was apparent that he would be the candidate the opposition papers centered their attack upon him and the "Back Stair Cabinet".⁵⁹ After the convention he was attacked for his attitude toward the Cumberland road to which he had been opposed and was called the real candidate for the presidency.⁶⁰ His nomination was looked upon as a step in his promotion to the presidency and Jackson was charged with dictating his successor.⁶¹ The Clay central committees in different counties, on the eve of the election, sent out addresses to the people attacking, along with the spoils system and the bank veto, the "Dictator to the American People".⁶²

The matter of choosing candidates for presidential electors was not nearly so weighty a matter as in the two previous elections. In the National Republican party the convention of 1831 had determined the course of the campaign and when the regularly constituted convention met in Indianapolis on January 21, 1832, it merely selected Jacob Kuykendall of Knox

⁵⁸ *Niles' Register*, May 26, 1832.

⁵⁹ *Indiana Journal*, Feb., March, April, 1832.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, Oct. 6, 1832.

⁶¹ *Indiana Republican*, Oct. 4, 1832.

⁶² *Ibid.*, Oct. 11, 1832.

county, John Hawkins of Fountain county, Samuel Henderson of Marion county, Dennis Pennington of Harrison county, Walter Wilson of Cass county, Stephen Ludlow of Dearborn county and Abel Lomax of Wayne county as candidates for electors and Sylvanus Everts of Union county and John I. Neely of Gibson county as contingent electors.

In addition to this it appointed a committee with Ex-Governor Ray as chairman, to fill any vacancies that might occur in the electoral ticket and to attend to any other business that might be necessary to promote the success of the ticket.⁶³ Conventions were held in the various counties in November and December, 1831.⁶⁴ On December 11, a state convention met in the Presbyterian church in Indianapolis.⁶⁵ It selected George Boone of Sullivan county, James Blake of Marion county, Arthur Patterson of Parke county, Marks Crume of Fayette county as candidates for presidential electors, with Thomas Givens of Posey county, A. L. Burnett of Floyd county, W. Armstrong of Dearborn county, and John Ketcham of Monroe county, as contingent electors to be used in the order named. They appointed delegates to the national convention, to be held in Baltimore and provided for vigilance committees and committees of correspondence in the various counties. Provision was made for distributing seven thousand copies of the address and the Democratic editors in the state were requested to insert it in their papers.

The address itself dwelt at length upon the benefits that the western farmers should derive from the commercial treaties that had recently been negotiated with foreign countries. It declared that the tariff was at length beginning to be discussed on the principles of reason and that the "judicious" tariff of Andrew Jackson was then being recognized on all hands as the one which the American people deserved. Jackson was commended for the payment of the national debt, for transferring the Indian tribes beyond the Mississippi and his fitness to guard the constitution against any attempt to eliminate any section from the union. The question of internal improvements was entirely omitted. In their resolutions they

⁶³ *Cass County Times*, Feb. 10, 1832.

⁶⁴ *Western Sun*, Oct. 12, 19, 26, and Dec. 3, 1831.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, Jan. 7, 1832; also *Indiana Palladium*, Dec. 31, 1831.

endorsed Jackson, approved the acts of his administration, and declared that in asking for a second term he was not overstepping the precedent of his party. The *Indiana Journal* in commenting upon the large number of delegates said that it reminded one of a play entitled *Much Ado About Nothing*, that its announced purpose was to nominate Jackson electors, but its real purpose was to awe the legislature into measures for the purpose of controlling the senatorial election.⁶⁶

There were many incidents of local or pressing importance during the campaign. Mr. Clay and his two sons passed through Indiana in 1831, visiting Vincennes and Terre Haute. This was an occasion of great enthusiasm in those cities. Mr. Clay, however, refused to commit himself in any manner except to say that great injustice had been done him.⁶⁷ Rumors about Jackson being in poor health were circulated and denied throughout the state.⁶⁸ The unfortunate controversy involving Mrs. Eaton, at Washington City, filled the columns of the opposition papers for several weeks.⁶⁹ The *Indianapolis Democrat* beginning March 3, 1832, headed its candidate list with:

Under his administration: West India trade restored, indemnity for French and Danish spoliations, revenue \$26,000,000, population 13,000,000, national debt extinguished, prosperity at home, respected abroad, democracy triumphant. The tree is known by its fruits.

The popularity of Jackson and the unpopularity of the bank were too much for the opposition and in the November election Jackson carried the state by a vote of more than two to one, 31,522 to 15,462.⁷⁰

In giving an account of the election the *Indiana Republican* declared:

Old Hickory can do no wrong. His popularity can stand anything. Down with Henry Clay. Down with the American system. Down with the Bank. Huzza for British manufactures; Huzza for local banks without capital. Good times are coming. Spurious paper money is coming. Van Buren is coming.⁷¹

⁶⁶ Dec. 3, 1831.

⁶⁷ *Indiana Journal*, Oct. 28, 1831.

⁶⁸ *Indiana Democrat*, April 21, 1832.

⁶⁹ See *Indiana Journal*, beginning Oct. 29, 1831.

⁷⁰ E. Stanwood, *History of the Presidency*, 163.

⁷¹ Nov. 22, 1832.

The agitation did not cease with the election. The trend of politics was scarcely interrupted by the election. The bank question would not down. The opponents of Jackson felt that they were defeated but they immediately began agitation for a state bank. That was the main issue in the state election of 1833. The week before the election the *Vincennes Gazette* declared that before that time they had long speeches on the improvement of navigation, reports of committees, divers bank bills, while little or nothing had been done towards furthering any of those objects; that a majority of the people were in favor of the state bank and that the senators and representatives elect would not dare to trifle with the wishes of their constituents.⁷²

When the removal of deposits from the bank came in 1833 the anti-Jackson papers deplored the act, declared that it would add to the financial depression and urged judgment instead of blind partisanism in forming opinions upon the subject.⁷³ The papers that supported Jackson were commonly called "Collar Presses" whose attack, which the *Vincennes Gazette* called a "compound of political skunk's grease and asafetida," were turned upon the United States bank.

