

HENRY S. LANE AND THE BIRTH OF THE INDIANA REPUBLICAN PARTY, 1854-1861

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Introduction

During the nineteenth century, in an age of high levels of political participation, the United States had many significant and influential party leaders. Alongside the famous names of Henry Clay, Daniel Webster, and Abraham Lincoln, Henry Smith Lane is relatively unknown to historians and students of political history. If historians do recognize the name Lane, it most likely comes from studying the 1860 National Republican Convention in Chicago where Indiana delegates, including Lane, worked to secure Lincoln's nomination. However, Henry Lane represents more than just a name at a party convention, as he served as one of the leading Hoosier political figures in the nineteenth century.

Lane participated in government during a time of party turmoil and shifting political climate. In the early nineteenth century, the United States grew increasingly divided between the northern and southern sections of the country while national parties unsuccessfully attempted to downplay this sectional strife. The Second Party System refers to the political structure in which the two main political parties were the Whigs and Democrats. This system functioned from the 1830s to the early 1850s and relied on an agreement between the two parties that certain issues would not be addressed on a national scale, particularly slavery.¹

With the annexation of new territories as a result of the war with Mexico in the late 1840s, other political issues could no longer overshadow the slavery question. The issue of whether slavery would extend into these territories

¹ Eric Foner, *Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Men: The Ideology of the Republican Party Before the Civil War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970), 9.

engrossed the nation. As a consequence of this debate, the Whig Party grew increasingly weak in the 1850s, unable to produce candidates who appealed to both the North and South. A devoted Whig, Lane eventually realized that his party was no longer viable and joined a new party that would support free labor in the territories. Vital aspects of this study focus on his transition from Whig to Republican as well as Lane's leadership of that new party in Indiana.

With the collapse of the Second Party System after the 1852 presidential election, two new parties emerged in many northern states. The Know Nothing—or American Party—quickly established itself as a refuge for nativist, and sometimes anti-slavery voters, while the Republicans appealed to supporters of restrictions on slavery expansion in new territories. In Indiana, the two new parties battled each other to establish themselves as the dominant rival to the Democratic Party. The 1856 presidential campaign proved a major turning point for both the Republican and American parties. The former gained formidable strength in many northern states while the latter divided over the slavery issue and lost much of the voter support that it had shown in the 1854 and 1855 elections.

After leaving the Whig Party, Lane emerged as an important figure during the formation of the Hoosier People's Party. Lane helped develop this new party in Indiana—which eventually adopted the name “Republican”—and by 1856, he became one of the party's leaders. Serving as the president of the Republican Party's national convention in Philadelphia, that year, Lane gained recognition for his eloquent speeches and leadership qualities. According to one early biography, Lane

was an orator who “abounded in anecdote,” with a “peculiar charm in his delivery.”² These talents helped win Lane election to the United States Senate in 1858, in an attempt by Indiana Republicans to replace two Democrats who they believed had been elected unconstitutionally. Although the Democratic controlled U.S. Senate rejected Lane as Indiana’s senator, his battle in Washington on behalf of the Hoosier Republicans further secured his leadership role in the party.

In 1860, Lane attended the Republican National Convention in Chicago where he worked tirelessly to nominate Abraham Lincoln as the party’s presidential candidate. Later that year Lane was elected as the first Republican governor of Indiana, but resigned days after his inauguration on account of his election to the U.S. Senate by the state legislature. Lane served and led the people of Indiana in the 1850s and deserves to be recognized as one of the influential Hoosier politicians of his time. Among the Indiana Republican leaders, noted historian Kenneth Stampp argues, “none had been more active than Lane in organizing the new party, none was more popular with the rank and file, and none matched his proficiency as a stump speaker.”³ This study contends that Lane was a vital leader in Hoosier politics and especially in the Republican Party’s transition from a grassroots movement in 1854 to its development into a powerful organization by 1860.

There is an abundance of scholarship on American politics in the 1850s. However, in recent years, historians have largely ignored the study of the emergence of the Republican Party in Indiana. Historians frequently examine the

² William W. Woollen, *Biographical and Historical Sketches of Early Indiana* (Indianapolis: Hammond & Co., 1883), 128.

³ Kenneth M. Stampp, *Indiana Politics During the Civil War* (Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Review, 1949), 27.

party's involvement in the sectional crisis and the coming of the Civil War in the late 1850s. Many works also discuss the organization of the party, but on a national scale rather than a state-by-state account. A study focusing on Lane can be a useful addition to scholarship about the ways local and state political battles contributed to the growing national political crisis. Further, Lane represents a figure who is relatively unexplored in the scholarship produced in the last fifty years on Indiana history. Although other historians do not consider Lane a leader because he did not hold important offices, portray himself as an ambitious man, or influence national politics, Lane represents a different kind of leader. His influence in Indiana resulted from his personal popularity as well as his skill in addressing voters and bringing together different factions within one political organization. An assessment of how Lane fits—or does not fit—into the interpretations of the most influential of these secondary sources is necessary to understand the historiography of this subject.

The majority of secondary works examined for this study focused on the national picture in the discussion of Lane and the Republican Party. William E. Gienapp's book *The Origins of the Republican Party, 1852-1856*, although one of the most useful sources on antebellum northern politics barely mentions Lane. When he does discuss Lane, it is within a national context, at the first Republican national convention where Republicans chose the Hoosier as their chairman. Gienapp labels his selection as "unfortunate" and presents Lane as an inexperienced and ineffectual leader at the convention.⁴ Likewise, although Eric Foner in *Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Men: The Ideology of the Republican Party Before the Civil War*, does label Henry

⁴ William E. Gienapp, *The Origins of the Republican Party, 1852-1856* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 335.

Lane as a leader in Indiana, he only discusses him when studying the conservative element of party. For Foner, Lane was a product of the changing political climate, reacting to national events and leaders rather than a proactive architect of the new movement in Indiana.⁵

Other highly regarded historical works do not discuss Lane at all and only examine Indiana briefly. Nevertheless, these sources are useful in understanding the general development of the Republican Party and the national events that produced the collapse of the second party system and its collapse. For example, Tyler Anbinder in *Nativism and Slavery: The Northern Know Nothings and the Politics of the 1850s*,⁶ discusses the influence of nativists, both in the Republican and Know Nothings parties, but only examines Indiana in a few sections. Michael F. Holt's essays in his book, *Political Parties and American Political Development from the Age of Jackson to the Age of Lincoln*⁷ examine the death of the Whig Party, the popularity of the Know Nothings in the North, and the strength of the Democratic Party but all from the perspective of national leaders and national events. Although useful in the broader narrative of the 1850s, these sources fail to observe the significance of the Hoosier state and its leaders.

While a majority of the sources that specifically focus on Indiana and Lane were written in the early twentieth century, they still provide valuable information on this subject. Walter Rice Sharp studies Lane in his 1920 article, "Henry S. Lane

⁵ Foner, *Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Men*, 190; 217.

⁶ Tyler Anbinder, *Nativism and Slavery: The Northern Know Nothings and the Politics of the 1850s* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992).

⁷ Michael F. Holt, *Political Parties and American Political Development from the Age of Jackson to the Age of Lincoln* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1992).

and the Formation of the Republican Party in Indiana.” Sharp claims that Lane helped define and shape the new Republican Party in Indiana and argues that by 1856, Lane was “the foremost figure in the party organization.”⁸ However, while Sharp determines that Lane preferred to let others hold positions in political office, this study argues that Lane also desired these positions but understood when it was advantageous to run for office. For example, he refrained from campaigning for governor in 1852 but accepted the candidacy in 1860 because if successful, he was guaranteed a seat in the United States Senate. Although not a ruthless politician, Lane was more of an active leader than perhaps Sharp allows.

James A. Woodburn’s 1931 article “Henry Smith Lane,” is more of a hagiography of its subject. Woodburn virtually omits the difficulties that Lane and the People’s Party faced in 1854-1855 and jumps right to 1856 where he claims that the organization, with Lane’s leadership, “was a more homogenous party with a future before it.”⁹ Furthermore, Woodburn naively argues that in the 1860 election, there was no formal agreement between Lane and Oliver Morton concerning the governorship and the U.S. Senate seat. Because many opposed such an agreement at the time, painting Lane in a negative light, Woodburn simply labels the controversy as “a mutual understanding.”¹⁰ Although Woodburn’s article requires scrutiny when evaluating its information, this study uses it to provide background information on Lane’s life and the general development of the Republican Party.

⁸ Walter Rice Sharp, “Henry S. Lane and the Formation of the Republican Party in Indiana,” *The Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 7, no. 2 (September 1920): 109.

⁹ James A. Woodburn, “Henry Smith Lane,” *Indiana Magazine of History* 27, no. 4 (December 1931): 280.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 282.

In the 1950s, historian Roger Van Bolt wrote a series of articles studying the fusionist movement and Indiana's political climate in the 1850s. This study focuses on two of Van Bolt's articles. In "Fusion Out of Confusion, 1854," Van Bolt discusses the break up of the Hoosier Whig Party within the context of the introduction of the Kansas-Nebraska Act but does not mention Lane as a major figure in this event. He only mentions Lane one time in his article, calling him a "popular" colleague of John Defrees, the editor of the Indianapolis *Journal*.¹¹ Whereas this study places Lane at the forefront of the fusionist movement in 1854, Van Bolt relegates him to the sidelines, where his usefulness came from his campaign speeches. In the article "The Rise of the Republican Party in Indiana, 1855-1856,"¹² Van Bolt does acknowledge Lane's participation in the development of the party and his recognition as president of the Republican national convention in 1856. However, he claims that men like John Defrees, George Julian, and Schuyler Colfax represented the true leaders of the fusion movement. These men definitely played a major role in Indiana during this time but this thesis argues that Lane belongs to this small group of fusionist leaders because of his oratorical skills, influence among former Whigs, and his ability to appeal to the different factions that made up the Republican Party in Indiana.

The primary sources examined in this study are not immensely different from the primary sources used in other studies on Lane or the early years of the Hoosier Republican Party. This thesis relies heavily on newspapers published

¹¹ Roger H. Van Bolt, "Fusion Out of Confusion, 1854," *Indiana Magazine of History* 49, no. 3 (December 1953): 380.

¹² Roger H. Van Bolt, "The Rise of the Republican Party in Indiana, 1855-1856," *Indiana Magazine of History* 7, no. 2 (September 1955).

throughout the state of Indiana and preserved on microfilm at the Indiana State Library in Indianapolis. The Republican Indianapolis *Journal* and the Democratic Indianapolis *Sentinel* proved the most useful in understanding the dynamics between the two parties as well as the local and national events that strongly affected Indiana politics in this time period. However, additional newspapers from around the state provided valuable insight into subjects like the Know Nothing Party, differences in opinions between northern and southern Hoosiers, and local elections. Also, many of these papers printed speeches by political leaders, including Lane, offering not only the text but also the editor's opinions on the speech's contents. Since newspapers in the nineteenth century were highly partisan, they are useful in the study of elections, state and national party conventions, and party platforms.

This thesis also examined the personal papers of Hoosier politicians. Besides studying the most important sources such as the Henry S. Lane Papers at Indiana University and the Lane-Elston Family Papers at the Indiana Historical Society, other useful collections were the John G. Davis Papers, Daniel R. Bearss Papers, and the William English Papers, all at the Indiana Historical Society. These politicians, Whig-Republican Bearss, and Democrats Davis and English were involved in the same events as Lane and provide first-hand accounts of not only the political leaders but also the constituents they represented.

Other primary sources used in this thesis include contemporary published works discussing the development of the Hoosier Republican Party and some of the

party's political leaders. George Julian's *Political Recollections, 1840 to 1872*¹³ is one of the most useful of these sources. As an antislavery leader and a radical Republican—especially compared to Henry Lane—Julian's memoir is a valuable chronicle, and often critique, of the Hoosier Republican Party, especially in its earliest stages. It also serves as a commentary on the Hoosier Republican Party's reaction to local and national events as well as its success and failures in elections. Another valuable contemporary source is Murat Halstead's *Caucuses of 1860: A History of the National Political Conventions of the Current Presidential Campaign*.¹⁴ This work provides extensive detail of the 1860 Republican National Convention and Lane's involvement in securing Abraham Lincoln the presidential nomination. As a correspondent at the convention, Halstead describes the inner workings among the Republicans and how the convention functioned. These contemporary sources, together with the newspapers and personal collections, help support the study of the development of the Hoosier Republican Party.

