Sectional Aspects of Expansion, 1844-1848

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The Harrison sweep to victory in Indiana and the nation in 1840 resulted in the complete rout of the Hoosier Democrats. The movement continued through the congressional election of 1841, leaving the Indiana Democrats with one seat in Congress. The hopes of the party were at low ebb: the combination of state and national electoral defeats had robbed the Democracy of state and local offices as well as the fruits of patronage. In order for the rehabilitation process to begin, it was necessary to overhaul completely the party machinery.

The rejuvenation, however, was not slow in developing. A new party organ, the Indiana State Sentinel, under the editorship of Jacob Page Chapman and George A. Chapman, began publication in the summer of 1841. The Chapmans, originally from Massachusetts, had published the Wabash Enquirer at Terre Haute before coming to the state capital. With the motto, “Crow Chapman Crow,” at its masthead, the Sentinel was to become a powerful mouthpiece for the Democracy.¹

By the summer of 1842, the Democrats had gained control of the state legislature and were prepared for the congressional elections of 1843. The party prospects appeared brighter.

It was apparent that the Democrats had freed themselves of the old leadership and the old battle cries, and were taking up the standards of the so-called New Democracy. As they laid their plans for the coming election, they saw that the Whigs had furnished them with issues upon which to wage the campaign. There was, for example, the effect that the halting of the canal and road program had had on the outlets to market, leaving them in a sad state of repair. This condition, coupled with the aftermath of the depression of 1837 which was hindering economic progress, the Democrats blamed on the Whigs. The Whig tariff of 1842 and the attitude of the Indiana Whigs in favoring a state rather than a national bank had weakened their party unity; and following the breach be-

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¹ Jacob P. Dunn, Greater Indianapolis (2 vols., Chicago, 1910), I, 388-89.
tween Henry Clay and John Tyler, the Whig party experienced even further demoralization. The Democrats of Indiana were ready to take advantage of the political misfortune of their opponents.

The New Democracy, however, was more than a political rebuttal to the Whig program. Under the guidance of such talented orators as Robert Dale Owen, Joseph Wright, James Whitcomb, and John W. Davis, the Democracy pled for human rights, individual liberty, and private initiative. The sentiments of such western leaders as William Allen of Ohio made the rounds of the Hoosier press, and during the congressional contests, there were many debates enlarging on the party principles and involving such issues as the tariff, the currency, and internal improvements.

This campaign centered less about personalities than had the campaigns of the past. The change in tactics was in part indicative of new leadership, but more than that it was a reflection of the growing force of the western progress; it was part and parcel of the growing sectional consciousness of the economic needs of the West. The result was that, being out of office nationally as well as locally, the Democracy could become a party of opportunism and could promise relief from the economic burdens under which the citizenry labored.

The Hoosier campaign of 1843 was termed by the Chapmans in their journal as a revolution. The Whigs were swept out of office almost completely, and for the first time since statehood, the Democrats had elected a governor. Jesse Bright rode into state office as lieutenant-governor, and his brother Michael was appointed state agent. James Morrison was elected by the legislature to rule the state bank; William E. English became clerk of the assembly; and Andrew L. Robinson, who was to become a Free Soil candidate by 1852, was elected speaker of the House. The Democrats had also gained control of the legislature.

On the national scene, whereas in 1841, there was only one Democratic congressman from the state, now the party had elected members in eight out of the ten districts.
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Edward Hannegan, although elected to office prior to this important election, was in this new order, having replaced Tilghman A. Howard when the latter was deserted by the Democrats. Hannegan's victory was a popular one, representing another instance in which the party had freed itself of the control of the old liners.

The housecleaning was about complete as far as the Indiana Democrats were concerned by the time of the opening of the coming presidential campaign.

The campaign in 1843 had centered about the tariff as far as national questions were concerned, with Texas and Oregon playing a minor role—if any at all. Yet in the summer of that year, Oregon and Texas had come to the fore as national questions and were being carried along by the buoyant and optimistic wave of expansionism. Indiana was in the heartland of this rising western sentiment. Gradually the movement for expansion came into the political arena of the state and the nation. In October of 1843, Robert Dale Owen, newly elected congressman, began breathing the spirit of manifest destiny when he declared in a letter to his constituents that the time had come for them to assert their just claims and to take possession of the territory [Oregon], without bloodshed, before the Hudson's Bay Company, profiting by the joint occupancy, made peaceful penetration impossible.

The state legislature also pressed the Oregon question by joint resolution. Young Willis A. Gorman, Bloomington Democrat and later territorial governor of Minnesota, as chairman of the committee on federal relations, announced: "that the settlement and immediate occupation of the Oregon Territory, is big with interest to the United States, and particularly to the West. . . . And now what is the conduct of the British? They have crossed the 49th degree, settled on the Columbia, from head to mouth; fortified it, monopolized the fur trade, and are daily urging on the savage Indian tribes, to murder

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* Ibid., 7-8.

† Howard, South Carolinian by birth, had read law in the office of Hugh L. White in Tennessee. While in the legislature there, he was a great friend of Sam Houston. In 1830, he had migrated to Indiana and had become a law partner of both James Whitcomb and Joseph A. Wright. The friends of Howard never forgave the Democracy of Indiana for its desertion of the General. William W. Woollen, Biographical and Historical Sketches of Early Indiana (Indianapolis, 1883), 262-72.

‡ Esarey, A History of Indiana, I, 529-30.