The *Gazette* also declared that it was reported that the *Washington Globe* was about to denounce Mr. Van Buren; that the removal of deposits would be opposed by the *Albany Argos* and that Van's safety fund system was about to blow up all the power vested in the Kitchen cabinet.⁷⁵ The fight continued in this manner throughout the year. The fact that the legislature, early next year, established a state bank did not alter the controversy.⁷⁶

The friends of Jackson were equally aggressive in their attempts to justify the removal of deposits. It was shown that Tammany Hall was opposed to the rechartering of the bank. The removal of deposits was defended by articles selected from the press of the entire nation. Open letters were printed in attempts at justification. It was declared that the

⁷² July 27, 1833.

⁷³ *Vincennes Gazette*, Oct. 5, 12, 19, 1833.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, Oct. 26, 1833.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, Nov. 3, 1833.

⁷⁶ *Western Sun*, Feb. 15, 1834.

bank had first made war on Jackson in 1824,⁷⁷ while the opposing presses were called the "bank bought presses". The Jacksonians diverged from their course long enough late in 1834 to warn the farmers against paper money and land speculation.⁷⁸

Indiana was yet too deep in the period of personal politics to wage a lively political warfare without its centering about some personality. The election of 1832 removed the two foremost political figures from the field, one by giving Jackson the second term of office, the other making Clay's election impossible. The new administration was scarcely in operation until the papers began to discuss the possible candidates for the next election.⁷⁹ Richard M. Johnson was the Indiana favorite among the possible Jacksonians and his name was kept before them in the early part of the administration.⁸⁰ When it became evident, however, that Jackson was determined to have Van Buren as his successor the agitation in favor of Johnston ceased and the *Western Sun* declared that

never was the character of a public officer so assailed so much denounced, so much vilified as that of the vice president.⁸¹

It also declared that he was gaining strength from the attacks. When Jackson became fearful for his favorite and recommended "a convention of delegates fresh from the people" to select a candidate for the presidency, it became a recognized fact that Jackson's will would determine the choice. The Indiana Democrats hastened to send a full delegation to the convention.⁸² When the convention nominated Van Buren and Richard M. Johnson the results were accepted as a foregone conclusion. There was very little comment in the Jackson press, other than to give the proceedings of the convention,⁸³ publish the address to the people and place the names of Van Buren and Johnston at the head of the editorial columns as candidates.⁸⁴

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, March 1, June 25, Oct. 25, 1834.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, Nov. 22, 1834.

⁷⁹ *Vincennes Gazette*, Sept. 28, 1833.

⁸⁰ *Western Sun*, April 5, and July 5, 1834.

⁸¹ May 2, 1835.

⁸² *Western Sun*, May 23, 1835.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, June 6, 13, 20, 1835.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, Sept. 5, 1834.

Among the opposition no one great leader stood out prominent as Clay had done in 1832. Every section of the country brought forward its favorite son. A convention of citizens nominated Judge John McLean, late in December, 1834.⁸⁴ On New Year's day 1835, the Alabama legislature nominated for the presidency Hugh L. White, United States senator from Tennessee, by a vote of 55 to 20. Other names were presented to the Alabama legislature, among them Thomas H. Benton of Missouri and Mr. Cass of Michigan.⁸⁵ Toward the close of January, 1835, the Massachusetts legislature nominated Daniel Webster.⁸⁶ The Tennessee legislature on October 16, 1835, placed Hugh L. White in nomination.⁸⁶ In doing so they declared that their motives were the same as those that had prompted the nomination of Jackson by the same body. One of these was

to restrict the establishment of the practice of electing the President of the United States according to any plan of regular succession among the great functionaries of government.

William Henry Harrison was nominated by anti-masonic state convention at Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, in the early part of December. The Whig state convention accepted the Anti-Masonic nomination and Harrison became a candidate of both parties.⁸⁷ There was no demand and apparently no attempt on the part of the Whigs of the nation to concentrate their efforts upon any one man. Apparently they wished to be understood to be in the opposition, and thought that by putting forward the local favorite in each section they could secure enough votes to prevent the election of Van Buren and throw the choice upon the house where it would be more easy to unite on the strongest man.

Ratliff Boon threw consternation into the ranks of the Indiana Democrats early in the year 1836 by declaring in his circular letter to his constituents that the Whigs were attempt-

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, Jan. 31, 1835.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, Jan. 31, 1835. Stanwood in his history of the presidency, page 180, says that the Tennessee legislature nominated White in January, but this is evidently a mistake. Stanwood cites no authority and no record of it can be found while *Niles' Register* No. 14, 1835, gives the full proceedings of the meetings. This is materially important as the Democratic convention came between the two dates and the Tennessee action came as a protest against Van Buren and Jackson's dictation.

⁸⁶ *Niles' Register*, Dec. 26, 1835.

ing to devolve the presidential election on the House.⁸⁸ Throughout the campaign the Democratic papers were filled with editorials, selected articles, open letters and statistics showing the dangers of the election going to the house.⁸⁹ The Jacksonians had had one experience in the house and they dreaded another most of all things.

The mere fact that Harrison was a candidate at all made him the choice of the Indiana Whigs. No one could poll so large a Whig vote in Indiana as her first territorial governor and the hero of Tippecanoe. When the Whigs sent out their call for delegates to a state convention it was to select electors to vote for General Harrison.⁹⁰ The convention met in the hall of the house of representatives in Indianapolis December 14, 1835.⁹¹ General Marston G. Clark was made president.