This thesis uses these primary and secondary sources to provide a case study of the role of local and state politicians in the transformation of the Second Party System into the Third Party System. By examining Lane, this study looks for the part played by “conservative” Whigs in the new coalition with antislavery and nativist groups in the growing Republican Party. Whereas other historians have looked at Lane's papers and speeches to describe his eloquence and influence, this study uses

¹³ George W. Julian, *Political Recollection, 1840 to 1872* (Chicago: Jansen, McClurg & Company, 1884.)

¹⁴ Murat Halstead, *Caucuses of 1860: A History of the National Political Conventions of the Current Presidential Campaign* (Columbus: Follett, Foster and Company, 1860).

those same sources to depict an ambitious man, a capable leader, and an architect of a new political organization in Indiana.

Although the main emphasis of this study is Lane and his part in the Republican Party, another important part to this thesis is the examination of Indiana and national politics in the 1850s. This thesis studies the development of the Hoosier Republican Party and the obstacles the young organization experienced as it transformed into a major political party. Party leaders generally focused on states like New York and Pennsylvania in national elections but Indiana became increasingly significant leading up to the 1860 election. In James A. Fuller's article "The Election of 1860 and Political Realignment Theory: Indiana as a Case Study," he studies the idea that Hoosiers created a short-term strategy for the 1856 and 1860 election, aiming more at "electoral victories" in state and local contests than at helping determine the outcome of national contests.¹⁵ Furthermore, while Hoosiers certainly paid attention to national issues, Fuller argues what most affected these elections "reflected the particular situation in the state."¹⁶

Like Fuller, this thesis also argues that Hoosiers took national issues and made them locally significant. For example, by studying Lane's papers as well as newspapers throughout the state, Hoosier Republicans used issues like the Dred Scott decision and the Lecompton Constitution to denounce Democrats but at the same time portray a conservative element to their antislavery arguments. Another portion of this thesis, the state election in 1860—a subject Fuller discusses in his

¹⁵ James A. Fuller, "The Election of 1860 and Political Realignment Theory: Indiana as a Case Study," in *The Election of 1860 Reconsidered*, ed., James A. Fuller (Kent, Ohio: The Kent State University Press, 2013), 196.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 201.

article—supports his argument that the Republicans developed short-term strategies. The Republicans nominated Lane as governor and Oliver Morton as lieutenant governor in 1860 based on the agreement that if successful, Lane would be elected U.S. Senator, making Morton governor. Lane would appeal to conservatives and former Whigs while Morton, a former Democrat, would attract anti-Lecompton Democrats. As Fuller argues: “As important as the issues were, the personalities involved mattered even more.”¹⁷

Though Hoosier names like George Julian and Schuyler Colfax might be more recognizable nationally for their role in the Republican Party, this thesis argues that Lane played a guiding role in the development of the new third party in Indiana. Through the study of primary sources, it is clear that Hoosiers turned to Lane to lead the organization of the Republican Party and to lead it to its success in elections. Historians have long acknowledged Lane’s involvement in the 1860 Republican National Convention but fail to fully realize his significance in Indiana throughout the 1850s. This thesis argues that Lane was a vital leader in Hoosier politics and helped transform the Republican Party in Indiana from a grassroots movement into a powerful political party by 1860.

¹⁷ Ibid., 213; quote: Ibid., 201.

Chapter I: Henry Lane, the 1852 Election and the Nebraska Bill

Henry Smith Lane was not a Hoosier by birth. Like many early Indiana settlers, Lane was originally from Kentucky and he moved to the Hoosier state in 1834. Born in Bath County on February 21, 1811, Lane was the seventh child of James Hardage Lane and Mary Higgins Lane. Although a son of a farmer, Lane was allowed to attend a log school house and later, the academy at Mount Sterling for three years. While at Mount Sterling, Lane studied under Judge Silas Webster Robbins, a classical scholar whom Lane admired. After completing his academic training under Robbins, he decided to pursue a career in law. As a part of the necessary training in the law profession, Lane sought to study law under an established lawyer. Here he would learn the common practices of the profession as well as the laws and statutes of the state that he would need to successfully run his own practice. Lane travelled to Owingsville to study law under his cousin, Colonel James Suddeth and on July 10, 1832, he passed the Kentucky bar.¹

After passing the bar, Lane married Pamela Bledsoe Jameson of Mount Sterling and two years later, the couple decided to move to Indiana. Lane possessed strong family ties to Indiana as his brother Higgins Lane, and his two sisters, Mary Lane Hazelrigg and Sally Lane Stone, all lived in southern-central Indiana. Lane and Pamela settled in Crawfordsville, Indiana and in March 1834, Lane obtained licensure to practice law in the Hoosier state. A year later, he established a legal partnership with Isaac Naylor and the two practiced in Indiana's Eighth Circuit. By

¹ Lane-Elston Genealogy, Lane-Elston Family Papers, Box 5, Folder 2, Indiana Historical Society, Indianapolis.; Robert F. Wernle, *Henry Smith Lane, the Old-War Horse* (Crawfordsville, Indiana: Montgomery County Historical Society, 1983), 6-7.

1835, Lane had established himself as an honest, successful lawyer in Indiana and began taking interest in Hoosier politics, an interest that would continue for the remainder of his life.²

Lane was an ardent admirer and follower of Henry Clay and so identified himself with the Whig Party and its ideals. The Whig Party—emerging from divisions within the Jeffersonian Republican Party and opposition to President Andrew Jackson—was formed in 1834. Henry Clay began his political career in Kentucky and eventually established himself as the leader of the Whig Party. He served as a state legislator, a congressman in the United States House of Representatives, secretary of state to John Quincy Adams, and a member of the United States Senate. Clay and his followers were nationalistic, in favor of higher tariffs, internal improvements, and economic development. Born and raised in Kentucky, the state Henry Clay represented, Lane claimed that he supported these Whig principles, “which warm the bosoms of our patriotic ancestors in the time which tried men’s souls.” Lane admired Clay, who he labeled, “the man who has thrice saved the Union of States from the most eminent dangers.”³

As Lane gained a reputation for his success as a lawyer and his devotion to Whig principles, his fellow citizens nominated him to the Indiana House of Representatives. In 1837, at the age of twenty-six, he was elected on the Whig ticket

² Wernle, *Henry Smith Lane*, 8-12.

³ Background to the Whig Party: Michael F. Holt, *The Rise and Fall of the American Whig Party: Jacksonian Politics and the Onset of the Civil War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 1-7. Holt’s work represents the most comprehensive source on the birth, life and death of the Whig Party in American politics; Quotation: Henry Lane to Samuel Stone, September 15, 1835, Lane-Elston Papers, Box 1, Folder 2, Indiana Historical Society, Indianapolis.

to the Indiana Legislature. Three years later, Lane was elected to fill Hoosier Democrat candidate for governor Tilghman A. Howard's vacant seat in the United States House of Representatives. He then was re-elected to that seat and served from 1840 to 1843. By this time, Lane was recognized as a gifted political speaker. He was known to have a fondness for anecdotes as well as "brilliant wit and fiery eloquence" that made him a successful and well-known stump orator.⁴ Although popular with the people, Lane did not seek reelection to the House. Before his term ended, Pamela Lane died as a result from a stagecoach accident, and the devastated Lane returned to his law practice in Crawfordsville.⁵

During the presidential campaign in 1844, Lane stumped Indiana for his personal hero, the Whig candidate Henry Clay. A central issue of the election was the proposed annexation of Texas. Generally, Democrats favored annexation while Whigs stood against it. When the Democrats successfully elected James K. Polk as president, northern Whigs worried that Polk's support of annexation would lead to another slave state as well as a possible war with Mexico over the disputed territory. The Whig press in Indiana believed that the issue of Texas had been "forced down the throats of the free states by the entire Locofocracy of the Union, aided by a few recreant Whigs."⁶

⁴ Walter R. Sharp, "Henry S. Lane and the Formation of the Republican Party in Indiana," *The Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 7, no. 2 (September 1920): 98.; James A. Woodburn, "Henry Smith Lane," *Indiana Magazine of History* 27, no. 4 (December 1931): 279. Quotation: Charles W. Taylor, *Biographical Sketches and Review of the Bench and Bar of Indiana* (Indianapolis: Bench and Bar Publishing Company, 1895), 266.

⁵ Wernle, *Henry Smith Lane*, 19.; Henry Lane to Walker Bourn, February 26, 1843 in Lane-Elston Papers, Box 1, Folder 6, Indiana Historical Society, Indianapolis.

⁶ *Indianapolis Journal*, March 12, 1845.

Ultimately, the Democrats carried out their plan of annexation and Texas entered the Union in December 1845. Following annexation, a war with Mexico began in the spring of 1846. Many northern Whigs denounced the conflict as a Democratic plan to gain more slave territory. However, Lane surprised many in his party by supporting the war. Lane not only supported Polk's war resolutions, but he also volunteered to fight. In Indiana, he raised a company of volunteers from Montgomery County and upon the formation of a regiment, was chosen its captain.⁷

Although an inexperienced soldier, James R.M. Bryant recommended Lane to Colonel Thomas F. Hunt as a man "who with the exception of a little practical acquaintance with military affairs, possesses all the essential qualities of a soldier and a gentleman." Lane's patriotism and devotion to the Union led him to fight. In a letter to his brother-in-law Samuel Stone, Lane explained that he had always stood opposed to the annexation of Texas, believing it would lead to war. However, now that "the deed is done," he started, "Texas is a part of the United States & I feel as bound to fight for her as I would Indiana, or even old Kentucky."⁸

Throughout his service, Lane rose to the status of lieutenant colonel and employed his regiment in guarding supply trains and protecting stations. According to historian Ronald H. Ridgley, Lane was concerned with not leaving his military

⁷ Holt, *Rise and Fall of the American Whig Party*, 232-233; Graham A. Barringer, "The Mexican War Journal of Henry S. Lane," *Indiana Magazine of History* 53, no. 4 (December 1957): 383. Barringer provides a brief biography on Lane and the rest of the article is a reproduction of Lane's journal that he kept during the war, providing insight into the Hoosier's experience.

⁸ First quotation: James R.M. Bryant to Col. Thomas F. Hunt, June 10, 1846, Henry S. Lane Papers, Box 1, Folder 1, Lilly Library, Bloomington, Indiana; Second quotation: Henry Lane to Samuel Stone, November 5, 1846, Lane-Elston Family Papers, Box 3 Folder 8, Indiana Historical Society, Indianapolis, Indiana.

mark on history while his regiment lingered behind the front lines and he found “no military glory or satisfaction in the army.”⁹ By August 1846, Lane clearly believed that his regiment was not destined for greatness. In a journal entry dated August 7 he wrote: “The prospect for a fight rather more gloomy. We are now assured that we shall remain for at least five weeks in this neighborhood, eating rather poor rations & daily parades & guarding bagg[ag]e. A dicidedly [sic] dull business.”¹⁰

On February 22, 1847 Captain Stanislaus Lasselle of the First Regiment Indiana Volunteers made a speech in Matamoros, Mexico in honor of George Washington’s birthday. Lasselle invited Lane to come and make a short speech, in which Lane defended the Mexican War. Democrats supported Lane’s sentiments while northern Whigs denounced them. Lane reflected on the results of his speech as his military career came to a close in June 1847: “It is strange to read my praises in Democratic papers, & stranger still to see my self abused in Whig papers. I have said & done in reference to the Mexican war what I believe to be right.” On June 16, 1847 Lane received his discharge papers and travelled home to Crawfordsville.¹¹

Upon returning to Indiana, Lane continued to defend his position on the Mexican War. On January 1, 1848 Lane wrote to the editor of the Crawfordsville *People’s Press* explaining his views. He began his letter with his ideas on patriotism. “The duty of our government to protect the State of Texas from all foreign invasion is so clearly obvious that there can be no difference of opinion among good citizens

⁹ Ronald H. Ridgley, “Henry Smith Lane: Republican Progenitor,” in *Their Infinite Variety: Essays on Indiana Politicians*, ed. Robert G. Barrows and Shirley S. McCord (Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Bureau, 1981), 55.