§ Indiana Statesman, October 21, 28, 1843, cited in Leopold, Robert Dale Owen, 177-78.
our trappers, traders, and settlers, and are now using this important port to bring British goods free of duty, to trade upon within our borders. . . . War is now the favorite policy with England, and war with us too. The patriot’s bosom, and the soldier’s sword respond, ‘Let it come rather than dishonor.’” He concluded with the demand that Congress take active and effective steps immediately.

On January 4, 1844, just a month after the joint resolution of the legislature, Robert Dale Owen introduced into Congress a resolution to end the joint occupation, and by the twenty-fourth, Owen was making a formal reply to the house committee that had decided his proposal was inexpedient. Owen was aroused by this to make his maiden speech in Congress in which he upbraided the committee for its action. “We have faults and failings enough, God knows—we of the West; but cowardice—tame, cold blooded cowardice—the craven spirit that would desert a comrade in his utmost need, that, at least, is no part of our character.” The House apparently felt no inclination to debate the subject.

In the nation, Owen’s speech was eminently successful; it was reprinted and distributed widely in the press, appearing in two Democratic journals in New York as well as in the Globe, the national party organ.

In the Senate, Hannegan was also busy with the Oregon question. He introduced the joint resolutions of the Indiana legislature into the Senate in February, 1844, and later in the same month took the floor again to attack Rufus Choate of Massachusetts for his fear that a war might result. He decried those who disregarded national honor, glory, and integrity for cost, and he attacked the senator from South Carolina who had reputedly characterized the settlers who had gone to Oregon as wanton adventurers whose movements were injurious to the best interests of the nation. On the contrary, said Hannegan, this was the spirit of America. “It was this spirit which gave to our country the brightest jewel in her diadem—the great and mighty West,” he cried. With William Allen of

11 Congressional Globe, 28 Cong., 1 Sess., 178.
12 Ibid., 186.
13 Leopold, Robert Dale Owen, 181.
Ohio and James Semple of Illinois, Hannegan was one of a triumvirate of western leaders in the Senate who were forwarding the cause of expansion into the great Northwest.15

The eighteen senators who voted to end the joint occupations were thus providing an issue for the campaign of 1844. Hannegan in the Senate and Owen in the House were willing to take Indiana along with them in their demands.

The expansionist mood also asserted itself in the case of the annexation of Texas during the pre-election maneuvers of the political parties. While the northwestern Democrats were shouting for a settlement of the Oregon boundary, their southern brethren were leading the movement to annex the Texas Republic. The result of the expansionist demands was a single plank in the Democratic platform in 1844 which aimed to satisfy the leaders of both sectional interests; yet the idea of manifest destiny had its ardent supporters in both sections. It is important to consider the Indiana Democrats' position in this controversy.

The Texas question did not come in for congressional discussion until the eve of the Baltimore convention. The matter had been kept in the background partly by the secrecy of the negotiations in progress and partly because it would have been unwise politically for the followers of Martin Van Buren to allow expansion to become the burning issue of the coming campaign, since his stand on the question was one of a "wait and see" character. For the Democracy of the Northwest, it was difficult to become enthusiastic in such a situation, but when it was suggested that the two prongs of the expansionist drive be linked, the Democratic congressional delegation from Indiana voted solidly for it. The resolution, however, was laid on the table.16

The Chapmans in Indianapolis editorialized on the question by urging that it be left alone at the moment as it might endanger the political hopes of Van Buren.17

On the whole, the Whigs opposed the annexation of Texas, with only a few of the party members feeling much concern. Calvin Fletcher, an early settler and by the 1840's leading citizen of Indianapolis, confided to his diary that "the Texas An-

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15 Semple claimed that the first Oregon meeting held in the United States was under his guidance at Alton, Illinois, in 1842. Theodore C. Pease, The Frontier State (Springfield, Illinois, 1918), 325.
16 Congressional Globe, 28 Cong., 1 Sess., 434.
17 Indianapolis, Indiana State Sentinel, March 28, 1844.
The uneasiness that he felt was not general, however, as evidenced by his entry several days later: “the subject of the annexation of Texas makes some stir among the people in various states but great apathy prevails here.”

The legislature, although it had passed a joint resolution advocating the settlement of the Oregon question, had failed to carry a similar resolution concerning Texas beyond a first reading. A memorial from South Carolina had been lost on the governor’s desk and Whitcomb had forwarded it to the House shortly before adjournment with an apologetic note.

The apathy was short-lived, for a month later Calvin Fletcher was filled with more than “gloomy apprehension.” He was now, it seemed, thoroughly aroused by the Texas question. He wrote: “The annexation of Texas seems to be the great exciting question at present I deplore the state of affairs the political degradation, the corruption of men at the head of national affairs I fear the multitude of demagogues exciting the ignorant in the non slave holding states not to reject territory like Texas as imprudent in their eyes as to refuse the fair offer of a farm on some plausible pretext—& the influence of the Slave states—both united it will be an interposition of Providence if the annexation does not take place—But may I learn prudence, patience, & forbearance in all these matters—Trust in God and his abundant mercies.”