Mr. Jenckes of Terre Haute in a bitter speech attacked the "Spoils Party." He declared that the friends of Van Buren were more dishonorable in their party warfare than the American savages; that they fought only for the spoils. Thomas H. Blake of Terre Haute also denounced the "Spoils system". It was proposed to nominate Richard M. Johnston as a candidate for the vice-presidency, but the resolution was voted down and the electors that were chosen were left uninstructed as to their choice of vice-president. A committee of fourteen was chosen to draw up an address to the people and a central committee of sixteen was chosen. There seems to have been very little enthusiasm but rather a sullen, determined opposition to Jackson, Van Buren, the "Spoils System" and the veto.

The Democratic state convention was set for January 8, 1836. A month and a half before the time for the convention meetings had been held in nearly all the counties of the state at which delegates were appointed and instructed to select electors pledged to vote for Martin Van Buren and Richard M. Johnston.⁹² The Knox county convention in its preamble charged the Whigs with running Hugh S. White in the south, Daniel Webster in the north and Harrison in the west for the

⁸⁸ *Western Sun*, May 7, 1836.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, May 7, July 2, Aug. 13, 22, and Oct. 1, 1836.

⁹⁰ *Western Sun*, Oct. 10, 1835.

⁹¹ See *Indiana Democrat*, Dec. 15, 1835, for full proceedings.

⁹² *Western Sun*, Nov. 21, 1825.

purpose of preventing an election by the people.⁹³ This convention also appointed vigilance committees for the various townships.

When the convention met in Indianapolis Samuel Milroy became temporary chairman.⁹⁴ The convention was organized by a committee of five from each congressional district. (The first instance of organization by committee in Indiana). The officers consisted of a president, seven vice presidents and two secretaries. Nathan B. Palmer of Marion became the permanent chairman. In his speech before the convention Palmer regretted the attack upon Van Buren and Johnston and pleaded for harmony in the Democratic ranks. The delegates from each congressional district were given the right to select the candidate for elector from that district, while a committee of five from each congressional district was selected to appoint two senatorial electors. A committee of three delegates from each congressional district was appointed for the purpose of preparing and reporting to the convention a uniform mode of organizing the Democratic Republican party in the state so as to secure concert of action and harmony of feeling among the friends of popular institutions. Provision was made for a central committee of sixteen the majority of whom should live in or near Indianapolis. By a separate resolution the convention deprecated the election of a president by Congress as "an effort of the few to rule the many." In addition to the state's central committee the committee of three members from each congressional district recommended the appointment of congressional committees of five persons from each district within the state and county committees of six persons living as near the center of the county as possible. Each of these committees was given the power to fill vacancies within its own ranks. It was the duty of the county committees to appoint vigilance committees in the several townships in each county. These vigilance committees were to make a roll of all the Democratic voters within each township and then the county committees were to apportion delegates among the several townships in the various counties, and call a county convention in each county at a time designated by

⁹³ *Ibid*, Nov. 21, 1835.

⁹⁴ *Indiana Democrat*, Jan. 12, 1836, for full proceedings.

the county committee. These conventions were to choose candidates for county office. The various vigilance committees were instructed to report the actual strength of the political parties in each township as soon as the results of the April elections (township) were known. Thus the convention system was applied to the counties through a necessity for concerted action upon a national question rather than a process of gradual growth from the state convention downward.

The address of the convention was more featureless than any previous address. It filled twelve full newspaper columns and spent its energies in condemning the Whigs, praising Van Buren and Johnston and condemning the criminal and libelous attacks upon them.⁹⁵

When the candidates were once selected the campaigns became largely one of personalities in Indiana. The *Western Sun* published biographies of both Van Buren and Johnston.⁹⁶ Van Buren and Harrison were compared by the presses on both sides of the question. The Jacksonian press insisted that Van Buren had been the object of severe persecutions.⁹⁷ While the Whig papers likened the two men to a hero and a political grimalkin.⁹⁸ Van Buren was charged with being a Catholic.⁹⁹ Open letters filled with questions addressed to Van Buren were printed in the papers.¹⁰⁰ These personal attacks were of much the same nature as those aimed previously at Jackson but in Jackson's case they only tended to increase his popularity. Van Buren however, was unpopular from the beginning and the personal attacks increased this unpopularity daily.

The Whigs from the beginning had a more hopeful outlook. On Thursday May 21, 1835, General Harrison came to Vincennes for a visit. On Monday May 25, the citizens gave him a public dinner.¹⁰¹ Senators Hendricks and Tipton were reported to be in favor of Harrison. The report was not

⁹⁵ *Western Sun*, March 19, 1831.

⁹⁶ July and August, 1835.

⁹⁷ *Western Constellation*, (Covington) Oct. 23, 1836.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, April 23, 1836.

⁹⁹ *Logansport Canal Telegraph*, June 11, 1836; also *Western Sun*, Aug. 27, 1836.

¹⁰⁰ *Logansport Canal Telegraph*, Nov. 5, 1836.

¹⁰¹ *Western Sun*, May 30, 1835.

verified but it had the effect of attracting many voters to their candidate.¹⁰² On Saturday, November 7, 1835 twelve to fifteen hundred people met at the Battle Grounds to celebrate the Battle of Tippecanoe.¹⁰³ This was perhaps the greatest political mass meeting held in the state up to that time. By February, 1836, the Whigs were able to say that no cause had ever gained so rapidly as theirs had done in the central part of the state.¹⁰⁴

The Democratic abuse of the Whigs was perhaps the most bitter ever heaped upon a political party in the state. As early as June, 1836, they were called "that compound of various opinions and dissimilar interest."¹⁰⁵ A little later in the year an open letter by "Democrat" was copied by the press of the state. It declared that

that piebald no-party composed of the shreds of all parties was unceasing in its cry against office holders. And that the moment that one of these immaculate self-constituted whigs became a candidate for office you heard him exclaim against office holders and endeavor to create an unjust prejudice against the best and purest men in the country as though they were not citizens of the same country and entitled to all the rights and immunities of free men.¹⁰⁶