¹⁰ Henry Lane quoted in Barringer, “Mexican War Journal of Henry S. Lane,” 390.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 434.

on that subject.” Next, he addressed the issue that caused Whigs the most fear: the accumulation of new territory that southerners would claim for slavery’s extension. Lane made the argument that the climate of these new territories would not support a profitable slave labor system. Furthermore, he argued, even if the climate did sustain slavery, Mexican laws did not support the slave system. Lane believed that a law would be required to incorporate slavery in these territories and “that law under the constitution congress would have no right to pass.” Many conservative northern Whigs were skeptical of such an optimistic outlook and continued to criticize Lane for supporting the “Democrats’ War.”¹²

Despite the Whigs’ opposition to the Mexican War, they had learned that war heroes made good candidates for high office. For the 1848 presidential election, the Whigs chose General Zachary Taylor as their candidate. During the war, Lane had personal contact with Taylor and favored him as the Whigs’ candidate. He labeled the general as “a plain man in his manners” but admired how he could make anyone at ease in his company. Lane did not think Taylor was a politician, but rather something better, an American. “He is Whig enough for me & patriot enough for any & every American.”¹³

Lane once again stumped in Indiana for the Whig cause and several political leaders implored him to make speeches across the state. Seeming to forget their critiques of Lane and his position on the Mexican War, Whigs praised Lane for his oratorical skills, which led several listeners, like his brother-in-law James Elston, to

¹² Henry Lane to the Editor of the Crawfordsville *People’s Press*, January 1, 1848 in Henry S. Lane Papers, Box 1 Folder 2, Lilly Library, Bloomington, Indiana, 1-6.

¹³ Henry Lane quoted in Barringer, “Mexican War Journal of Henry S. Lane,” 424.

claim that he made the “best extempore speech” in the Hoosier state.¹⁴ In 1848 the national Whig Party successfully elected General Taylor to the presidency, but the following year, Hoosier Democrat Joseph E. McDonald defeated Lane for a seat in the U.S. Congress. Though defeated, Lane did cut the Democratic majority by three hundred votes and gained about five hundred more votes than the Whig candidate for governor in his district. While claiming to have no regrets about the campaign, Lane explained that his allies pushed him to run and although his friends believed he could win, he knew that “their wishes deceived them.” By September 1849, feeling defeated, he claimed that he would no longer participate in politics and planned to focus only on his law practice.¹⁵

The political scene that Lane vowed to leave behind reached a boiling point in early 1850. While the North and South continued to debate over the slavery issue, some politicians believed another compromise would end the hostilities. On January 29, 1850 the “Great Compromiser,” Henry Clay, proposed his resolutions for compromise in the Senate. The Kentuckian intended these resolutions, when taken together, to “propose an amicable arrangement of all questions in controversy between the free and slave States, growing out of the subject of slavery.” However, these proposals did not directly result in the Compromise of 1850.¹⁶

¹⁴ James Elston to Mrs. Joanna Lane, December 3, 1848 in Henry S. Lane Papers, Box 1 Folder 2, Lilly Library, Bloomington, Indiana.

¹⁵ Henry Lane to Samuel Stone, September 27, 1849 in Lane-Elston Papers Box 1 Folder 10, Indiana Historical Society, Indianapolis. Also, Wernle, *Henry Smith Lane*, 27.

¹⁶ *Congressional Globe*, 31st Cong., 1st sess., Jan. 29, 1850, <http://www.heinonline.org.proxy2.ulib.iupui.edu/HOL/Index?index=congreg/conglob&collection=congreg>, 244.

In May, Clay presented revised compromise bills, including an omnibus bill, laying out legislation for the lands acquired from Mexico. Ultimately, the omnibus bill was split and voted on as individual proposals in order to pass the compromise through Congress. Historian Michael Holt points out that the Compromise of 1850 damaged the Whig Party: “It suggested a propensity to embrace pro-Compromise Democrats at the expense of anti-Compromise Whigs.” The beginnings of the Whigs’ fracture along sectional lines occurred with this all-important compromise.¹⁷

Somewhat disillusioned after his loss to Joseph McDonald, Lane refrained from running for office in the early 1850s. With the upcoming election in 1852, Whigs around the state began writing to Lane urging him to stump the state for their candidate, General Winfield Scott, as well pushing him to accept the nomination as Indiana’s governor. A member of the Indiana Legislature, J.F. Suit wrote to Lane informing him that he would soon receive a letter signed by all Whig members of the legislature, requesting him to accept the gubernatorial nomination. Suit implored Lane “it is the universal wish of the Whigs here that you should run, and will not take “no” for an answer.”¹⁸ Lane responded graciously and with much appreciation but again reiterated to the Hoosier Whigs that he would not accept the nomination.

Lane claimed that his health would not allow him to properly canvass the state and without such canvass, they could surely not win. He regretted placing himself “in a position of apparent opposition to the wishes of my friends & the Whig

¹⁷ Holt, *Rise and Fall of the American Whig Party*, 499. The “omnibus bill” refers to a giant bill that contained the majority of Clay’s compromise measures. Quotation: *Ibid.*, 543.

¹⁸ Lane’s disillusionment: Ridgley, “Henry Smith Lane,” in *Their Infinite Variety*, 55; Quote: J.F. Suit to Henry Lane, February 9, 1852 in Henry S. Lane Papers, Box 1 Folder 2, Lilly Library, Bloomington, Indiana. J.F. Suit was a representative from Clinton County.

party” but he believed that there were other Whigs “who would make a better race than I should & who would be equally acceptable to our party.”¹⁹ Furthermore, Lane fully believed that no matter whom the Whigs decided to endorse, Democratic Governor Wright would defeat them. In October 1852, Lane’s prediction came to fruition.²⁰

During the 1852 presidential campaign, the Indianapolis *Journal*—the major Whig organ in the state—attempted to rally support for General Winfield Scott. The General fought in the war with Mexico and the paper presented Scott as a war hero, claiming “his glory has never faded; the luster of his name has never paled.” As in previous elections, the Whigs supported a military man as their party leader but unlike William Henry Harrison and Zachary Taylor, Scott did not benefit from such a strategy.²¹

The 1852 election exposed the growing weakness of the national Whig Party. Historians like William E. Gienapp argue that ethnocultural issues like nativism played a major role in the Whigs’ defeat. From this viewpoint, Scott’s attempt to accommodate the foreign vote increased anti-Catholicism sentiment while at the same time, alienated nativist Whigs. Although these ethnocultural issues played a role, the slavery issue must not be ignored within the context of the 1852 election.

¹⁹ Henry Lane to J. Lyle King and the Indiana Legislature, February 15, 1852 in Henry S. Lane Papers, Box 1 Folder 2, Lilly Library, Bloomington, Indiana.

²⁰ Henry Lane to D.P. Holloway, February 4, 1852 in Henry S. Lane Papers, Box 1 Folder 2, Lilly Library, Bloomington, Indiana.

²¹ Indianapolis *Journal*, June 24, 1852.

Many northern and southern Whigs stood divided over the finality of the measures of the Compromise of 1850.²²

At the Whig National Convention, delegates nominated Scott on the fifty-third ballot but he only secured seventeen votes from the slave states. General Scott never fully supported the finality of the Compromise of 1850 and as a result, he raised the issue of the permanence of the Fugitive Slave Act, legislation the southerners held on to so dearly. His reluctance to mention that aspect of the compromise cost him votes in the South and the division within the national Whig Party along sectional lines grew wider. Although Indiana Whigs raised some questions about their candidate, they ultimately supported Scott believing that he would be a safe candidate who would not agitate the slavery issue nor fully commit to the finality of the Compromise of 1850.²³

Indiana possessed a strong Democratic voting record and in 1852, the state once again voted against the Whigs. While many Whigs wanted Lane as their gubernatorial candidate, his rejection led them to choose Nicholas McCarty to run against Governor Joseph Wright. Both the Democratic and Whig tickets

²² Nativism refers to many Americans' hatred and fear of immigrants and their influence in American politics. These citizens wanted to see stricter immigration laws and a pro-American society. See William E. Gienapp, *The Origins of the Republican Party, 1852-1856* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 93. For a discussion of "political nativism" see Eric Foner, *Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Men: The Ideology of the Republican Party Before the Civil War* (New York: Oxford University Press 1970), 230-231. Ethnocultural issues factors heavily Gienapp's study of the Republican Party; see Gienapp, *Origins of the Republican Party*, 35.

²³ Winfield Scott and the National Whig Convention: David M. Potter, *The Impending Crisis, 1848-1861* (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1976), 233; Discussion of the "finality" to the Compromise of 1850: Dale Beeler, "The Election of 1852 in Indiana," *Indiana Magazine of History* 11, no. 4 (December 1915): 309-310; Indiana Whigs accepting Scott as their candidate: Roger H. Van Bolt, "Indiana in Political Transition, 1851-1853," *Indiana Magazine of History* 49, no. 2 (June 1953): 151.

demonstrated the sectionalism within Indiana. The Democrats largely represented the southern half of the state while the Whigs' constituency made up the northern half.²⁴ In October, Wright retained the governorship with 93, 576 votes over McCarty's 73, 641. In the presidential race, Democratic candidate Franklin Pierce received 95, 299 Hoosier votes compared to Scott's 80, 901. Nationally, Scott's campaign was a complete failure. He received only forty-two electoral votes while Pierce received two hundred and fifty-four. The Whigs could not unify their party and a division along sectional lines was increasingly evident.²⁵

After the election, some Hoosiers recognized that the Whigs' attempt to appeal to both the North and the South severely damaged the credibility of the party in both sections. The South Bend *St. Joseph Valley Register* commented on this dilemma stating "it was the misfortune of Gen. Scott that, though distrusted, denounced, and opposed at the South by men formerly Whig because he was not Southern enough to be relied upon, he was also distrusted, denounced and opposed by the Free Soil party of the North as not being Northern enough to be safely trusted."²⁶ Neither northern nor southern men of the party wanted a candidate they perceived as appealing to the opposite side. During the election, Scott attempted to bridge the gap, with little success.

The disappointing results of the 1852 election pushed some national Whigs, like New York political boss Horace Greeley, to declare that the party could never

²⁴ Beeler, "The Election of 1852," 313-314.

²⁵ For state election results: *Indianapolis Journal*, December 6, 1852; For national election results: George Julian *Political Recollections, 1840 to 1872* (Chicago: Jansen, McClurg & Company, 1884), 129.

²⁶ South Bend *St. Joseph Valley Register*, November 4, 1852.

overcome its losses. Greeley changed his *Whig Almanac* to the *Tribune Almanac* and shocked Whigs by discussing the disbanding of the party. Disgusted with the party's compliance with the Fugitive Slave Act, he claimed the Whigs were "not merely discomfited, but annihilated." He believed that it was better to start a new party rather than to submit to pro-slavery forces: "We choose to go out of the Whig party, if we must, rather than to remain in its subject, servants, or prisoners."²⁷

Hoosiers, both Whig and Democratic, did not want to accept the death of the Whig Party. The Democratic Indianapolis *Sentinel* criticized Greeley's sentiments and claimed that the destruction of the Whigs would do harm to the Democratic Party: "The success of the Democratic party, and the purity of their principles, in some degree depend on open political opposition. We hope the Whig party will still continue to make fight." The Indianapolis *Journal* also commented about the duty of the Whigs. An article claimed that although the Whigs were defeated, they were still a great and powerful party and that the duty of its members was to "stand firm to their cause" and "to *go over* to no other party whatever."²⁸ The Hoosier Whigs were committed to maintaining their party even while the political climate across the state, and the nation began to shift.

Henry Lane participated in the election by campaigning for General Scott across the state. After the election and the Whig's defeat, Lane made the decision to leave the profession of law in early 1853. Joseph E. McDonald presented resolutions to the Montgomery County Court in April 1853 after Lane's resignation. One such

²⁷ Robert Williams, *Horace Greeley: Champion of American Freedom* (New York: New York University Press, 2006), 164.

²⁸ Indianapolis *Sentinel* quoted in the Indianapolis *Journal*, November 24, 1852; North Carolina *Raleigh Register* quoted in the Indianapolis *Journal*, November 29, 1852.

resolution claimed that Lane's fifteen-year career as the head of the bar in Montgomery County "has been characterized by conduct and ability on his part that has justly made him the pride and ornament of his profession and has established for him a reputation throughout the State, which will endure while Indiana possesses a code of laws or a jurisprudence."²⁹

By leaving his practice, Lane did not intend to become idle. Back in February 11, 1845, Lane had remarried to Joanna Elston, daughter of successful banker Isaac Elston. Now, Lane decided to join the banking business with his father-in-law in Crawfordsville. As historian Ronald Ridgley suggests, Lane took his ill health into consideration when deciding to leave his law practice as well as refrain from public office.³⁰ As time would tell, Lane would only be away from the political scene for two years, as local and national events caused him to once again assume a leadership role in Indiana politics.