Politically, some Indiana Democrats had the uniting of the diverging interests in mind even if it meant selecting a new presidential candidate. Van Buren seemed to them a bad political risk. Apparently Fletcher’s ire was directed at such political tactics as Tilghman Howard had in mind when he wrote from Washington to a friend: “You will see Van Buren’s and Clay’s letters on Texas. I do not agree with either of them, as I regard the acquisition of Texas a great moment to the United States. Mr. V.B.’s letter has given great dissatisfaction to the Southern members here, and there is much confusion and misgiving in the party. A third man is talked of, and Cass often mentioned. I think Democrats should not be too prompt in

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18 Fletcher Diaries, March 25, 1844, Manuscript Division, Indiana Historical Society Library, Indianapolis.
19 Ibid., March 31, 1844.
21 Fletcher Diaries, April 22, 1844.
taking ground against Texas, as it will react, and the country will go for it, or I am mistaken.”

Howard was not alone in his estimate of the situation. The Hoosier congressmen let it be known that they were extremely skeptical of Van Buren’s chances. Albert Kennedy from Muncietown, representing northeastern Indiana in the House, wrote to the Globe that he had used all the proper means available to secure the defeat of the squire of Lindenwald. Furthermore, he declared, he had been engaged in the task for two months. The Ohio delegation in Congress charged that this movement was part of a concerted effort among some congressmen in Washington. The Hoosiers did not deny their feelings on the subject, but to remove the odium of being accused as conspirators, they replied to the charges of the Ohio Democrats, admitting they had doubts as to the outcome of the election, but stating they were not aware of the “concerted efforts” spoken of by the Ohioans. This denial was published in the Globe, headed by the name of Edward Hannegan and followed by a list of the entire delegation with the exception of Robert Dale Owen, who remained loyal to Van Buren.

The New Harmony reformer, who was by now a staunch advocate of manifest destiny, was plainly worried by the division in the ranks of the Democracy. He wrote a letter to the Globe under the name “Tullius” justifying immediate annexation, but at the same time he warned the extremists that the Baltimore convention should decide whether the Texas issue would become a party principle. Owen was finding it difficult to be an advocate of manifest destiny while professing loyalty to the presidential aspirations of Martin Van Buren.

As the meeting of the convention at Baltimore neared, the actions of certain Indiana congressmen had made it rather clear to the Democracy of Indiana and the nation that Van Buren was not their choice for the presidential nomination.

If Van Buren was not in agreement with the Democrats of Indiana on the Texas issue, Lewis Cass of Michigan seemed to be completely in line with the party leaders. Four days after the Globe letters appeared, this politician wrote to Hannegan that he was in favor of immediate annexation, and he

24 Ibid., May 6, 1844.
outlined both the material and the military reasons for it. Cass claimed he feared the black troops that the British might unloose on the southern states if given the opportunity. Politically, Cass felt that more and more American people were in favor of annexation and since they were, action should come soon.25

Hannegan thus had an unequivocal statement on a much feared question that he could use in advancing the cause of Cass.

General Cass had begun the groundwork for his campaign in Indiana at an early time. The state convention, held at Indianapolis in January of 1843, had been filled with Cass supporters who tried to secure a pledge that the Indiana delegation would go to Baltimore supporting him. Their effort, however, had failed and the state convention had requested all the prominent candidates to submit replies to a set of questions concerning the bank, the tariff, land, limited veto, and whether the potential candidate would support the Democratic party if he did not receive the nomination.26

The replies were all safe enough as submitted by Van Buren, John Calhoun, Colonel Richard Johnson, James Buchanan, and Cass. As Van Buren’s correspondent from Indianapolis put it: it was a case of answering as fully as if this were the first time that the questions had been asked of him. Calhoun was amazed that he should be considered for the office. This chivalrous attitude was not too well received by such partisan Hoosiers as Judge John Law, the loyal Van Burenite.27

The Cass campaign began in full swing with the occasion of the opening of the canal at Fort Wayne linking the Indiana and Ohio divisions of the project. A great celebration was planned for July 4, 1843, and by the first of the month, the guests had begun to arrive. The committees for the occasion were well staffed with Hoosier Democrats, including Bright, Hannegan, Abel C. Pepper, Robert Brackenridge, and Ethan

25 Lewis Cass to Edward A. Hannegan, Detroit, May 10, 1844, in William T. Young, Sketch of the Life and Public Services of General Lewis Cass (Detroit, 1852), 220-22.

26 John Law to Martin Van Buren, Indianapolis, January 10, 1843, Van Buren Papers. Microfilm copy of these papers is at the University of Chicago.

27 John Law to Martin Van Buren, Vincennes, April 17, 1843, Van Buren Papers. The replies were printed in full in the Niles’ National Register (Washington, Baltimore, or Philadelphia, 1837-1849), LXIV (May 13, 1843), 167-69.
A. Brown. Henry Clay, Daniel Webster, and General Winfield Scott had been invited but had declined the opportunity. The joyous occasion was addressed by General Cass. His remarks in themselves were innocent enough, but the meeting of the Democratic leaders was sufficient to give the Cass advocates a chance to begin their move toward capturing the caucus of the state for the Michigan Democrat.

It seems to be clear that the Hoosier Democrats had not turned suddenly against Van Buren because of his attitude on the Texas question. This may well have been the excuse they needed to cast him aside, explaining that it was all for party harmony. The unity of the party was of primary concern to the politician. At the same time, manifest destiny was a solid tenet of political faith to many. To men such as Hannegan, these two goals were not in conflict—they were concerned with the fact that both sections, North and South, wanted more land; that slavery went with the Texas acquisition was more of a fringe issue, as it were.