The *Western Sun* called them

a loose compound of Hartford convention Federalism and Royal Arch Masonry¹⁰⁷

and declared that treachery was their favorite instrument, their nature and vocation and that their only cement was a sympathy of hatred to every man of purer principles than themselves. A year before the election Democratic presses predicted that Harrison would lose everything in Indiana,¹⁰⁸ while the vigilance committee made an attempt to show that Harrison was not qualified for the presidency.¹⁰⁹ In an attempt to keep the opposition votes divided the Democratic press kept the names of Harrison, Webster and White on their

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, Sept. 12, 1835.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, Nov. 28, 1835.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, Feb. 6, 1836.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, June 24, 1835.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, Sept. 19, 1835.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, Oct. 24, 1835.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, Oct. 24, 1835.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, Oct. 31, 1835.

lists of opposition candidates.¹¹⁰ The *Democratic Union* of New Albany in a statement to the people said that the country was divided into two great political parties, one exerting its influence and energies to perpetuate and continue in existence a course of policy which had been proven the most wholesome and salutary in a republican government—the other seeking to gain the ascendancy and place the affairs of the nation in the hands of an aristocracy.¹¹¹

In the later months of the campaign the canvas became very largely a still hunt campaign with the burden of work falling upon the committees. Abuse of the opposite party almost entirely ceased. Among the last hints to be found of the bitter vindictives being an open letter by Ratliff Boon on the subject of "Collar dogs". He said:

I am a party man and one of the true collar dogs and am proud to wear the collar of a man like Andrew Jackson whose collar is the collar of democracy. The charge that the Jackson party are proscriptive in their feelings and actions is utterly without foundation or fact. The Democratic state of Indiana has given her vote on three several occasions to the present chief magistrate and yet there has never been a Jackson majority in the state legislature nor has she ever elected a Jacksonian governor.¹¹²

The press became more and more persuasive in its methods. The open letter by "One of the People" giving the following twelve reasons why Van Buren should be elected is typical of the press comment. Its reasons are:

His moral character; (2) his natural genius; (3) his study of law and political science; (4) his long experience; (5) he was a lifelong Democrat; (6) he enjoyed the confidence of the Democrats of his own state; (7) he had the confidence of the Democrats of the nation; (8) he did not enjoy the confidence of the Whigs; (9) he never would enjoy the confidence of nullification, Hartford convention, Blue Light, and Boston Federalism in any root or branch; (10) he sprang from the humble walks of life (11) his natural temperament fitted him for the position. (12) He was an ardent supporter of the Union.¹¹³

A few weeks before the election, September 14, the Whig central committee issued a "Circular to the free men of Indi-

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, Dec. 19, 1835.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, April 2, 1836.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, June 11, 1836.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, Aug. 20, 1836.

ana."¹¹⁴ It reduces the issue to a contest between Harrison and Van Buren. It pointed out that Harrison was a son of one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence. It then traced his career as an aide de camp to Wayne; as representative from the Northwest territory; as territorial governor of Indiana; as the commander of Tippecanoe; and at the Thames; and declared that he was never defeated when commanding in person. It reviewed his civil service in the Ohio legislature in both houses of congress and as minister to Columbia. Opposed to this it traced the career of Martin Van Buren. It showed him entering public life by supporting De Witt Clinton, a Federalist, for the presidency in 1812, in opposition to James Madison; while his next act was to oppose Clinton when he advocated the splendid system of internal improvements which had so much enriched the state of New York. It declared that as a member of congress he had done nothing worthy of attention. He was charged with being the instigator of the caucus that nominated Crawford; with intriguing with Adams for an appointment and failing he secured the confidence of Jackson and gained control of his administration. His votes as member of the senate were shown to be against the interests of the west, while a member of the administration he was declared to be responsible for the constant interference with the financial conditions of the country. It then traced the financial policy of the administration and finally drew the conclusion that on one side they had a hero and on the other, "A political grimalkin". It then urged the friends of Harrison to appoint general county committees and committees of vigilance in the townships whose special duty it should be

to urge the voters to the polls and see that each township is amply supplied with tickets.

The question of ticket supply was one of the questions to which the vigilance committee had to give very strict attention. There was no regular ballot and no regular source of supply. The manipulation of the ticket was the most common means of corruption and the vigilance committees were expected to outwit all attempts of their opponent. Ten days

¹¹⁴ *Weekly Messenger*, Oct. 29, 1836.

before the election,¹¹⁵ the *Western Sun* gave notice that Democratic Republican tickets could be secured at its office, and two days before the election it warned the Democratic voters "to look well to the tickets which they put in", for frauds had been committed at elections by palming off upon an individual a different ticket from what he intended to vote.¹¹⁶ It declared that the cause must indeed be bad which required such an artifice to support it, and that no honorable man, no matter to what party he belonged, would disgrace himself by so dishonorable an act. It admonished the Democrats that if they could not beat their opponents honorably to put up with defeat, but to let no event prevent their attending the polls.

Election day fell upon the 25th anniversary of the Battle of Tippecanoe and the Whigs over the state celebrated it by giving a free barbecue at the voting places in memory of that event.¹¹⁷

The local elections had continually shown that the voters of the state who had three times given majorities to Jackson were not so much partisans as they were hero worshipers. This election was no exception. The difference lay in the fact that the hero was of the opposite party. When the election returns were all in Harrison had a total vote of forty-one thousand two hundred and eighty-one to only thirty-two thousand four hundred seventy-six for Van Buren.¹¹⁸ The change of majorities was remarkable. In 1832 the Democrats had carried the state by a ratio of about 2 to 1. Now they had lost it by a ratio of 5 to 4. The spell of the name of Jackson was broken and the Democrats in the state were put on the defensive and have been so rather constantly ever since.

The question of distribution of revenue by the federal government was the chief topic discussed by the newspapers from the election of 1836 until June, 1837. In June the State bank suspended specie payment.¹¹⁹ Immediately the topic for political discussion became the surplus distribution and "paper banks". In July the discussion was confined generally to local conditions. Early in August notice was issued to the banks

¹¹⁵ Oct. 27, 1836.