After their defeat in 1852, Indiana Whigs looked for new issues to revitalize their party. The temperance issue was a moral crusade for many that entered into the political arena. Growing out of the Second Great Awakening in the early eighteenth century, where an increase in religious and moral reform took place around the country, temperance was the cause to reduce the sale and consumption of liquor. Even before 1852, Hoosiers debated over the issue and many Whigs and

²⁹ Order Book from Montgomery County Court, April 7, 1853 in Henry S. Lane Papers Box 1 Folder 2, Lilly Library, Bloomington, Indiana.

³⁰ Wernle, *Henry Smith Lane*, 21; Ridgley, "Henry Smith Lane," in *Their Infinite Variety*, ed. Barrows and McCord, 56. Major Isaac Elston, father to Joanna Elston Lane was also father to Susan Elston who married Lew Wallace of Crawfordsville. This union made the future Civil War general and famed author Henry Lane's brother-in-law. Henry and Joanna's home, the Lane Place, as well as Lew Wallace's Study are museums in Crawfordsville.

Democrats favored temperance. Eventually, many Democrats abandoned the temperance cause because they did not want to alienate the immigrant voters, whose cultures often incorporated alcohol consumption. By early 1854, some politicians characterized temperance as “the most exciting topic that is agitating the minds of our citizens.”³¹

In the 1850s, Whigs attempted to capitalize on the temperance issue. Because many nativists were also Whigs, leaders in the party believed they could gain votes by supporting anti-liquor laws. Democrats recognized that Hoosier Whigs devoted themselves to the temperance issue and many Whig voters openly declared not to support any man “who will not pledge himself in favor of a Prohibitory law.”³² Indiana temperance men criticized the Democrats and Governor Wright for their vague and contradictory stances on the issue. The *Indianapolis Journal* commented that before the 1852 election, Wright opposed temperance legislation in order to satisfy the liquor dealers. At the same time, he proposed to do all that he could in the form of “moral suasion.” When he retained his office, he then supported a law that would render “drunkenness a criminal offence, punishable by indictment” but it said nothing against the “drunkard manufacturer.”³³ The *Journal*, along with other Whigs, sought to appeal to temperance advocates while labeling the Democrats pro-liquor, and therefore, aiding in the deterioration of society.

³¹ Hoosiers favoring temperance: *Indianapolis Journal* April 13, 1852. Quotation: Jeffrey Noel to John G. Davis, January 27, 1854, John G. Davis Papers, Box 1 Folder 8, Indiana Historical Society, Indianapolis.

³² William H. Miller to John G. Davis, February 2, 1854 in John G. Davis Papers, Box 1 Folder 9, Indiana Historical Society, Indianapolis.

³³ *Indianapolis Journal*, January 8, 1853.

While many Democrats stood opposed to temperance legislation, some realized the significance of the issue in the upcoming state elections in October. Democrat Samuel T. Ensey believed that by opposing temperance, the Democrats would lose votes in the election: "The great majority of Temperance Democrats will vote for candidates endorsing the Temperance Platform." Just as many Whigs declared themselves opposed to any candidate who voted against temperance legislation, Ensey claimed some Democrats would do the same. However, a majority of the Democrats in Indiana believed the Whigs were only using temperance to revitalize their party and remained opposed to the legislation.³⁴

During this time, Lane embraced the temperance issue. In March 1854, he attended a temperance convention held in Crawfordsville. Crawfordsville Democrats warned their constituents to not fall into the Whig trap of "merging all political questions in the Temperance issue." While many Whigs viewed the temperance issue as a political, as well as moral question, Democrats likened the issue to religion, which "should never be contaminated by a union with the affairs of State."³⁵ Regardless of the Democrats' warning, several Hoosiers traveled to Indianapolis in June to attend a state temperance convention. Lane attended and spoke at the convention.

However, the Whigs did not gain significant party strength from the temperance issue. While support for these anti-liquor laws increased in the early

³⁴ Samuel T. Ensey to Joseph A. Wright, February 24, 1854, Joseph A. Wright Papers, Box 1 Folder 5, Indiana State Library, Indianapolis, Indiana; Charles Zimmerman, "The Origin and Rise of the Republican Party in Indiana from 1854 to 1860," *Indiana Magazine of History* 13, no. 3 (September 1917): 215-216.

³⁵ Wernle, *Henry Smith Lane*, 29; Quotation: Indianapolis *Sentinel* quoted in the Crawfordsville *Review*, March 18, 1854.

1850s, those who favored temperance legislation were not selectively Whigs. The supporters of a Prohibitory Liquor Law in 1854 were made up of men “of all parties who are at length constrained by a sense of duty to their race to forego party preferences if *necessary* in order to secure the suppression and prevention of drunkenness.”³⁶ Because the temperance issue spanned party lines, the Whigs could not place the Prohibitory Liquor Law on their platform and expect all temperance supporters to join their ranks. In order to remain a viable party, the Whigs needed to find an issue that could unite both its northern and southern constituents, an issue that would once again define party lines between the Whigs and the Democrats.

Nativism represented another avenue that the Whigs explored to cultivate support in the early 1850s. While Democrats were known to cater to immigrant voters and accept Catholics in their ranks, many Whigs took the opposite stance, denouncing foreigners and promoting Protestantism. However, just as with the temperance issue, the Whigs did not benefit from growing nativist sentiments in the nation because of its weakened state. Especially in Indiana, the Whigs were simply unable to attract nativists into their ranks, partly on account of Winfield Scott’s attempt to appeal to foreigners’ vote in 1852 and partly due to the rise of a new political organization, to which many nativists were flocking.³⁷ As the Whig Party

³⁶ Editor of the Valparaiso *Observer* quoted in the Indianapolis *Journal*, February 11, 1854.

³⁷ See Carl Brand Fremont, “The History of the Know Nothing Party in Indiana,” *Indiana Magazine of History* 18, no. 1 (March 1922). The new political organization nativists were joining was the secret order of the Know Nothings, explained in Chapter II of this paper.

struggled to find a platform that could bolster strength, the year 1854 would prove to shake the political landscape across the nation.

Despite the perceived finality of the slavery issue with the Compromise of 1850, in January 1854 other issues could not divert the discussion over the future of slavery. Congress looked toward the West and wanted to find a suitable way to organize the territories. The main interest rested with the Nebraska Territory. Under the Missouri Compromise of 1820, Nebraska was deemed suitable for admission to the United States only if it was established as a free state. The 1820 Missouri Compromise came about in an effort to organize the remaining territories of the Louisiana Purchase. The result of the compromise established that slavery would not exist north of the 36°30' parallel. The thirty-second Congress (1851-1853) attempted to pass a Nebraska bill but it had failed, largely because of its compliance with the Missouri Compromise. Southern congressmen refused to support such a bill that would organize any more territory under the terms of the compromise. This issue led some political leaders to determine that the Missouri Compromise would have to be bypassed if such a bill was to pass through Congress.³⁸

On December 14, 1853 Democratic Senator Augustus Dodge from Iowa proposed a bill to organize a Nebraska Territory. From here, the bill went to the Senate's Committee on Territories, which Democratic Senator Stephen A. Douglas of Illinois chaired.³⁹ On January 4, 1854 Douglas introduced a modified bill to organize

³⁸ Holt, *Rise and Fall of the American Whig Party*, 806; Michael F. Holt, *The Political Crisis of the 1850s* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1978), 144.

³⁹ Holt, *Rise and Fall of the American Whig Party*, 804.

the Nebraska Territory and by January 23, Douglas outlined a measure to the Senate that would establish two territories—Kansas and Nebraska—under the repeal of the Missouri Compromise. That same day, Douglas and the Committee on Territories reported the revisions of the bill. In regards to the issue of slavery in the territories, the bill proposed that all questions relating to slavery “are to be left to the decision of the people residing therein, through their appropriate representatives.”

Furthermore, the bill declared “the provisions of the Constitution and laws of the United States, in respect to fugitives from service, are to be carried into faithful execution in all the ‘organized Territories’ the same as in the States.”⁴⁰ Douglas’ bill allowed for the territories to determine whether it would accept or deny slavery under the idea of “popular sovereignty” but there was no question about the validity of the Fugitive Slave Act.

While Congress debated over the Nebraska bill, popular northern opinion grew hostile to the proposed legislation. Whigs claimed that the Democrats had broken congressional compromise and decried the repeal of the Missouri Compromise line. The Whigs’ main goal was to stop the passage of the bill into a law. The party understood that they did not possess enough votes in Congress to prevent the bill’s passage if the Democrats remained united. However, they believed the best chance in defeating the bill was to provoke northern public opinion in order to intimidate northern Democrats into voting the bill down, lest they lose the

⁴⁰ *Congressional Globe*, 33rd Cong., 1st sess., January 23, 1854, <http://www.heinonline.org.proxy2.ulib.iupui.edu/HOL/Index?index=congreg/conglob&collection=congreg>, 221-222.

upcoming elections in 1854. Although the Whigs remained hopeful that this tactic would work, the Democratic Congress looked certain to pass the legislation.⁴¹

While the bill remained in Congress, Hoosiers discussed Douglas and his proposals. Whig newspapers were openly unreceptive to the Nebraska bill. The South Bend *Register* criticized Douglas for repealing the Missouri Compromise on the premise that the Compromise of 1850 superseded the 1820 legislation. The paper wrote of the Nebraska Territory under Missouri Compromise: “Thus far it has been protected by a solemn compact of our fathers against the footsteps of the slave; and they declared, the North and the South in Council together, that this protection should exist ‘forever’.” The paper then declared that it would stand in opposition to the bill if Congress, “seduced by Executive patronage, trammelled by political dictation, forgetful of plighted faith” passes the bill and called others to join the fight.⁴²

The Indianapolis *Journal* supported the organization and eventual statehood of Nebraska but if the bill resulted in the repeal of the Missouri Compromise, the paper believed Congress should propose a different method to organize the territory. Also, *Journal* editor John D. Defrees spoke to the amount of anxiety on both sides of the political spectrum over the bill. He recognized that many Democrats in Indiana stood against the bill and directly asked the Indianapolis *Sentinel*—the

⁴¹ Holt, *Rise and Fall of the American Whig Party*, 807; 810-811.

⁴² South Bend *St. Joseph Valley Register*, February 16, 1854.

major Democratic newspaper in the state—what it thought about other Democratic editors “who, like us, oppose this violation of plighted faith?”⁴³

Most Hoosier Democrats attempted to tread lightly in the state, careful not to oppose fellow Democrat Douglas outright but also mindful of losing votes to anti-Nebraska men. A Democratic paper in Lane’s Crawfordsville, the *Crawfordsville Review*, claimed that generally, Democrats in the state were opposed to the Nebraska Bill and they did not believe Congress had the right to allow or exclude slavery in any territory. However, the paper also supported a contingency for acceptance of Douglas’ bill: “If his principles are founded in reason and truth, let them prevail, and the triumph of reason and truth will follow.”⁴⁴

Other Democrats recognized that if members did not support the bill, their party would be weakened and tried to reassure each other of the validity of the proposed legislation. A local Hoosier Democrat constituent, Samuel Fisher, wrote to John G. Davis—Democratic U.S. Representative from the Seventh Indiana District—that the majority of Democrats supported the bill and those that did not “will be like the boy that shot his dady [sic], they will be darned sorry they done it.”⁴⁵ Powerful Hoosier Democratic leader and U.S. Senator Jesse Bright favored the proposed bill. Bright owned a plantation in Kentucky and tended to side with pro-slavery

⁴³ Indianapolis *Journal* February 8, 1854. Editor John D. Defrees was a Whig and later, Republican political leader and in this case, wanted the Democratic *Sentinel* to account for the amount of Democrats who were against the Nebraska bill.

⁴⁴ Crawfordsville *Review*, February 18, 1854.