Thus when the convention met in Baltimore, the Indiana delegation was prepared to support Cass. Those who remained true to Van Buren feared Texas and claimed that the congressional junto was not in tune with the voting Democracy.28

With Cass as the majority choice of the Indiana delegation, the national convention met in Baltimore on May 27, 1844. The Hoosiers did not figure to any great extent in the proceedings, as reported by the Globe, although Jesse Bright, who was beginning his long career as committeeman and manipulator, represented Indiana on the rules committee. When the two-thirds rule was introduced in order to block the aspirations of Van Buren, the Indiana delegates, along with those from Illinois and from most of the southern states, cast their votes in favor of the rule; Ohio and New York dissented, and Pennsylvania split its vote. The crucial test of the convention, however, came with the balloting for the presidential candidate. On the first ballot, the Hoosiers cast three votes for Van Buren and nine for Cass; on the fifth roll call, only one delegate remained faithful to the former president; on the eighth ballot when the tide turned in favor of James K. Polk, the dark horse candidate, the Indiana delegation still cast its vote in favor of Cass. Only on the final ballot did the Hoosiers support Polk in acclamation.

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The supporters of Van Buren did not accept defeat easily. Judge Law, a delegate, was indignant when he wrote: "The Texas question was all a humbug—it offered an opportunity to the malcontents to do what they had already determined on—producing division and discontent, and making this the pretext for the apostacy."39 In spite of this attitude, Law continued to support the party and prepared himself for the coming campaign.

The Whigs, on the defensive, attempted to arouse the electorate with a new appeal to the common man, calling themselves this time the "hob nails." Clay, the choice of the party, had begun his campaign in Indiana in 1842 at a great barbecue held in his honor at Indianapolis. This conclave was so successful that the party decided to carry the campaign to the people on the same grounds, adding for more effectiveness a speakers' bureau and more campaign newspapers. In their arguments, however, they proved to be weak: Clay had eliminated himself on the Texas issue, and the attacks by Whitcomb on the tariff, along with the unpopularity of distribution as a land program, made their position difficult. The eloquent Hannegan was arousing the voters on the question of Texas and Oregon, to which the Whigs countered: "We say this is a question that rises above all party. It means union or disunion; the free North will never submit to it; the free West will not submit to such a tax merely to spread slavery. Our free laborers are in favor of a tariff. The admission of Texas is a step forward in the abandonment of our tariff system."30

The votes of the Free Soilers, who had nominated Birney as their party's candidate, were of concern to both the Democrats and Whigs; the Whigs attempted to make concessions to gather in this vote.

Although the August elections for the state legislature resulted in an unexpected setback for the Democracy, the presidential election in November was a victory for the followers of James K. Polk.51

Now that the Democracy had taken the center of the stage, completing the reversal of the situation of the party in

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30 Indianapolis, Indiana State Journal, June 29, 1844; Esarey, A History of Indiana, I, 531-35.
31 The Whigs received 67,867 votes and the Democrats 70,181 votes. The Free Soil vote was 2,106. Esarey, A History of Indiana, I, 537.
1841 and 1842, the western Democrats were anxious to execute the program of their party. The expansionists were particularly interested in carrying out the Baltimore resolution on Texas and Oregon, but there was a difference of interpretation as to whether to carry out these proposals immediately or to wait until after the inauguration in March.

Soon after the Congress convened in January, 1845, the question of annexing Texas arose in the House. Caleb Smith, in the Whig minority, attacked the South in general and William L. Yancey in particular for appealing to patriotism, claiming Texas was merely a party issue and that sufficient reasons had not been advanced for its annexation.\textsuperscript{32} Thus the opportunity arose for Robert Dale Owen to deliver an address filled with spell-binding phrases in which he attempted to eliminate all the objections that had been raised in the debates. He declared a treaty was not necessary to annex Texas; all that was needed was a joint resolution. He attempted to dispel the fears of the North regarding slavery, by claiming that it, like monarchy, was merely a temporary evil—both would disappear with progress. According to him, it was not the problem of the Negro that blocked the annexation, it was the Whig rejection of any annexation. His plea wound up with the demand for immediate action.\textsuperscript{33}

Owen’s speech indicated that he did not foresee the danger of a war over Texas. He believed the dispersal of slavery would weaken the slave system, leading gradually to emancipation in the border states. He was not concerned with the difficulties of constitutionality, an attitude which prompted Samuel Sample, Whig congressman from South Bend, to write to wealthy Allen Hamilton of Fort Wayne: “It is passing strange that men who almost go into convulsions at the idea of voting public money for the improvement of our harbors & rivers can gulp down this great constitutional difficulty with the greatest ease.”\textsuperscript{34}

Sample and Caleb Smith, alone in the House, could not halt the progress of the Democratic drive. It is interesting that neither of them concerned himself with the slavery aspects of the Texas question.

\textsuperscript{33} Ibid., 109-12.
\textsuperscript{34} Samuel C. Sample to Allen Hamilton, Washington, D.C., January 9, 1845, Allen Hamilton Papers, Indiana State Library, Indianapolis.
By the end of January, the Texas resolution passed the House by a vote of 120 to 98, with the Indiana Democratic congressmen lending their full support to the measure. A month later, the Senate passed the resolution with Hannegan supporting it and Albert S. White, the Whig, dissenting. Thus one of the campaign pledges of 1844 had been carried out.

Congress next began a consideration of the other half of the expansion program—Oregon. The enthusiasm of the northwestern Democrats increased accordingly, for it was a popular issue at home. The resolutions of the state legislature, advocating the end of the joint occupancy of Oregon, were introduced by the Whig Senator from Indiana, Albert S. White, who took the occasion to say that he was anxious to vote for a measure such as this; indeed, he claimed that he was prepared to go even further than the legislature of his state had instructed him to go.