¹¹⁶ Nov. 5, 1836.

¹¹⁷ *Western Sun*, Nov. 5, 1836.

¹¹⁸ Stanwood, *History of the Presidency*.

¹¹⁹ *Western Sun*, June 17, 1837.

of the state not to receive notes of the late United States bank.¹²⁰ From that time on the only political question that was given prominence through the year was the bank question. In all the discussions banks, Whigs and Federalists are the only terms used to designate the Whigs. By October the "Shinplasters" were offered as a relief. The Democratic press bitterly condemned them.¹²¹ By the middle of October the passage of the sub-treasury act turned the course of discussion from the bank to the new financial policy.

The intense suffering brought by the Panic of 1837 aroused both political parties to immediate action. On Wednesday evening December 13, 1837 a large number of Democrats from all parts of the state met informally at the capital building in Indianapolis to

consult together in regard to the present situation of the country and to adopt measures for celebrating in an appropriate manner the anniversary of the Battle of New Orleans.¹²²

In a series of resolutions they denounced the Whigs as Federalists, declared that the Federalists were trying to embarrass the administration; complimented Van Buren on his financial policy; indorsed his land policy; viewed the New York elections as a bank triumph; and declared that county meetings should be held to express views on the state of the country and reorganize the party. This meeting appointed a committee to prepare an address to the people of the state. The address was prepared by Robert Dale Owen as chairman of the committee and on February 10, 1838 representatives of the party met in the hall of the house of representatives to listen to the address. In an extremely lengthy discourse he discussed the Bank question, denounced the Whigs as Federalists; denounced the Adams election; and praised Jackson and Van Buren. The address was adopted without a dissenting voice.¹²³

An assembly of Democrats of Clark county at Charlestown on January 28, 1838, declared that to arrest the Whig invasions of their ranks it would be necessary to meet their per-

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, Aug. 12, 1837.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, Oct. 17, 1837.

¹²² *Western Sun*, Jan. 13, 1838.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, Feb. 24, 1838.

petual opposition in a prompt and energetic manner, and that the necessity for organization and harmonious energetic action was obvious to all.¹²⁴ In June the *Western Sun* admonished its readers to let no man who has ever been a Democrat accept favors from a Federalist. He might join their hosts and carry with him the flag of his hosts and his reception would be to have his pockets picked and himself stripped and when there was nothing more to plunder they would drive him out of the camp.¹²⁵ By October the Democratic papers began to show a more hopeful attitude in giving results of various victories in State elections for the Democrats.

The Whigs met in convention in Indianapolis January 22, 1838. Thomas H. Blake, the temporary chairman in his speech, condemned the policies of the government for the past nine years.¹²⁶ He declared that the currency of the country was everywhere deranged; banks had been compelled to stop specie payment; private enterprise was crushed, commerce was ruined; and a gloom like the pall of death still rested upon the great cities of the East and West and finally he declared that the prosperity and glory of the nation were going down together. He admonished the delegates to the convention that the eyes of the other states were upon them, the sooner it was understood the better, that Indiana would maintain her stand under the Whig banner and if the great battle was lost reproach should not fall on her sons. In its resolutions the convention condemned the general conduct of government for the past nine years. They denounced the sub-treasury plan as an attempt to draw public attention from the "immoralities of the administration". The office holders were condemned as a set of leeches who were sucking the life blood from the treasury. The coming election was pronounced a contest over principle. A single term for the president was called for and the election of the president by the house was deprecated. William H. Harrison was recommended to a proposed convention of Whigs as a candidate for the presidency, although the convention expressed confidence in Henry Clay. Honest Democrats were viewed as brethern of the

¹²⁴ *Ibid*, Jan. 27, 1838.

¹²⁵ June 30, 1838.

¹²⁶ *Logansport Telegraph*, Feb. 3, 1838.

same family, honestly differing from them in opinion and were offered the right hand of fellowship. The Van Buren administration received special condemnation in a second set of resolutions offered by Governor Noah Noble. Immediately before adjourning the convention appointed a controlling committee of twelve persons and provided for a correspondence committee of one person in each county.

After these two conventions there was very little discussion of the national question by the press of the state. This year was the breathing spell in which the forces of the two parties prepared for the coming campaign of 1840. The date for the Whig national convention was set for December, 1839.¹²⁷ This started an agitation concerning the possible candidates which were to run the next year. William H. Harrison was the choice of the majority of the party but Henry Clay had his loyal supporters.

Clay was condemned by the Democratic press as a Federalist and the reproach of the bank and the Hartford convention was heaped upon him.¹²⁸ He was attacked for allowing himself to be brought up to make a speech in a carriage. This and the fact that he had allowed a crown of roses to be placed upon his head "by the wives of the Aristocracy" were held up as positive proof of his aristocratic tendencies.¹²⁹ Mr. Clay on September 14, 1839, wrote O. H. Smith of Indiana to ascertain the conditions in the state.¹³⁰ He asked if the result of the last local election was due to the use of his name; if it would have resulted otherwise if his name had not been used; if the contest was between himself and Van Buren, who would likely receive the vote of the state; if there was any other name that would likely receive a larger vote in the state than his; if there was any reason to believe that the late elections in the state were influenced by public money; and if the state intended sending delegates to the Whig national convention at Harrisburg in December. In reply Mr. Smith declared that the system of internal improvements was responsible for the results of the late elections, and that the name of neither of the candidates had much to do with the

¹²⁷ *Western Sun*, June 2, 1838.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, Aug. 31, 1839.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, Sept. 7, 1839.

¹³⁰ O. H. Smith, *Early Indiana Trials and Sketches*, 251.