⁴⁵ Samuel Fisher to John G. Davis, April 4, 1854, in John G. Davis Papers, Box 1 Folder 11, Indiana Historical Society, Indianapolis.

legislation, which also reflected the interests of his constituents in southern Indiana.⁴⁶

Not all Hoosier Democrats stood behind Douglas and the Nebraska bill. On March 13, 1854 Hoosier Democratic Congressman Ebenezer M. Chamberlain made a speech against the repeal of the Missouri Compromise in the House of Representatives. In his address, he claimed that while the constitution recognized slavery and the existing rights of slaveholders, it did not uphold slavery's "extension upon free territory." Chamberlain also spoke upon the pressures that the South put on the North to uphold the balance in the nation. He claimed that the rights of the North were in jeopardy and if any section was ever asked to yield to the other, it was always the North to the South. Furthermore, Chamberlain promised that while the bill may pass, Indiana would devote itself to the Union and stand "firm in her integrity of the compromises, and thus most appropriately vindicate her justice both to the North and South."⁴⁷ If Douglas believed that his Nebraska bill would unite Democrats, while at the same time, weave together a new compromise to settle sectional tensions, he had a long and weary road ahead of him.

When studying the slavery issue in the mid-nineteenth century, there is a vital question that needs to be answered: Why, in the 1850s, did northerners of both major parties adopt such a strong opposition to slavery when the institution had been around since the conception of the nation? While it is true that many northerners had always been weary of slavery, their passive resistance changed to

⁴⁶ Zimmerman, "The Origin and Rise of the Republican Party," 221.

⁴⁷ E.M. Chamberlain, *Speech of Hon. E.M. Chamberlain of Indiana Against the repeal of the Missouri Compromise act, delivered in the House of Representatives, Monday, March 13, 1854* (Pamphlet; Indiana Historical Society, Indianapolis), 2-13.

outright hostility in the early 1850s. But this confrontation with slaveholders did not signify that northerners had suddenly gained a guilty conscious and wanted to free the slaves; they resisted slavery based on its expansion into the new territories.⁴⁸

The arguments against slavery's extension developed partly out of a fear of a growing "Slave Power" in the South. Northern politicians, like the influential and anti-slavery Salmon P. Chase of Ohio, developed this idea that the Slave Power was a politicized group of slaveholders attempting to "dominate the national government" and "make slavery the ruling interest of the republic."⁴⁹ The main objection to this Slave Power was the widespread idea that slavery would be extended into the North if these southern conspirators were not stopped. Many northerners believed that southern slaveholders were determined to overrun the republic and establish an aristocratic society based on the institution of slavery. As northerners grew suspicious of their southern brethren, national parties weakened and sectional lines grew wider. By the 1850s, the issue of slavery once again threatened to tear apart the nation and compromise did not look like the answer.⁵⁰

Slavery extension also possessed an economic dimension. Historians like Eric Foner argue that because northern society favored free labor, political democracy, and social mobility, they criticized the South for possessing a society based on slave labor with a slaveholding aristocracy. Based on this idea of a superior society, northern political leaders, like New Yorker William H. Seward, believed that

⁴⁸ See Foner, *Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Men*, Chapter Nine: "Slavery and the Republican Ideology."

⁴⁹ Holt, *Rise and Fall of the American Whig Party*, 73.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 981; Foner, *Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Men*, 99-101.

slavery's expansion into the territories would cripple the nation's economy. Foner also argues that this economic concern combined with the fear of a Slave Power aggressively pushing its ideals on the North, "hammered the slavery issue home to the northern public more emphatically than an appeal to morality alone could have ever done."⁵¹ To many in the North, the Nebraska bill represented southern slaveholders' belief that they could push slavery into the new territories, thus expanding the institution and the South's power over the nation. These economic arguments and an examination of northern ideology help explain why there was so much outrage to the Nebraska bill as well as the institution of slavery in the 1850s.

Despite many northerners' hostility toward Douglas' bill, on May 30, 1854 President Franklin Pierce signed the bill into law, making it the Kansas-Nebraska Act. Although the legislation had caused strife along sectional lines, it was proposed mainly as a means to achieve partisan goals rather than sectional ones. Some leaders in both the Democratic and Whig parties viewed the act as "a chance to revive the flagging Second Party System by creating a new issue that Whigs and Democrats could once again fight about on party lines."⁵²

However, many voters felt that the two major parties could not be trusted, that political leaders were corrupt, and that the Whigs could no longer stand against the Democrats in elections. The Whigs remained a national party, but with the increase of anti-southern sentiment in the North, suspicion of the party grew. Many old-line conservative Whigs, although against slavery, remained sluggish to alienate its southern wing as they looked toward the next presidential election. Those Whigs

⁵¹ Foner, *Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Men*, 40-44; Quotation: *Ibid.*, 309.

⁵² Holt, *Political Crisis of the 1850s*, 147.

who allied themselves with anti-Nebraska Democrats searched for a new coalition that could combat slavery extension, southern Slave Power, and help preserve northern ideals of free labor, political democracy, and social mobility.⁵³

Although Lane became involved in Indiana politics quickly after moving from Kentucky, the 1840s were politically formative years for him. With American politics revolving around the annexation of Texas and the war with Mexico, Lane gained experience by not only participating in the war as a soldier but also by supporting a conflict largely unpopular with the Whigs. His involvement in the Mexican War demonstrated his devotion to the Union as well as provided him with the knowledge to speak about western expansion. The more he spoke about the war, the more people listened. Hoosier Whigs understood Lane's appeal and attempted to persuade him to run for governor in 1852. Although ambitious, Lane rejected the offer, citing ill health and the Democrats' overbearing power in the state. From 1852 to 1854, Lane remained in Crawfordsville, devoting his time to banking and generally refrained from political activity. However, by 1854, Lane could no longer remain outside the political sphere as the Whig Party struggled to remain viable and national events required the action of leaders like Lane.

⁵³ Ibid., 151; Gienapp, *Origins of the Republican Party*, 65.

Chapter II: The Fusionist Movement

The fusionist movement began to take shape after the passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Act in 1854. Lane, refraining from politics for much of 1853, used his influence within the dying Whig Party to help establish a new grassroots movement taking shape in the North. The new organization in Indiana adopted the name “People’s Party,” a label less offensive to conservative Whigs, nativists, and Democrats who stood against the Kansas-Nebraska Act. Lane played an active role in the People’s Party’s first convention in July 1854 and campaigned throughout Indiana before the state elections in October. His reputation as a former Whig and as a moderate successfully attracted those dissatisfied with the two major political parties and although he held no political office during this time, he continued to speak against slavery extension and the Democrats’ position of popular sovereignty.

During the 1850s, the Second American Party System began to break down. This system refers to the political structure that pitted the Whigs and Democrats against each other from the 1830s to the early 1850s. Prior to the 1850s, the system relied on a balance and on an understanding between the two parties that certain divisive issues would not be addressed on the national scale. With the Kansas-Nebraska Act in 1854, the delicate balance no longer existed and both parties were forced to discuss the slavery issue. Sectional pressure placed a strain on both the Whigs and Democrats.¹ The Whigs, severely weakened from the 1852 election continued to struggle, as its northern and southern constituencies grew more suspicious of the other. The Democrats were held responsible for the Kansas-

¹ Foner, *Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Men*, 9.

Nebraska Act and while southerners praised the legislation, many northerners felt betrayed by their party. Some old-line party leaders attempted to maintain their organizations but many decided that they could no longer trust old leaders and old parties.

While the parties separated along sectional lines, the Democrats and Whigs both witnessed internal divisions in the North. The emergence of several issues—including the growing anxiety over slavery—caused Whigs to leave their party in order to find a capable organization that would not only champion the North but also defeat the Democrats. Lew Wallace, a Hoosier Democrat at the time, explained that during this period, “the whole North was alive with *isms*.” These different factions “all had in their organizations men of far sight, scheming and struggling to bring about a general coalition without which there could be no effective opposition to the Democratic party.”² Historian Michael Holt explains further that the leaders of these movements attempted to progress from local protest movements to national political parties and to establish themselves as permanent organizations. With these transformations in the North, the United States began its shift from its second to its third party system in the 1850s.³

In Indiana, during the weakening of the Second Party System, different coalitions grew out of the dissatisfaction with Democratic rule in the state. The Whigs, although severely deteriorating as a national party, viewed the Kansas-Nebraska Act as a way to retain old-line party members and as a means to run

² Lew Wallace, *An Autobiography* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1906), 231.

³ Holt, *Rise and Fall of the American Whig Party*, 838-839.

successfully against the Democrats.⁴ The Free Soilers, who opposed slavery in the territories, also opposed the Democrats. They did not support the restoration of the Missouri Compromise nor the Kansas-Nebraska Act because both pieces of legislation recognized slavery in certain territories.⁵ Finally, the Abolitionists also sought to gain support in their opposition to the Democrats. They opposed slavery and thus any legislation, which supported the institution. These different factions, along with the newly formed Know Nothing Party committed to a nativist platform, represented the different factions present in much of the North in the early 1850s. However, the issue remained that alone, none of these groups would ever defeat the Democrats in elections. The only chance to unseat the Democrats was to unite together under one banner and this movement began to take form in 1854.

As early as February 1854, the coalescing movement to start a new organization began in northern states like Wisconsin and Michigan. Those involved in the movement christened themselves “Republicans,” aiming to restore the principles and rights established by the Constitution. Anti-Nebraska leaders understood and valued a party name that could be associated with Thomas Jefferson’s own Democratic-Republican Party of the past. Although outrage over the Nebraska Act was widespread in the North, the organization of this new party within the states was difficult, and at times, confusing. The Republican Party developed differently in the North as party members weighed the advantages and

⁴ Holt, *Political Crisis of the 1850s*, 147.

⁵ George W. Julian, *Political Recollections, 1840 to 1872* (Chicago: Jansen, McClurg & Co, 1884), 137.

disadvantages of joining a new coalition based largely on the idea of anti-slavery extension.⁶

In Indiana, the Republican movement progressed at a more cautious pace than in most states. Instead of the title “Republican,” Hoosiers adopted the name “People’s Party” at their July 13th convention in Indianapolis. The formation of this new organization in Indiana was also referred to as the “fusion movement” and its members as “fusionists.” The People’s Party was a fusion of many different factions, namely abolitionists, former Whigs and Democrats, prohibitionists and some nativists.⁷ These groups united in the People’s Party, mainly over the Kansas-Nebraska Act and the desire to defeat the Democrats and any southern influence in the North.

Lane had been absent from politics since retiring from his law practice and beginning his banking career with his father-in-law in 1853. Now in 1854, after the passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Act, Lane felt compelled to once again take an active role in politics to defend against slavery’s extension and protect the principles he felt were vital to maintaining the Union. The *Journal* announced in June that anti-Nebraska men scheduled a mass convention in Indianapolis for July 13. Lane, considered one of the leading Whigs in the state, was invited to speak at the

⁶ Gienapp, *Origins of the Republican Party*, 105; Potter, *Impending Crisis*, 245-246.

⁷ Seeds, Russel M., ed, *The History of the Republican Party of Indiana: Biographical Sketches of the Party Leaders, Vol. I* (Indianapolis: Indiana History Co., 1899). Virtually all the secondary sources used in this paper note the use of “People’s Party” rather than “Republican” in Indiana. Many Indiana historians also refer to the People’s Party as a “fusion organization” and its members as “fusionists.” This term speaks to the various factions that united under the People’s Party: abolitionists, former Whigs, former Democrats, prohibitionists, etc; See Seeds, *History of the Republican Party of Indiana*, 24; The call for a mass convention in Indianapolis is in the Indianapolis *Journal* June 2, 1854.

convention. Lane's principles, such as his devotion to the Union and his stance against slavery's extension, as well as his Clay-like affinity for compromise appealed to Whigs, nativists, and anti-Nebraska Democrats who were joining this new political movement. His leadership position in the People's Party resulted from his well-known political skills as well as his reputation as a moderate Whig.⁸

While Lane and the People's Party prepared for their convention, another organization that also benefited from deserting Whigs and Democrats had emerged and began coordinating their own convention. The Know Nothing Party, a secret fraternal order, appealed to nativists, anti-Catholics, and anti-slavery voters. Know Nothings acquired most of their support from nativists but when the two major parties failed to enact temperance legislation and prevent the Kansas-Nebraska Act, many old-liners joined the secret order. George W. Julian—a former Hoosier Whig who later joined the anti-Nebraska forces—accounted for the appeal of the Know Nothings: "Thousands, eager to bolt from the old parties, but fearful of being shot down on the way as deserters, gladly availed themselves of this newly devised 'underground railroad' in escaping from the service of their old masters." Some historians view the Know Nothings as an important bridge between the Whigs and Republicans and this third party helped destroy one party system and build another.⁹

⁸ Indianapolis *Journal*, June 3, 1854; Ridgley, "Henry Smith Lane," in *Their Infinite Varieties*, 59.