On the same day that these resolutions were introduced, the House, after discussion, passed a bill providing for a territorial government for Oregon. On the question of the prohibition of involuntary servitude, the only congressman who saw fit to vote against an amendment to that effect was William J. Brown. On the final vote, Sample went along with the Democrats while Caleb Smith reneged. When the bill, however, was received in the Senate, it was voted down by the slim margin of two votes. Thus through politics, inertia, or the presidential message, Oregon was still hanging fire when the Twenty-eighth Congress adjourned for the last time.

Before the Indiana Democrats could return to the capital, they had to face the electorate once again. The summer of 1845 was devoted to congressional elections. The Texas issue was out of the way and the Oregon question had been aired in the national legislative chambers just enough to reveal the impending difficulties over its passage.

The campaign was in reality a continuation of the 1844 canvass. William W. Wick of Indianapolis, Democratic aspirant for a congressional seat, replied to the questions of the district convention with the same set of political principles used by the presidential candidates in 1843 with one exception:

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36 Ibid., 237.
37 Ibid., 236-37, 388.
he added his views on Texas and Oregon by virtually repeating the party stand of 1844.38

As for Robert Dale Owen, he merely stood on his record for re-election, escaping attack even on the question of Texas, for the Whigs of the “Pocket” refrained from considering the matter from the standpoint of the extension of slavery, and the upland Southerners of his district could not be aroused on this subject. Consequently, the campaign revolved, for the most part, about personalities.39

Despite the lack of clearcut issues in the congressional campaign, the political breezes that summer did stir up some indications of the direction they were blowing. There was a continuing cry for Oregon, with jingoism and emotionalism adding some interest. Sarah T. Bolton, who often served as the poetess of the Democracy, composed verses for the Oregon immigrant. She wrote:

In Oregon children of free men are dwelling;

They're willing to die but they can't be enslaved.

No, No, starry Flag we can never forget thee,
Till freedom is shrouded in tyranny's night;
Wherever we dwell we're determined to set thee,
And die or maintain thee unsullied and bright.40

During the summer, the Democratic state organ was also filling its columns with warnings to the Hoosiers. The Chapmans wrote: “There is, we are fearful, great danger. Ought not the whole West to arouse in this matter: Will not Indiana act with her sister, Illinois, and act promptly? We think so. Let our voices be heard, and rely on it, it will have a powerful influence in settling this great question—the greatest to the West which has been mooted since the last War. Who will take the lead? Let us hear from our strong men!”41

When the ballots were cast in August, the political balance remained the same. Two Whigs and eight Democrats were elected to office.

After the elections, preparations went forward for the coming session of Congress. By November, 1845, the citizenry were being prepared for possible British action on the question

38 Indianapolis, Indiana State Sentinel, May 8, 1845.
39 Leopold, Robert Dale Owen, 189.
40 Indianapolis, Indiana State Sentinel, June 26, 1845.
41 Ibid., August 30, 1845.
of Oregon, to which one Hoosier editor responded by suggesting the counter move of placing an embargo on cotton which, he said, would bring Great Britain to terms in less than six weeks. The national government would buy the cotton and burn it, if necessary.\textsuperscript{42}

Within the Democratic ranks there was dissatisfaction over the patronage falling to the loyal partisans of the party. The President, declared the Greencastle \textit{Patriot} in August, was a tenant only, with the freehold being held by the people, not the friends of John Calhoun in the South, nor Silas Wright in the North. “The Administration must be misinformed of the wish and feelings of its friends West and North-West of the Ohio. It must be that the Administration has been informed, that this vast district of country has no pride to gratify, or they have no men with whom it is safe or prudent to do it. It cannot be, that any sane man can suppose that as yet the North-West has received any rent for her share in the inheritance.” Since at this same time the \textit{Indiana Democrat} was pushing Cass for the presidency in 1848, it would seem that some Indiana Democrats were feeling their political neglect early in the game. The election was over and they wanted no more promises “that the administration may deem it a virtue to violate and needful to refuse any and all explanation.”\textsuperscript{43}

While the Indiana politicians were confronting the presidency with their sectional attitudes, they were also expressing their views as to what their role should be in relation to other sections. The western attitude was one of youth—a realization of newly found manhood—and with this growing self-consciousness came bluster, show of muscle, and vigor. The confining nature of the federal household bore a little heavily at times and the parental guidance of the older sections was not always gratefully accepted. The western child was beginning to have a mind of its own. Indeed, it wanted a new status in the family, although it did not seem to recognize that responsibilities come with a more nearly adult position, and occasionally it even went so far as to disclaim the parent. One Indiana politician wrote, for example: “I have been of the opinion, and still believe, that if one or the other must be lost to the Union [Texas or Oregon], that the interest of the West would be promoted by giving New England for Texas and

\textsuperscript{42} \textit{Ibid.}, November 15, 1845.

\textsuperscript{43} \textit{Ibid.}, August 30, 1845.
Oregon. Those Little States, which five of them do not equal in territory the State of Indiana . . . comes forward with their ten Senators to our two.” Declaring that the East had hamp- ered the West on lands and the tariff, and had demanded for Negro representation in the South, this Hoosier suggested that Daniel Webster should be authorized to make another treaty with Great Britain, which would draw the eastern boundary line at the Connecticut River.44

These western leaders were thus frequently inciting the Hoosiers to look upon the older sections of the nation as contributing to the difficulties of securing the material needs of the expanding Northwest. The plan of ceding New England had, of course, its ludicrous aspects.