Whig cause; he feared that the name of Clay would not be strong enough to stem the tide that was running against them; but assured him that no name would be so well calculated as his to rally the original Whigs; that he could not rely upon the old Jacksonians who had joined them under the Harrison banners who still retained a deep rooted prejudice against him on account of the first contest between Adams and Jackson; and that a contest between Van Buren and him would require desperate efforts on the part of the Whigs to insure success. The party opposed to them seemed to be united and moved by one common impulse; that although their watchword, Democracy, was understood by few, it was still powerful with the masses; they must meet the issue made for them with the false cry of Federalism ringing in their ears. He thought that Harrison could without a doubt get a majority in the state against Van Buren. He also declared that the State would send delegates to the national convention.¹³¹ When the convention met it nominated William Henry Harrison and John Tyler as its candidates. Five months later May 15, 1840, the Democratic convention at Baltimore nominated Martin Van Buren and Richard M. Johnston, and the campaign took a definite direction.

The campaign began early. In May the *Western Sun* started its fight for votes by drawing comparisons between the two parties, then and at the time of Jefferson. It pointed out that the principles laid down by Jefferson were equal and exact justice to all men; state's rights must be supported; preservation of the constitutional vigor of the federal government; right of election; decision by majorities; economy in public expense; honest payment of debts; encouragement of agriculture and commerce; diffusion of information; and freedom of religion. The Democratic principles in 1840 were declared to be: equality of men; government for the happiness of all; the voice of the people; the conservation of the government; acquiescence in the decision of the majority; no special favors to bankers or merchants; banks are to be founded on substance and not shadow; separation of the government from the banks; banking interests should not be partisan; opposi-

¹³¹ *Ibid* 152.

tion to reestablishment of the bank.¹³² The Federalist principles under John Adams were: Class distinction (gentlemen and simple men); inequality of both; distinction of rich and poor. The Federalists' principles in 1840 were: an ignorant people were not to be trusted; free suffrage was a curse to any people; people cannot govern by reason; single aim of the party was self-preservation; money can be used in elections; government should be founded on property; the farmer has nothing to do with legislation; the farmer is an imposing demagogue.

Even before this the *Sun* had made an attack on Harrison by declaring that he was in the hands of a committee that governed his course, and that nothing was more despicable than a candidate that would not declare his position.¹³³ The same paper complained that the hard times were favorable to the Whig cause and that they were laboring to maintain the depression for political effect.¹³⁴ On June 13, the *Sun* declared that the chief supporters of Harrison were the chief enemies of Jackson. Two weeks later (June 27) it tried to prove that Harrison was a favorite of the Adamses and on July 18, it declared that Harrison was a "black Cockade Federalist" and that he had often been seen wearing the black cockade of Federalism. The charge of Federalism was flaunted at the Whigs in every issue of every Democratic paper during the remainder of the campaign.

The Madison *Courier* was perhaps the most aggressive of the Democratic papers. On July 25, it declared that the policy of the Whigs was that the general make no further declaration of his principles for the public eye, while occupying the position he then held. This statement, signed "General Harrison's Body Guard and Conscience Keepers", headed the editorial column during the remainder of the campaign. Such expressions as "Blue light British Tories",¹³⁵ "log cabin, hard cider, coon skin, blue-light politicians", "Blue-light, Federal, abolition, British Whig partisans,"¹³⁶ are common in its col-

¹³² May 9, 1840.

¹³³ May 9, 1840.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, April 25, 1846.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, June 13, 1846.

¹³⁶ July 25, 1840.

¹³⁶ Aug. 1, 1840.

umns through the year. It declared that many Whigs were shut out of the log cabins by the resemblance they bore to other grog shops.¹³⁷ It accused them of buying votes with liquor at the August elections.¹³⁸ It accused them of threatening war if they were not successful at the election.¹³⁹ It declared that the strongest liner of the Federalist party was British gold.¹⁴⁰

This spirit of denunciation was accompanied by a very feeble attempt to be optimistic concerning their own prospects and an attempt to arouse party spirit. A well-known Irishman by the name of Grattan published an open letter addressed to Irishmen.¹⁴¹ He declared it to be the duty of every man of Irish birth or origin to rally under the Democratic banner. He appealed to them in the name of Montgomery, and Emmet. Letters of Jackson were published declaring that the hard cider cry was humbuggery, and that it would soon react, also making the charge of Federalism against Harrison.¹⁴² Peter Cartwright, one of the most famous early Indiana Methodist preachers published an open letter denying that he had forsaken the party,¹⁴³ while every Jackson man was forced to deny similar rumors.¹⁴⁴ Letters of Jackson, Clay, Van Buren and Jefferson were published throughout the campaign in an attempt to awaken the dead spirit of the party.

The denunciation of their opponents and an appeal to the former glory of the party appeared to have but little effect and in August the Democrats added an innovation to their party organization by forming in practically every township in the state a "Democratic Association" or club. The assembly in Vincennes that formed the association also appointed a committee of vigilance, a committee of distribution and a committee of correspondence, and provided for weekly meetings of the association.¹⁴⁵ From this time on the papers are filled

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*

¹³⁸ Aug. 3, 1840.

¹³⁹ Aug. 29, 1840.

¹⁴⁰ Sept. 19, 1840.

¹⁴¹ *Western Sun*, June 20, 1840.

¹⁴² *Western Sun*, July 18, 1840.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, Aug. 1, 1840.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, Aug. 15, 1840.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, Aug. 29, 1840.

with accounts of the organization of new "associations" and the proceedings of their meetings.