⁹ The introduction to the Know Nothings: Tyler Anbinder, *Nativism and Slavery: The Northern Know Nothings and the Politics of the 1850s* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 43. Anbinder provides an extensive study of northern Know Nothings and their strength in the early 1850s. Quotation: Julian, *Political Recollections*, 141. The discussion of

After the passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Act, while old-line Whigs continued to hold on to their party and the People's Party attempted to attract departing Whigs and anti-Nebraska Democrats, the Know Nothings gained significant ground. Some Whigs and Republicans attributed the growth of the Know Nothings to bolting Democrats. Horace Greeley claimed that the tyranny of the Democratic Party and its commitment to slavery "may be likened to the operations of the British Government or the Holy Alliance, which resulted in secret organizations." In contrast, Democrats viewed the Know Nothings as "citizens whom their very patriotism and national pride have deluded" and criticized the secret order for excluding foreign-born men.¹⁰

While nativism played a major role in the growth of the Know Nothing Party across the nation, Indiana did not have a large immigrant population in the 1850s like other northern states. However, the Know Nothings dominated the fusionists in Indiana until 1856. One reason for Know Nothing strength in Indiana comes from the 1851 Indiana Constitution. Article Two of the constitution allowed foreign-born, white males over twenty-one to vote as long as they had lived in the U.S. for over one year, lived in Indiana for at least six months, and declared his intention to become an American citizen. Some historians suggest that many Hoosiers did not agree with this section of the constitution, believing it too lenient to immigrants.

the link between the Whigs, Know Nothings and Republicans: Gienapp, *Origins of the Republican Party*, 444.

¹⁰ Greely's quote: South Bend *Register*, June 29, 1854. Schuyler Colfax, editor of the *Register* was a former Whig, who joined the Know Nothings briefly, and eventually joined the Republican Party, becoming one of its leaders. The Democratic viewpoint of Know Nothings quotation: Crawfordsville *Review*, August 5, 1854.

This sentiment then contributed to some joining the more nativist Know Nothing ranks rather than the People's Party. Furthermore, a majority of immigrants voted for Democrats and so the secret order attracted those who wanted to oppose the Democratic candidates in Indiana.¹¹

The Hoosier Know Nothings decided to hold their convention on July 11 in Indianapolis, two days before the People's Party's convention. The coalition met secretly at the Masonic Hall in Indianapolis. The Know Nothings nominated candidates and decided to introduce their platform to the fusionist convention, recognizing the usefulness of the anti-Nebraska sentiments in the North. People's Party leaders needed the strength of the nativists in the state and agreed to work with this group at their convention. Thus the two groups decided to merge together, under the condition that the movement did not adopt the more radical title "Republican." Both sides believed that with a combined ticket, even if the Know Nothings were largely concealed from the rank-and-file People's Party members, they would have a better chance in defeating the Democrats in the upcoming elections.¹²

On July 13th, an estimated 10,000 people met in Indianapolis united in their opposition to the Kansas-Nebraska Act. Lane was chosen to serve as chairman of the convention. Lane, along with other political leaders like Schuyler Colfax and John W.

¹¹ *Constitution of the State of Indiana 1851, Article Two: Suffrage and Election*. Indiana Historical Bureau. <http://www.in.gov/history/2473.htm>. The website claims that the text of the constitution came from Charles Kettleborough, *Constitution Making in Indiana, Vol. I* (Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Bureau, 1916 and 1971). I have listed Kettleborough's work in my secondary source list of my bibliography. See Anbinder, *Nativism and Slavery*, 71 for reasons as to why Hoosiers possessed strong nativist sentiments.

¹² Carl Fremont Brand, "The History of the Know Nothing Party in Indiana," *Indiana Magazine of History* 18, no. 1 (March 1922): 62-65.

Wright spoke at the meeting.¹³ The delegates officially adopted the name “People’s Party” and their platform opposed the extension of slavery, called for the restoration of the Missouri Compromise, and supported a prohibitory law. The call for a prohibitory law spoke to the influence of the nativist wing within the People’s Party. Just as the Whigs had done in the past, the People’s Party recognized the strength of nativist voters and in order to keep them as political allies, added this prohibitory law to the platform. George W. Julian, a former Whig and then Free Soiler who joined the Republican Party in its early years, labeled the People’s Party platform in 1854 as “narrow and equivocal.” Julian recognized that outsiders influenced the fusionist convention and he believed that the platform was more suitable to the Know Nothings rather than the People’s Party.¹⁴

The Hoosier Democrats attempted to downplay the fusionists, calling them a coalition simply made up of “distraught factions.” They recognized the strength of anti-Nebraska sentiment but also commented on what they believed was a lack of cohesion within the fusionist ranks. One Hoosier Democrat constituent, William Noel, commented on the confusion: “There was general dissatisfaction among the Whigs when I left home—It will be utterly impossible to make a fusion ticket that can even stand one contest.”¹⁵

The Democrats’ main critique of the People’s Party forces was the Whigs’ use of the new fusionist coalition. They claimed that after the 1852 election, the Whigs

¹³ Wernle, *Henry Smith Lane*, 30.

¹⁴ Julian, *Political Recollections*, 144.

¹⁵ The conservative People’s Party Platform: Gienapp, *Origins of the Republican Party*, 109. Democrats’ belief in a disjointed People’s Party: *Crawfordsville Review*, September 30, 1854. William Noel to John G. Davis, July 30, 1854, in John G. Davis Papers, Box 1 Folder 14, Indiana Historical Society, Indianapolis.

and the Abolitionists used the temperance movement to gain votes but once the Kansas-Nebraska Act passed, these leaders quickly abandoned that mission. All who were “disaffected” from the bill came together. This “mongrel tribe” formed “without any unity of motives, and merely for the purpose of defeating the Democratic party.” Addressing the upcoming election, Hoosier Democrat Horatio J. Harris wrote to Governor Joseph A. Wright expressing his hope that the Democrats would “not be led astray by the side-issues,” which he credited to the ambitions of the Abolitionists and Whigs. Many Democrats believed that the Whigs were simply utilizing these estranged factions to win elections and once the party could regain its strength, the People’s Party would dissolve.¹⁶

Hoosier Democrats, believing this movement was temporary did not fully understand the influence or strength behind the anti-Nebraska or nativist forces in 1854. Newspapers called for Democrats to remain faithful and to not vote fusionist simply because they were a “friend of temperance” or “opposed to the Nebraska measure.”¹⁷ Political leaders understood that the nativists had enticed several Democrats into their ranks but believed the old-liners outnumbered these deserters. Daniel A. Farley, a Democrat from Indiana’s Seventh Congressional District, wrote to John G. Davis that the voters would never elect a Know Nothing, whose political society “fears to advocate their views in open day before the assembled people.”

¹⁶ Crawfordsville *Review*, July 22, 1854; First quotation: Indianapolis *Sentinel*, October 19, 1854; Second quotation: Horatio J. Harris to Joseph A. Wright, May 29, 1854, Joseph A. Wright Papers, Box 1 Folder 6, Indiana State Library, Indianapolis, Indiana.

¹⁷ Crawfordsville *Review*, September 30, 1854.

Farley also believed that while the Order had attracted many Democrats, the old party was “taking them out faster than they got them in.”¹⁸

While preparing for the state elections, the People’s Party defended their coalition from the Democrats’ attacks. The Indianapolis *Journal* scoffed at the Democrats’ negative labeling of the People’s Party as a fusionist organization when in fact, they too were calling for their own fusion. In reference to the Kansas-Nebraska Act, the Indianapolis *Journal* charged: “Democrats fused with Secessionists, with Filibusters, with Slavery Whigs, with anybody and everybody, to secure the success of the most infamous fraud ever attempted by any party.” While the fusionists under the banner of the People’s Party united for their principles and ideals, the Democrats called for a coalition based on the spread of slavery and the quest to “cheat the North out of all her rights” promised under the Missouri Compromise.¹⁹ The People’s Party press continued to badger the Democrats over the “Nebraska swindle” and hoped that anti-Nebraska sentiment would mean success in the fall elections.

In the October 1854 state elections, the Hoosier People’s Party soundly defeated the Democrats. The fusionist state ticket received a majority of 13,000 votes and in the congressional campaigns, they managed to receive a majority of 14,500 votes. Two Democrats, William H. English and Smith Miller retained their congressional seats while the other nine positions went to the fusionists. In the next state legislature, the Senate was to consist of twenty-six Democrats and twenty-four

¹⁸ Daniel A. Farley to John G. Davis, September 24, 1854, John G. Davis Papers, Box 1 Folder 15, Indiana Historical Society, Indianapolis.

¹⁹ Both quotations: Indianapolis *Journal*, October 2, 1854.

fusionists while the House of Representatives was to have forty-three Democrats and fifty-seven fusionists. The Indianapolis *Journal* heralded: "The People Triumphant! Indiana Against Slavery Extension and in favor of American Principles!" In response to other Republican or fusionist victories in other northern states, it declared that the North "has spoken well, better by far, than her best wishers could have expected."²⁰

On November 1, the fusionists held a celebration in Indianapolis. Judge Oliver P. Morton from Wayne County spoke in the afternoon and the Indianapolis *Journal* pronounced that he was "one of the most instructive speaker in the State, or out of it" and that many would leave the celebrations carrying with them the points that he discussed in his speech. Know Nothing leader Godlove Orth also spoke at the gathering, stressing the importance of the approaching session of the Indiana legislature. Orth spoke to the necessity of a prohibitory law and reassured the people that "they had voted for positive action, and that alone would meet the wants and wishes of the country."²¹

The Democrats, refusing to believe that their defeat came at the hands of anti-Nebraska or anti-slavery men, blamed the Know Nothings. The Crawfordsville *Review* characterized the election as the triumph of "Jacobinism over republicanism." Daniel A. Farley wrote after the results, "The Know Nothings have done their task." As these Democrats suggest, the 1854 elections in Indiana did

²⁰ Indiana State Legislature in Charles Zimmerman, "The Origin and Rise of the Republican Party in Indiana from 1854 to 1860," *Indiana Magazine of History* 13, no. 3 (September 1917): 244; Election results: Roger H. Van Bolt, "Fusion Out of Confusion, 1854," *Indiana Magazine of History* 49, no. 3 (December 1953): 387. Quotation: The Indianapolis *Journal*, October 12, 1854.

²¹ Indianapolis *Journal*, November 2, 1854.

allude to the strength of the Know Nothing forces. Though these elections were viewed as Know Nothing victories, the growing People's Party also benefited. The elections led some Hoosier Whigs to realize that their party would never again regain its power as the leading oppositional party to the Democrats. This realization pushed some anti-slavery Whigs who had resisted the fusionist movement in the beginning to join its ranks in 1855 and 1856."²²

As the People's Party took office, Hoosiers waited to see if this new party could withstand the pressure of running the state. Democratic Governor Joseph Wright still headed the state but the Fusionists outnumbered the Democrats fifty-seven to forty-three in the 1855 Indiana House of Representatives. When the legislative body met in January, the two parties quickly came to a head. The issue that created much hostility between the two parties was the selection of a U.S. Senator. The Democratic Senate nominated Isaac Blackford to fill the position but the fusionist House refused to support Blackford. The House then called for a joint convention in order to decide on a senator but the Democrats rejected the suggestion, thus ending the legislative session with no senator chosen.²³ Democrat Jesse Bright represented Indiana alone in the U.S. Senate until 1857.

²² Crawfordsville *Review*, October 21, 1854; Daniel A. Farley to John G. Davis, October 12, 1854, John G. Davis Papers, Box 1 Folder 16, Indiana Historical Society, Indianapolis. The long-term benefit of these elections for Republicans: Michael F. Holt, "The Making and Mobilizing the Republican Party, 1854-1860," in *The Birth of the Grand Old Party: The Republicans' First Generation*, ed. Robert F. Engs and Randall M. Miller (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002), 37.

²³ Roger H. Van Bolt, "The Rise of the Republican Party in Indiana, 1855-1856," *Indiana Magazine of History* 7, no. 2 (September 1955): 186-187; Also, Zimmerman, "Origin and Rise of the Republican Party," 248.