The road, however, was usually open to bargaining for political and economic needs that could be secured only through the action of the federal government. Indiana’s Hannegan, for example, told Duff Green of a trade that would be offered to Calhoun and the South, prompting Green to write: “I saw Hannegan of Indiana yesterday. He says that the West will be united and will demand funds for the improvements of their harbours, rivers, and the Cumberland road, and the graduation of the price of public land, and that if the South will give these to the West the West will go with the South on the tariff.”46

There was nothing emotional or jingoistic about this planned tactic; it was merely a practical example of the give and take of politics, one of the points of conflict that had to be resolved if the bundle of interests that made up the political parties could operate to carry out the general will of the body politic. To the President and Congress fell the task of adjusting these conflicts.

On the first day of the new Congress, a correspondent wrote to the Sentinel: “Oregon, too, will undergo a similar keel-hauling, and the opposition will do their best to sustain British policy and British interests; while the Democratic party will go on, unterrified and undismayed by any threats or denunciations, either from this or the other side of the Atlantic, and our just claim up to the degree of 52, 40, will be carried without faltering or flinching on our part. So let it be . . .

44 Ibid., February 13, 1845.
Trust me when I say that from indications here, and among Democrats all over the country, there is, and will be one voice on this question. The whole of Oregon will remain ours: but whether immediate notice of occupation, or a further postponement will be recommended, does not yet appear. The President’s Message of to-morrow will, perhaps, enlighten us as to the future policy of the President and his cabinet on this point.”46 The Hoosier agreed with Polk that John Bull had to be treated by looking him straight in the eye. The offer of peace had been rejected, the president had reported to Congress, and the cries of 54° 40’ continued to be heard from across the mountains. William Wick prepared his constituents for war which he claimed was inevitable. Since there was prosperity in Indiana, he urged the Indianans to save all they could because the western valley would be the storehouse of the Army. Their nation, he told his constituents, would have to tax them to support the impending war. The editors at home had anticipated war through such slogans as “Peace if practicable—war, if necessary,” and the Chapmans had announced, “Let it come.”47

The first Indiana congressman to speak on the Oregon crisis was the exponent of manifest destiny, Robert Dale Owen. This time his tone was not belligerent when he defended Polk from his critics who were taking him to task on his July offer to compromise at 49°, an offer which had been refused by the British minister, Lord Pakenham.48

Also in the House, Caleb B. Smith, a staunch national Whig from the Whitewater Valley, declared that this was not a western question alone. Although he did not retreat from the position that Oregon should be protected, he was unwilling to end the joint convention. The West, he claimed, would suffer as much from a war, which he wished to avoid, as would any other section.49

Not all the Indiana representatives, however, were inclined to protect the administration or avoid positive measures in securing all of Oregon. There was, for example, Andrew Kennedy, the blacksmith-turned-lawyer from Muncietown, a

46 “Timoleon” to the editors, Washington, D.C., December 1, 1845, in Indianapolis, Indiana State Sentinel, December 11, 1845.
48 Congressional Globe, 29 Cong., 1 Sess., 135-36.
49 Ibid., 158-59.
district that still bore evidence of new settlement. This gentle-
man was a professed dyed-in-the-wool Democrat who boasted
that he was “one hundred and fifty yards ahead of his party.”
Illiterate until manhood, Kennedy represented well the self-
made western leader. This “young blacksmith” addressed the
House on the Oregon question and, unlike Owen or Smith, he
did not attempt halfway measures. He recalled to the reluct-
tant Southerners that: “If the question is to be considered as
a local question, then I ask that we may be the judges of the
course that is to be pursued. That is what we did when the
South came here and asked us, not to defend their own soil,
but to admit into the Union a foreign territory—an inde-
pendent nation. If upon that question, we had hesitated, it
would have been said that we wished to back out. . . You said,
this is the golden moment.” Kennedy elaborated on this part
of his speech in the Appendix in the Congressional Globe by
continuing: “If a northern or western man presumed to ques-
tion the mode or object to the time, he was denounced as rec-
reant to the best interests of the country, and suspected of
secret hostility to the measure. . . We went with them then,
and, I might almost say, we went in blind. . . But this much I
will tell them, that their hesitation and opposition will not
deter us from discharging our duty to our constituents and to
our country.” “Where I live,” said Kennedy, “this is no party
question. There is no difference between Whigs and Demo-
crats on this subject. In a question involving national rights,
we know no party differences.” On this observation, the
Hoosier congressman spoke with a modicum of truth.

The legislature demanded the occupation, “peaceably if we
can; forcibly if we must,” and both parties in their state con-
ventions in January passed resolutions demanding all of Ore-
gon. One of the Whig politicians, going along with the tide,
wrote: “On the Oregon question, we can [?] as long and loud
as they—in fact I shall insist among the liberty voters espe-
cially, that we are entitled to Oregon and must have it to re-
gain the political ascendancy of the Free States—and by the
by this is a strong argument with every sensible man who
views the relative situation of matters & things in their proper
light.”