One of the strong characters in the campaign on either side was Robert Dale Owen, the son of the founder of New Harmony. In the early part of the campaign he devoted his energies to writing, and his articles were copied by the press of the state. In his first article¹⁴⁶ he held that the majority of the Whigs were honest in their views and that the leaders might be honest, but their tactics were to keep their principles in the dark, and resort to the methods of Indian warfare and were determined to choose the field of battle. In his second article¹⁴⁷ he submitted a long line of evidence to prove his point. In a third article¹⁴⁸ he analyzed the hard cider cry. He declared that Christians were called upon to exhibit their enthusiasm in a political strife by drinking hard cider made hard by hard brandy for the glory of General Harrison. He declared that young men were getting their first lessons in drunkenness at the Whig meetings. He analyzed "Harrison's poverty" and his "military fame" and called abuse a "political blunder". Owen continued this series of high-minded discussions until the last of August when he gave them up to take the stump. All traveling had to be done on horseback, so the speaker generally spoke on every second day and traveled on the intervening days. The fact that Owen spoke at Spencer October 3, Greencastle October 5, Terre Haute October 7, Bowling Green October 8, and Vincennes October 10,¹⁴⁹ shows how busy the speakers were. They spoke under the auspices of the Democratic association. The entire state was canvassed by an unusually strong set of speakers, including Edward A. Hannegan, James Whitcomb, Marinus Willett, Findley Bigger, James Lockhart, Amos Lane, Thomas Smith, Thomas L. Smith, John Law, Joseph A. Wright, John G. Davis, Paris G. Dunning, Willis A. Gorman, Delana K. Eckles, Alvin P. Hovey, Andrew Kennedy, Marks Crume, William Watt, Jeremiah Smith, Henry Secrest, John Spencer, Elisha Long, William Rockwell, Nathaniel West, Nathan B. Palmer, Gen. James Drake, John Carr, William W.

¹⁴⁶ *Western Sun*, June 27, 1840

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid*, July 4, 1840.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid*, July 11, 1840.

¹⁴⁹ *Western Sun*, Oct. 3, 1840.

Wick, William J. Brown, Henry Brady, James B. Ray, Joseph Holman, Samuel E. Perkins, Ross Smiley, Wilson Thompson and others.¹⁵⁰ The speeches were usually very long and each speaker was usually followed by a man of the opposite side who was expected to refute his argument. Robert Dale Owen's speech at Vincennes October 10, was two hours in length and he was followed immediately by Samuel Judah. The Whigs were not satisfied with this and on October 13, Mr. Ewing spoke to them for four hours and the *Western Sun* thought that they were not yet satisfied.¹⁵¹ Richard M. Johnston, the candidate for vice-president, also crossed the state on his speaking tour. He spoke at Connersville on October 12, Indianapolis on the 14th, at Crawfordsville on the 16th, Lafayette on the 17th, Roachdale on the 20th, Terre Haute on the 21st, Carlisle on the 23rd, Vincennes on the 24th, New Harmony on the 26th, Evansville on the 28th, Rockport on the 29th, Troy on the 30th, and Rome on the 31st.¹⁵² At Vincennes he was met ten miles north of the city by three hundred horsemen. At the edge of the city he was met by a crowd on foot and horseback and the entire gathering paraded the streets led by the Vincennes band.¹⁵³

While those efforts of the Democrats were full of enthusiasm and the crowds were largely conscientious Democrats, there seemed to be lacking that spontaneous outburst of feeling that was found among the same people twelve years before and which now characterized their opponents. The Whigs had been true to their declaration in 1838 that they would regard the Democrats as erring brethren and would extend to them the right hand of fellowship. They did not abuse, but deplored the fact that the hard times had been brought on by the mal-administration of Jackson and Van Buren and by irresponsible officeholders. They depended upon enthusiasm generated at public speakings and barbecues to carry them to victory. They began their campaign by a celebration of Harrison's victory at Tippecanoe late in May. The call for the celebration went out through the Whig press of the state in large head lines and popular appeals to the masses. It said:

¹⁵⁰ O. H. Smith, *Early Indiana Trials and Sketches*, 350.

¹⁵¹ Oct. 10, 1840.

¹⁵² *Western Sun*, Oct. 3, 1840.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, Oct. 31, 1840.

TIPPECANOE

BE AT THE BATTLE GROUND

(Picture of coach and four)

"Every man to his tent, Oh," Indiana;

TO THE (picture of log cabin) BOYS OF CENTRAL INDIANA

Do you know that the greatest and most universal gathering of the People—of Farmers, Mechanics, Laborers—and all classes of community, who are in favor of (Eagle holding streamers bearing names of Harrison and Tyler) are to meet upon the

BATTLEFIELD OF TIPPECANOE ON THE 29TH OF MAY

to welcome the Old Soldiers once more to the scene of glory, where everlasting benefits were wrought in blood for Indiana?

Do you know that hundreds of old and young, the poor and poorer (none can say rich now) are already providing their "bread and meat and camp equipage" for the campaign? Do you know *that one thing* which few have in these subtreasury times, will not be needed? Every man with his wagon and horses or ox team, horse back or with his knapsack, with his week's provision be up and ready to march to Tippecanoe. Do you know that extensive preparations are making by the "Pioneers" around the old campaign ground, to afford better accommodation to those who cannot come prepared than the brave soldiers found who fought upon the bloody ground in 1811? Do you know that a larger army of men will be there than ever met together in the State of Indiana? Do you not feel anxious to form a part of that great mass of your friends who, with their shouts, their flags, and their cannon, will be there to engage in the political conflict of the brave Old Hero, who never lost a battle, and who stayed the Indian's tomahawk on that ground where so many of his friends will once more enlist under the banner of him who is beloved by his old soldiers, and despised by the blood suckers of the country, because he is literally one of us—one of the people—one who tills his own land—one possessed of true Democratic principles—equal rights and equal justice to all men— one who, when about parting with the brave little band who fought with him on the battle ground of Tippecanoe told them that "Notwithstanding he wore the dignified title of 'General', and also 'Governor' that he lived like themselves, in an humble log cabin, and, said he, while the heartfelt tears rolled down his cheeks, 'If you ever come to Vincennes, you will always find a plate and knife and fork at my table, and never find the door shut and string of the latch pulled in.' Such is the man, such the day, and the occasion for which we meet together upon the Tippecanoe Battle Field. Who will stay home on that day?