The People's Party members, outraged at this breach of republicanism, claimed that the Democrats sacrificed principle for party and believed that they disregarded the will of the people. The *Lafayette Journal* characterized this event as a plan to allow the Democrats "sufficient time to drill the consciences of such among them as may entertain scruples about committing so flagrant a violation of their sworn duty." The Democrats' refusal to even allow the possibility of electing a fusionist angered the People's Party and they would use this event in the future to label the Democrats as corrupt despots.²⁴

After their battle with the Democrats in the legislature, the People's Party press understood the importance of presenting a unified coalition. Because the men who carried the People's Party to victory belonged to different parties and possessed varying political ideals, party leaders grew concerned that the organization would divide into separate factions. The *Indianapolis Journal* claimed that "slavery extension Democrats will do all in their power to create dissensions in our ranks" and that the fusionists' duty was to keep in mind that "there is strength in Union."²⁵

As early as February 1855, the Democrats declared that the new fusion party was on the verge of death. They compared it to the anti-Masonic Party and the Free Soil Party, both of which had risen and attracted voters, only to decline a few years later. The Democratic press labeled the People's Party a sectional organization and claimed that Indiana would not continue to support a party that threatened the

²⁴ Connersville [Indiana] *Times* quoted in the *Indianapolis Journal*, March 13, 1855.
Quotation: *Lafayette [Indiana] Journal* quoted in the *Indianapolis Journal*, January 18, 1854.

²⁵ *Indianapolis Journal*, January 4, 1855.

harmony of the Union. Furthermore, they believed that because the People's Party capitalized on the excitement over the Kansas-Nebraska Act, the party could not hope to live "in the *one* idea." One Hoosier Democrat claimed that never again could any member of the party "be seduced into the ranks of the enemy" and that the fusion movement can "never be rekindled in this state because it is not founded on principle."²⁶

The Democrats' accusations of a disjointed People's Party proved not entirely unfounded. While the initial excitement over the Nebraska issue and slavery extension united the fusionists, once they claimed victory, other topics created division. Lew Wallace, a Hoosier Democrat who served as a general in the Civil War, commented on the different factions within the People's Party. He viewed the party full of "isms" promoted by the abolitionists, prohibitionists, and Know Nothings. Because of these various "isms," party members were "scheming and struggling to bring about a general coalition without which there could be no effective opposition to the Democratic party." The Democratic press also continued to comment on the various "isms" that plagued the People's Party: "The wretched factions standing in opposition to the Democracy are destined to experience great difficulty in dividing the spoils." Furthermore, it predicted that the party would last no more than a year, arguing that the party, "organized solely for the object of getting the offices out of the hands of the Democrats, will fall to pieces."²⁷ Indeed, after its initial success, the

²⁶ Crawfordsville *Review*, February 3, 1855. Hoosier Democrat quotation: E. Read to John G. Davis, February 22, 1855 in John G. Davis Papers, Box 2 Folder 2, Indiana Historical Society, Indianapolis.

²⁷ Wallace, *An Autobiography*, 231; Indianapolis *Sentinel*, October 19, 1854.

People's Party did face some challenges although it would not dissolve as the Democrats predicted.

The temperance issue represented one of the initial obstacles the People's Party faced in 1855. In February, the General Assembly approved a prohibitory act, which made the sale of liquor illegal. The bill passed both in the House and the Senate. On February 22, the South Bend *Register* reported that Governor Wright had signed the prohibitory bill into law.²⁸ Across the state, temperance advocates celebrated the Prohibitory Law. The law, supporters believed, guaranteed that "the personal rights of the people are more strictly guarded, and the security of a man's private residence is held sacred." Temperance enthusiasts declared "Indiana Redeemed!—Prohibitory Law Triumphant!—Rejoice, Rejoice!"²⁹ However, the celebratory atmosphere within the temperance-fusionist ranks did not last long.

Not long after the temperance law passed, the Indiana Supreme Court received a case, which forced them to scrutinize the constitutionality of this law. When Roderick Beebe opened a saloon in Indianapolis and was subsequently arrested, the incident served as a "test case" for the new prohibitory law. Just as it had done with temperance legislation in 1853, the Supreme Court declared the law unconstitutional.³⁰ Once again the Democrats defeated the temperance advocates within the fusionist movement. Social historian Ian R. Tyrrell argues that while nativists were hostile towards immigrants, many were indifferent to temperance

²⁸ Van Bolt, "Rise of the Republican Party," 186; South Bend *Register*, February 22, 1855.

²⁹ First quotation: Wabash [Indiana] *Gazette* quoted in the Indianapolis *Journal*, February 23, 1855. Second quotation: Lafayette [Indiana] *Journal* quoted in the Indianapolis *Journal*, February 23, 1855.

³⁰ Van Bolt, "Rise of the Republican Party," 187.

legislation. Also, prohibition “had significant cross-party support” during this time period, which made “prohibition agitation so disruptive of existing party loyalties.”³¹ The People’s Party possessed different factions within its ranks, which weakened the organization. Once unified over the Kansas-Nebraska Act, the fusionists seemed indecisive over side issues. In the future, the party would abandon its link to temperance because the issue proved too divisive.

The most influential factions within the Hoosier People’s Party were the former Whigs and the Know Nothings. While considered their own independent organization, the influence of the Know Nothings within the fusionist movement could not be ignored. The two groups came together naturally in 1854, united behind the anti-Nebraska movement and the issue of slavery extension. By 1855, the former Whigs and Know Nothings battled in a power struggle. In the beginning, the Know Nothings—existing as a secret order—recognized that their organization would never succeed without uniting with the People’s Party. But as the Order grew in strength, so too did their thirst for power and the chance to elect their own Know Nothing candidates on an open ballot. Godlove S. Orth, a leading Hoosier Know Nothing favored an American Party that would hold its own open conventions. Schuyler Colfax, another Know Nothing leader, worried that if the two factions could not work together, two tickets would form, and many would have to choose between the parties thus weakening the fusionist movement in Indiana.³²

³¹ Ian R. Tyrrell, *Sobering Up: From Temperance to Prohibition in Antebellum America, 1800-1860* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1979), 261; 265; 305.

³² Brand, “History of the Know Nothing Party in Indiana,” 62; Godlove Orth’s opinion on a national American Party: Godlove Orth to Schuyler Colfax, February 14, 1855 in Herman Schauinger, “The Letters of Godlove S. Orth, Hoosier American,” *Indiana Magazine*

In June 1855, while the People's Party suffered organizational problems, so too did the national Know Nothing organization. While Colfax claimed he would choose the anti-slavery issue over nativism if necessary, others like Orth clung to the hope that the two issues would remain united, especially in Indiana: "We must not lose sight of the fact, that while there is a strong Anti-Slavery feeling in the State, there is also a strong American feeling—and both must be preserved and united." Know Nothings like Orth viewed the divisions within the national party as destructive.³³

No longer a secret organization, the American Party held their national convention in Philadelphia. On June 5, Hoosier Know Nothings attended the meeting, hopeful of its outcome. When the national party presented its resolutions, the endorsement of the Kansas-Nebraska Act sent many northern members into protest. The Indiana delegation made a written declaration of dissent to the convention, separating themselves from the national party. Although not all Hoosier Know Nothings supported this break, many supported the action taken by the delegation. Discussing the topic with Schuyler Colfax, Godlove Orth claimed to have explained the proceedings of the convention with Hoosier Know Nothings and was encouraged that "they unanimously approved of our course." The greatest opposition to the action taken by the Hoosier delegation came from southern counties in the state. These men, who often sympathized with southern sentiments, were more reluctant to separate themselves from the national party on account of

of History 40, no. 1 (March 1944): 64-65; Schuyler Colfax's worry about splitting the fusionist movement: Van Bolt, "Rise of the Republican Party," 192.

³³ Godlove Orth to Schuyler Colfax, June 23, 1855 in Schauinger, "The Letters of Godlove S. Orth," 66.

the Kansas-Nebraska Act. However, the overall support of the separation with the national party and their compliance to support anti-slavery extension over nativism helped boost fusionism in Indiana—as well as other states in the North—and furthered the transformation into a Hoosier Republican Party.³⁴

The anti-slavery force in Indiana also began organizing in June 1855. Leaders of the group called for an anti-slavery convention in Indianapolis to be held on June 27. In their announcement printed in several newspapers across the state, they commented on the fragmentation of old party lines in the North and how different issues had relegated slavery into the background. They demanded, “The question of slavery must swallow up all others, and destroy any party that shall sink or ignore it.”³⁵ However strong the anti-slavery movement seemed to be in Indiana, the June 27 convention was not very well attended. The Indianapolis *Journal* blamed the lack of attendance on the fear that the mission of the convention was to “secure the independent and separate action of the Free Democracy of the State, without regard to the Republican or Fusion movement.”³⁶ Although this was not the intention of the meeting, the disappointing turnout proved that Hoosiers were still reluctant to proclaim themselves outright anti-slavery men, even if they were against the extension of the institution.

Preparing for the presidential election the following year, Democrats once again exploited the fusionists’ lack of organization. The Indianapolis *Journal* resented the fact that the Democratic press called the fusionists a “speckled party”

³⁴ Van Bolt, “Rise of the Republican Party,” 193-195; Godlove Orth to Schuyler Colfax, June 23, 1855 in Schauinger, “The Letters of Godlove S. Orth,” 66.

³⁵ Crawfordsville *Review*, June 6, 1855.

³⁶ Indianapolis *Journal*, June 30, 1855.

with “as little uniformity of principle as of past political association—a bundle of discordant factions, without strength of permanence.” Furthermore, many Hoosier Democrats viewed the People’s Party as a means of sectional agitation. They warned fellow Democrats to stay away from the fusionist party unless they favored “Disunion, Amalgamation and War of the sword and cannon against the people of the South.”³⁷ Democrats attempted to appeal to those who might have felt the People’s Party had taken a more radical turn by uniting with abolitionists and former Free Soilers.

Even though divisions were apparent, both within the fusionist movement as a whole, and within the ranks of the individual Know Nothing organization and People’s Party, also evident was the continuation of a common bond holding the new organizations together: anti-southernism and anti-slavery extension. The People’s Party held their 1855 convention on July 13 in Indianapolis. Over 3,000 people were in attendance and the atmosphere of the convention was decidedly more anti-slavery extension. The Indianapolis *Journal* commented on the convention saying “Resistance to slavery extension is a ‘fixed fact’ in Indiana” and that the subject of slavery was “the key note of all the proceedings and speeches, sentiments and resolutions” of the meeting.³⁸ The People’s Party, although still unsteady in regards to side issues, remained a growing organization because of its commitment to the ideas of anti-slavery extension and the perpetuity of free labor.

³⁷ Indianapolis *Journal*, May 1, 1855; Crawfordsville *Review*, September 22, 1855.

³⁸ Seeds, ed., *History of the Republican Party of Indiana*, 24; Indianapolis *Journal*, July 14, 1855.

At the People's Party Convention, Lane made a speech about the necessity of the North to unite over the slavery issue. Lane believed that a compromise with the South over slavery was impossible. The South had always been united over the issue while the North remained divided. Lane believed that a lesson could be learned from the southerners. While the South made its demands for the protection of slavery, the North had always been "told to touch lightly, lest the Union should be dissolved, and from our love to that Union, we have yielded." Lane continued, saying that the North would not give up the fight to restore the Missouri Compromise and would no longer give in to the Slave Power of the South. He challenged opponents who claimed that the People's Party was dead, commenting on the number of people at the convention even during the harvest season, the busiest time of the year for most Hoosiers. Lane believed in the unity of the fusion movement and increasingly in 1855, northerners were ready to defend their ideology of free labor against the slaveholders of the South.³⁹

On August 8, Lane sent fellow fusionist leader Schuyler Colfax a letter agreeing to attend a mass meeting in South Bend and also commenting on the duties of all northerners in the upcoming election. Again, he reiterated the fact that the party must resist the extension of slavery and preserve freedom. Lane also warned against the "Doughfaces" of the North "who are willing to sacrifice their own self-respect and the dearest interests of humanity for the purpose of obtaining office and position." He believed that these northerners who resist the cause of freedom and turn their back on republicanism were far more dangerous than any southerner

³⁹ Indianapolis *Journal*, July 14, 1855.

who supports slavery. He closed his letter vowing to arrive soon in South Bend to attend the meeting and further canvas the state for the fusionist cause.⁴⁰

Although the People's convention boasted a high volume of attendance and claimed that the "old-line" conventions were not successful, local October elections did not fare well for the fusionists. Democrats reclaimed many of the counties that the fusionists had won the previous year. For example, in Putnam County, the Democrats secured a majority of one hundred votes while in the 1854 election, the fusionists had claimed a majority of over four hundred votes. In Johnson County, the People's Party lost by eight hundred votes and in Shelby and Dearborn counties, Democrats secured a majority of six hundred votes. The Indianapolis *Sentinel* asserted that the party's majority in the state would be about twenty thousand votes. Although defeated, many believed the People's Party could be redeemed in 1856. The Indianapolis *Journal* called out to fusion supporters: "You have no cause to abandon your purpose, or lose hope, work vigorously."⁴¹

One factor that contributed to the fusionists' defeat was the emergence of an open American Party. Even though many Hoosier Know Nothings protested the party's national platform, now two "third" parties existed in opposition to the Democrats, forcing Know Nothings to choose between its newly open party and the

⁴⁰ Henry Lane to Schuyler Colfax, August 8, 1855 in the Indianapolis *Journal*, August 21, 1855.