50 Woollen, Biographical and Historical Sketches, 281-88.
51 Congressional Globe, 29 Cong., 1 Sess., 179-80; ibid., appendix, 209,
181.
52 Orth to Colfax, Lafayette, January 28, 1846, in J. Herman Schau-
ingers (ed.), “The Letters of Godlove S. Orth, Hoosier Whig,” in Indiana
Magazine of History (Bloomington, Indiana, 1900- ), XXXIX (1943),
379.
As the debates in Congress wore on, endless in duration, the Indiana delegation produced more advocates of expansion, including Owen, who apparently changed his tune and decided to help carry out the measure, and William W. Wick, who began an attack on Robert Barnwell Rhett, the South Carolina secessionist who was vigorously supporting Calhoun's policy of "masterful activity" and who had his own private interest in keeping the peace with England. Wick claimed that the West would lose much by a war: "The Northwest makes as many clear dollars, in proportion to her population, from the export of her wheat and other products, as South Carolina does from the export of her cotton. . . . We sell our produce wherever it is wanted—to England, when her starving population require it—and to South Carolina, when her cotton and rice crops are good, and her terrapin crop fails." Wick continued by attacking the nullification views of South Carolina, saying that if her politicians had any political ambitions, they would have to include Oregon. He then raised the question of sectional bargaining: "In the Northwest we go for all the issues of 1844. I regret to see that some portion of the party is hanging back; perhaps it is expected to save the tariff of 1842. . . . We annexed the territory of Texas. We in the Northwest charge nothing for our assistance in that matter. We went 'on our own hook' on that question."53

Charles Cathcart, representing the extreme northwestern part of the state, carried on the upbraiding of southern party members who were reluctant to act on the Oregon question. He harangued at length the policy of masterful inactivity. "But this doctrine of 'masterly inactivity': I cannot find it in the proceedings of the Democratic convention. I may, however, see room for its inference from the neglect to mention Texas and Oregon in the proceedings of the Whig convention; but, sir, that is not the chart which I steer by. . . . There is, however, something superlatively ridiculous in this idea of masterly inactivity and bed chamber diplomacy."54

In the Senate, Indiana had its Oregon enthusiast, par excellence, Edward A. Hannegan. On February 10, 1845, the fiery Hoosier introduced his resolutions demanding all of Oregon. Insisting that the voice of the people forbade all compromise on this issue, he leveled his oratory at Calhoun and the policy of masterful inactivity. When he was reminded by W.

53 Laura A. White, Robert Barnwell Rhett: Father of Secession (New York, 1931), 88; Congressional Globe, 29 Cong., 1 Sess., appendix, 199-201.
54 Congressional Globe, 29 Cong., 1 Sess., appendix, 323.
T. Colquitt of Georgia of his indifference to the acquisition of Texas, the Indiana Senator replied: "The time has now come when I should give the reason why I was not so much for Texas. Both Texas and Oregon were united in the Baltimore convention. But I dreaded—if Texas went first—I dreaded Punic Faith. Yes Punic faith."56

Colquitt claimed, however, that Hannegan's reluctance had preceded the Baltimore convention. At this point, the Senator from Indiana appealed to David R. Atchison of Missouri and Ambrose H. Sevier of Arkansas to verify his statements, which they did by claiming that he had been a true friend of the Texas annexation up until the meeting at Baltimore.66

The ire of Hannegan was raised in March when Senator William H. Haywood, Jr., suggested that Polk's message of 1845 could be interpreted as meaning that the President stood for a compromise at the forty-ninth parallel. If these were the words of the President, then he "has spoken words of falsehood and with the tongue of a serpent." Texas and Oregon, Hannegan declared, dwelt together in the American heart. The West would not be trodden on this way. After being called to order, Hannegan injected a new issue into the debate when he added: "The last steamer from Europe, it is said, puts this question in such a position that for Oregon we can get free trade. Free trade I love dearly; but never will it be bought by me by the territory of my country. . . . Whence this movement for free trade on the part of England? Does not every one know that she has been driven into this course by the outcries of starving millions? . . . But the West is to be provided for; it is to have a new and most profitable market. Some of us know that from the Baltic England would get her wheat long before we could send a ton into her market." Thus Hannegan pitted himself against the administration. During the evening of the same day that Haywood made his speech, Hannegan called at the White House where from an anteroom he shouted to Polk, concerning the speech of the senator from North Carolina: Polk denied that any one had spoken for him on the Oregon issue. Senator David L. Yulee and Dixon Lewis were in the

56 Ibid., 379.

66 On March 27, 1844, after the convention at Cincinnati had demanded all of Oregon, the Weekly Herald and Philanthropist had predicted a bargain between the South and the senators of Ohio, Illinois, New Hampshire, Indiana, and probably Michigan. When the issues of Oregon and Texas were joined at Baltimore, the West expected full support. See Melvin C. Jacobs, Winning Oregon (Caldwell, Idaho, 1938), 200.
next room and, according to Polk’s diary, were pleased with this reply.67

On the next day, Polk was severely castigated by Hannegan in the Senate, and he continued to attack Polk until the bill was finally passed, carrying the western Democrats, including Hannegan, Allen of Ohio, James Semple of Illinois, and Cass of Michigan, down to defeat.