Whigs who ha' with Heroes bled,
Whigs whom "Van" has never led,
Meet us on their glory bed,
And strike for victory.¹⁵⁴

¹⁵⁴ Semi-Weekly Indianapolis *Journal*, May 5, 1840.

An immense throng representing every county in the state, also delegates from Illinois, Michigan, Kentucky and Tennessee, met on the Battle Ground on May 29th for the celebration. The procession was led by a brig, the "Constitution" from Michigan City,¹⁵⁵ full rigged, its pennant inscribed "Harrison and Tyler" floating in the breeze. It was drawn by six white horses. This was followed by canoes, log cabins, banners, bands, hunter's camps, bodies of soldiers, and every device or emblem that appealed to pioneer life. The bands played martial music while the banners bore such devices: "No change can be for the worse"; "Indiana will cherish in manhood the defender of her infancy"; "The Hoosier boys are always ready to do their own voting as well as their own fighting"; "Log cabin freedom is better than White House slavery". The Fountain county banner bore the inscription:

I'm working for you
Said the hard cider to
Old Tippecanoe.

The Illinois delegation bore a banner with the inscription:

No blood hounds for soldiers
Fewer promises and more performances
We go for General Harrison
Huzza for the tip of all tips, "Old Tippecanoe."
Rags are better than nakedness
Can't take 7 cents a day and lodge in a hay mow
You can't come it over the suckers.

The Michigan delegation bore a banner inscribed: "Michigan will remember her deliverer" and another with the device "Michigan she can, she will". The Cambridge City banner represented Van Buren running down hill in front of a barrel of hard cider, that had rolled out of a log cabin at the top of the hill. He was crying, "Stop that barrell." After a magnificent parade, speeches, fireworks, and much revelry, the delegates started home still celebrating. The *Western Sun* sarcastically remarked that

On Sunday last the delegates from the great Whig show at the Battle-ground reached this place. (Vincennes) and our peaceful and

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid*, June 9, 1840 for details.

moral community was treated by them with martial music, firing of cannon and loud huzzas.¹⁵⁶

This was the beginning of a series of barbecues held in all parts of the state. There was not a town of any size but held its barbecue. The one at Vincennes is described as follows:

After the most stirring appeals, large hand bills, hundreds of invitations to persons at a distance to attend they passed through the streets carrying flags of various devices, log cabins, coon skins, buck horns, live coons, etc. The marshals conducted the procession with a great deal of dignity and all acquitted themselves no doubt to their own satisfaction. The speaker dwelt largely with the abuses of appointments.¹⁵⁷

The *Madison Courier* in describing the barbecue at that place said:

Of log cabins, hard cider, emblems of the most grotesque description, badges, medals, Harrison handkerchiefs, ram's horns, red and blue noses, and other unmeaning etceteras, there was no lack¹⁵⁸

One of the songs was:

Go it then for cooney
Cooney in a cage
Go it with a yell, boys;
Go it with a rage.

The *Courier* estimated that a thousand dollars was spent for handkerchiefs, scarfs, badges, and other such emblems. The crowds usually gave themselves up to heavy drinking and all the Democratic papers deplored the "fights and other fashionable exercises" that had been so lately introduced by hard cider enthusiasm.

Senator Oliver H. Smith was the chairman of the Whig central committee of the state and brought under his charge the best Whig orators of the day. Smith made appointments for speakers and meetings all over the state and spoke almost every day and night himself. Among his speakers were: Joseph G. Marshal, George G. Dunn, Albert S. White, William Herod, William Graham, Caleb B. Smith, Richard W. Thom-

¹⁵⁶ June 6, 1840.

¹⁵⁷ *Western Sun*, Oct. 10, 1840.

¹⁵⁸ Oct. 10, 1840.

son, Henry S. Lane, Othniel S. Clarke, John Beard, Newton Claypool, Samuel C. Sample Jonathan A. Linton, John D. Greaves, Douglas Maguire, Edward McGaughey, Thomas J. Evans, Hugh Oneil, Martin M. Ray, Schuyler Colfax, Thomas D. Walpole, William McKee Dunn, Daniel D. Pratt, Henry Walker, John Vawter, Milton Stapp, John Dumont, Stephen C. Stephens, Jeremiah Sullivan, Joseph C. Eggleston, William S. Coffin, William T. Otto, William G. Ewing, David Kilgore, David P. Holloway, Samuel W. Parker, Henry P. Thornton, James Collins, James Rariden, James H. Cravens, Joseph L. White, Jonathan McCarty, John Ewing, George H. Dunn, John Richter, Samuel Judah, James Perry, John Yaryan, Lewis Burk, P. A. Hackleman, Abner T. Ellis, Randall Crawford, Thomas H. Blake, Elisha P. Huntington, Thomas Dowling, Judge DeBruler, Charles Dewey, John W. Payne, Conrad Baker and others.¹⁵⁹ The campaign closed with a torchlight procession in Indianapolis;¹⁶⁰ one of the first of its kind in the state. Both parties took part. O. H. Smith spoke for the Whigs and James Whitcomb for the Democrats. The parties vied with each other in the brilliancy of their declaration. The bands played continuously while the whole city was lighted up with rockets, and the streets were filled with bonfires. Whitcomb occupied a stand on the north side of Washington street and Smith one on the south side. The sound of music singing and the explosion of rockets, and the clamor of the crowd rose above their voices and they quit the stand and mingled with the crowd until near midnight. This ended the most fiercely waged campaign that the state had yet seen and perhaps that it has ever seen. Harrison carried the state by a vote of 65,276 to 51,695 for Van Buren. The people here again showed that tendency to independent voting that has always made Indiana a doubtful state and has sometimes piled up majorities for a popular candidate of one party and at the very next election buried the less popular candidate of the same party under an avalanche of votes.

(To be continued)

¹⁵⁹ O. H. Smith, *Indiana Trials and Sketches*, 350.

¹⁶⁰ O. H. Smith, *Early Indiana Trials and Sketches*, 351.