Among the fourteen who voted against ratification on June 18, 1846, the names of Hannegan and Bright are to be found. Six of the last ditch opposition were from the Northwest. Hannegan continued his violent attacks even up to the ratification of the treaty, for Polk related in his diary just two days before ratification occurred: “Mr. Hannegan had made a violent speech, and that several of the North Western Senators were excited & in a bad Temper.” These “spoiled children,” as Polk called them, held their grudge, and it was not until the following year that Hannegan called again at the White House. “He had certainly no cause for complaint against me for my course was a consistent one. I received him in a courteous manner,” claimed Polk.68

The consistency of Polk was one matter, but to men such as Hannegan, Cass, and Allen, with their uncompromising attitudes toward Oregon, the expansionist urge was another. Fanatics on the subject, they would listen to no compromise! Polk explained the tempest in terms of political ambition, but it was more than that. Whether popular passions were whipped up by the Hoosiers themselves or by Indiana politicians in Washington is not a readily answered question. There, however, seems to be little doubt that the Oregon question aroused fits of temper that weakened considerably the party morale and thereby caused new stress and strain on the unity of the Democracy.

At the time when Hannegan had informed Duff Green of the trade which the West would make to get its economic program, the Indiana Senator did not include the expansion issue as a part of a possible political bargain. To western men of Hannegan’s background, there was no compromising of the best interests of all the people since manifest destiny had been clothed with sanctity. Yet when the southern senators joined with the Pennsylvanians and both hurled the tariff issue into the melee (for different reasons), complications arose that

57 Congressional Globe, 29 Cong., 1 Sess., 460; M. M. Quaife (ed.), The Diary of James K. Polk during His Presidency, 1845 to 1849 (4 vols., Chicago, 1910), I, 263-64, 267-68.
58 Quaife, The Diary of James K. Polk, I, 474; ibid., II, 348.
Hannegan could not cope with. He shouted that he would not sacrifice free trade for Oregon, and then, in the speech already quoted, proceeded to inform the Senate that Baltic wheat would arrive in Great Britain before a single bushel of American wheat could be shipped across the Atlantic. At the same time, in the House, William W. Wick, also a staunch Indiana Democrat, was producing statistics on the amount of western grain going directly to the continent. The wheat trade was vastly important to many Hoosiers.59

Hannegan, who had been in the center of the political stage in the Oregon controversy, had had his moment in the limelight and was now fading into the wings. He showed little interest on other western demands; for example, even during a naval appropriation bill debate, he brought up the matter of expansion. He voiced few opinions about the tariff or internal improvements. The manifest destiny of the growing nation had provided him opportunity to exhibit his political oratory. He was a blustery and often brilliant speaker. An English woman who visited the Senate galleries described him as a “genuine son of the West; ardent, impulsive and un-daunted; thinking, acting and daring with the most perfect freedom. His spirit is youthful and buoyant, and he is ever sanguine of success, though he feels acutely the bitterness of disappointment.” She went on to say that the Indiana Senator possessed the characteristics of his western colleagues who were “fluent of speech, quick in action, and ready in expedients; they are, in fact, the very men required for the position they hold, that of Borderers of the Republic. They are a new power, whose interests, although inseparably blended with those of the other sections of the Union, are yet distinct and individual; the West but now begins to assert herself, to exhibit her strength, and though yet an infant, to claim her share in the ‘balance of power.’” 60

Hannegan was far from being a careful and calculating statesman; rather he was a politician who allowed himself to be carried away by his own eloquence. His vehemence and bluster were born of debate rather than of a long planned course of political action. Typical of a stump speaker who never yielded ground to his opponent, Hannegan obstinately defended any position he took. His impetuousness led him to say many things that he later regretted. In the Oregon controversy, his course against Polk and the bargain he made may

59 Congressional Globe, 29 Cong., 1 Sess., appendix, 199.
well have occurred to him on the floor of the Senate, for they came spontaneously and in extemporaneous remarks. His hurried visits to Polk at the White House were in the heat of anger. To brush aside the wheat trade of the West was certainly not a calculated move. In the course of senatorial debates, he was rather frequently called to order by the president of the Senate. On occasion, his heated flow of words made later apologies necessary. After one of these occurrences in the Senate, the Indiana politician offered an explanation for his impetuous manner: "His [John Fairfield] language was meant in kindness... It implies, simply, that I act without reflection—that I press forward without consideration—that I have no consultation with patience. That, sir, can be implied only from the ardor of my manner, which God gave me, and which I did not bestow upon myself. I have on one or two occasions been taken to task here for this ardor of manner. Let me, once for all, say, look at the language—look not at the manner. Who is there that can say to me, you have planted a thorn, or thrust with a dagger? Is there malice in me? If my manner be warm, I cannot help it. If it be a crime and an offence to carry a warm heart—and although I say it myself—an honest one, then am I subject to the reproach... But, sir, I, at least am incapable of smiling when I stab."61 The ever hasty Hannegan was susceptible to excesses all of his life. His legal career was eventually ruined by his drinking habits. Contrasted to him was Stephen A. Douglas who, although also thoroughly aroused by the Oregon squabble, continued to climb the political ladder. The Illinois Senator had more than oratorical skill and while he, too, was unpredictable, he was a manager, which Hannegan was not.62 In the Oregon debates, Hannegan's haranguing and distrust of the other sectional wings of the Democracy helped to widen the cracks in the already over-stretched seams that were holding the diverging interests together.

The final result of this phase of the developing sectional strife was that one of the western demands—54° 40'—was lost. While still smarting from this defeat, the Hoosier politicians had little time to regain their pose for there were other battles to be fought and won if the western program was to become an actuality. Sectional issues that posed no easy compromise included the tariff, internal improvements, and slavery.

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61 Congressional Globe, 29 Cong., 1 Sess., 255.