⁴¹ Vote totals: Indianapolis *Journal*, October 11, 1855 and Indianapolis *Sentinel*, October 13, 1855; quotation: Indianapolis *Journal*, October 10, 1855.

People's Party. Schuyler Colfax's concerns about an open American Party and the split between fusionist votes were realized in the local elections of 1855.⁴²

With the state elections behind them, the old-liners, People's Party, and the Know Nothings all had their eye on the presidency in 1856. Democrats continued to point out the organizational difficulties within the People's Party while the fusionist leaders attempted to decide on a campaign strategy. Party leaders contemplated the benefits of the strategy employed in 1854, where they allied themselves with the Know Nothings. Would that same strategy be effective two years later? By 1856, a majority of the fusionist press referred to the People's Party as the Republican Party. While some Hoosier political leaders remained cautious, retaining the fusionist title, the growing acceptance of "Republican" by paper editors signified Indiana's alignment with the northern sectional party as well as its growing indifference to appeasing conservatives or nativists.⁴³

In early 1856, the Republicans met their first obstacle in national politics. During the campaign to elect a House Speaker in Congress, the Republicans sought to emerge as the leaders of the anti-Nebraska forces. They had to contend with the former Democrats as well as the powerful nativists in their quest to elect a speaker. They chose Nathaniel P. Banks, a second-term congressman, who had initially run as a Democratic Know Nothing. After almost two months of balloting and a change in

⁴² Van Bolt, *Rise of the Republican Party*, 197; Schuyler Colfax's worry about splitting the fusionist movement: *Ibid.*, 192.

⁴³ Barrows and McCord, ed., *Their Infinite Variety*, 61. Many works on the Republican Party claim that Hoosiers continued using the title "People's Party" well into the late 1850s. In 1856, Hoosiers did use People's Party but in the sources I studied, "Republican" was becoming more tolerated. These years were a transitional period for the People's Party/Republican Party in Indiana.

election rules that allowed a plurality rather than a majority, the Republicans successfully united the anti-Democratic forces and elected Banks as House Speaker.⁴⁴

Many Republican leaders viewed this election as the party's first victory while the Democrats again commented on the divisions within the fusionist movement. "After a delay of over two months, the Black Republican Know Nothings have at last organized the House by electing a Speaker, a thing which they might have accomplished the first day of the session, had they been united among themselves."⁴⁵ While Banks' election did signify the Republicans ability to elect candidates on a national level, the new party had much work to do to in the upcoming presidential campaign.

In Indiana, the fusionists searched for candidates who would run in the October state elections. In February, Lane once again turned down the nomination for governor but declared that he would "always be found ready to do battle for ALL those great and conservative principles which form the basis of the Republican party." The People's Party then turned to former Democrat Oliver P. Morton to run for governor. Party leaders believed that he would be able to appeal to anti-Nebraska Democrats as well as satisfy the Republicans within the state.⁴⁶

⁴⁴ Joel H. Silbey, "After 'The First Northern Victory': The Republican Party Comes to Congress, 1855-1856," *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 20, no. 1 (Summer, 1989): 1-8.

⁴⁵ *Crawfordsville Review*, February 9, 1856.

⁴⁶ Henry Lane to the Editor of the *Indianapolis Journal*, February 25, 1856 in Henry S. Lane Papers, Box 1 Folder 3, Lilly Library, Bloomington, Indiana; Oliver Morton as candidate for Governor: Sharp, "Henry S. Lane and the Formation of the Republican Party in Indiana," 108-109.

Even though many fusionists accepted the name “Republican” in 1856, in order to defeat the Democrats, they continued to work with the Know Nothing supporters. On March 3, 1856 the Indianapolis *Journal* printed a proposal for the 1856 state election, initially made by the New Albany *Tribune*. The *Tribune* proposed to unite the Republican and American parties “against the common enemy” and find candidates “for whom every man who supported the ticket and platform of 1854 and 1855 will willingly vote.” Furthermore, the *Tribune* called for the Republicans to adopt the candidates made by their convention in June while the Americans would also adopt the candidates chosen by their convention in July. Then, Hoosiers would vote on the candidates and the two men who secured the most votes would be the presidential and vice presidential candidates for a joint Republican-American ticket.⁴⁷

While the *Journal* recognized the fairness of the *Tribune*'s suggested proposal, it doubted its practicability. It explained the difficulties of attempting to vote for candidates while at the same time, effectively canvassing the state against the Democrats. Ultimately, Berry R. Sulgrove and Rawson Vaile, now the editors of the *Journal* wrote: “We shall not stand in the way of any effective arrangement for a cooperation against ‘old-lineism,’ but we suggest these difficulties that the *Tribune* may meet them, or modify its plan or make another.”⁴⁸

While some Republicans and Know Nothings hoped for a combined ticket, the 1856 campaign witnessed the split between the two parties with separate platforms. Not only was there a split between these two parties in Indiana, the

⁴⁷ New Albany [Indiana] *Tribune* quoted in the Indianapolis *Journal*, March 3, 1856.

⁴⁸ Indianapolis *Journal*, March 3, 1856.

national Know Nothing Party struggled to unite. While the Know Nothings dominated many northern state elections in 1854 and 1855, the presidential campaign of 1856 split the party. Similar to the Whigs' crisis in 1852, the American Party labored to satisfy party members in the North and the South.

At the American National Convention in February 1856, the party attempted to find a compromise between the northern and southern factions on the slavery issue. However, when the Know Nothings adopted a platform that did not denounce the Kansas-Nebraska Act, northerners vowed to leave the convention unless the platform endorsed the restriction of slavery above the Missouri Compromise line. With a majority vote of 151 to 51, delegates proceeded with the nomination process and upheld the proposed platform, causing several delegates from New England, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Illinois, and Iowa to leave the convention. These northern delegates then decided to meet in New York on June 12 for their own "North" American Party convention, to nominate a separate presidential candidate and devise a new, anti-slavery, nativist platform.⁴⁹

The remaining American Party members in Philadelphia chose former Whig and U.S. President, Millard Fillmore to head their party. Fillmore, although not considered a nativist, appealed to American leaders who viewed his devotion to the Union as a tool to neutralize sectional tensions. Know Nothings contended that they were the "only absolute conservative party in the Union" and that there was "no National Party now in this government but the American party." Hoosier Know

⁴⁹ Now that the Know Nothings ran candidates out in the open rather than casting secret ballots, they were more well known as the American Party; Anbinder, *Nativism and Slavery*, 206-209.

Nothings attempted to sway some Republicans into their ranks by claiming Fillmore was the only real chance the North had at restoring the Missouri Compromise. Also, they appealed to voters who did not feel comfortable with the Republican Party as a sectional organization. Know Nothings claimed that they were against slavery but because they were a national party, did not support agitation upon the issue. They contended that Fillmore and the party understood both sides of the argument and believed each should follow the laws that were already in place.”⁵⁰

On May 1, 1856 Lane served as the chairman of the People’s State Convention and also spoke at the gathering, which took place in Indianapolis. In regard to the slavery issue, Lane reiterated that the Republicans’ stance was not the abolition of slavery, but rather the prohibition of slavery’s extension. Lane then explained that if the resistance to slavery extension was labeled as “abolitionism” by southerners, then yes, he was an abolitionist. At this time, only Millard Fillmore had been officially nominated as president and although Lane respected the former president, he believed that Fillmore did not represent the true sentiments of the North in regards to slavery. Lane thus ended his speech claiming he would not support Fillmore.⁵¹

In May 1856, Republicans discussed their potential candidates for president. John C. Frémont was a strong contender. Frémont, a young military man and western explorer seemed the most unlikely choice for the new party. However, as

⁵⁰ Ibid., 202; Quotation and Know Nothings’ attitude toward Fillmore: *Terre Haute Wabash Express*, April 9, 1856.

⁵¹ Henry Lane’s speech delivered at the People’s State Convention, Indianapolis, May 1, 1856 published in the *Montgomery Weekly Journal*, May 8, 1856 in Henry S. Lane Papers Box 1 Folder 3, Lilly Library, Bloomington, Indiana.

historian William E. Gienapp argues, the masterful political minds behind the scenes decided on Frémont because “he enjoyed a favorable public image, was a former Democrat” and also possessed “a meager political record that was sufficiently malleable for the times.”⁵²

Hoosier John D. Defrees, a leading Republican, wrote to Lane that the party could secure more votes for Frémont than any other man: “We can raise a breeze for him. He is a young and vigorous man, full of the right kind of pluck—never before the people for office—a new man and a new party will take thousands!”⁵³ Many Republicans like Defrees, believed that Frémont would appeal to those still indecisive about the new party but ready to support an anti-slavery extension candidate.

From June 17 to June 19, Lane presided over the first Republican National Convention in Philadelphia. His selection as the permanent chairman reflected his reputation as a moderate as well as his well-known political ability and personality. The Indianapolis *Journal* praised Lane’s appointment stating that it was “a deserved compliment to an excellent man...the cheers for Indiana that greeted his accession to the chair is a compliment to the free feeling of the State, that she will prove worthy of in the election.”⁵⁴ In his opening speech, Lane spoke to his moderate background and appealed to those who were still uneasy about joining a new party. “I, my fellow citizens, had perhaps as much difficulty in laying down my party

⁵² Gienapp, *Origins of the Republican Party*, 333-334.

⁵³ John D. Defrees to Henry Lane, May 19, 1856 in Henry S. Lane Papers, Box 1 Folder 3, Lilly Library, Bloomington, Indiana.

⁵⁴ Lane’s selection as chairman: Barrows and McCord, eds., “*Their Infinite Variety*,” 61; Quotation: Indianapolis *Journal*, June 19, 1856.

predilections as any of you...I followed the standard of the glorious Clay, of Kentucky—(applause)—but when the Kansas-Nebraska swindle passed, my allegiance from that hour to Kentucky politics has slumbered in the grave of Henry Clay.” Concluding his speech, he rebuked opponents’ claims that the Republicans were treasonous or pro-disunion. He also claimed that while the Constitution lasts, the Republicans Party could never die. A correspondent of the Cincinnati *Commercial* recognized Lane’s address as “the most astonishing speech ever heard in these parts” and believed that the Hoosier deserved to have national recognition for his work at the convention.⁵⁵

The Republicans worked with the newly formed North American Party—the anti-slavery Know Nothings who had split from that national party—to nominate Frémont. Here in Philadelphia, the Republicans knew that many northern Know Nothings would indeed collaborate with them in order to nominate a national ticket. Back in February, at a Republican convention held in Pittsburgh, the delegates received word from Ohio Know Nothing Thomas Spooner about the weakened condition of that national party. “The American party is no longer a unit. The national council has gone to pieces. Raise the Republican banner. The North Americans are with you.”⁵⁶

⁵⁵ Henry Lane’s Address before the Republican National Convention at Philadelphia, June 17, 1856 printed in the *Rushville Weekly Republican*, July 2, 1856 in Henry S. Lane Papers, Box 1 Folder 3, Lilly Library, Bloomington, Indiana; Cincinnati *Commercial* quoted in the Indianapolis *Journal*, June 21, 1856.

⁵⁶ The Republican and North American plan to elect Frémont: Anbinder, *Nativism and Slavery*, 208 and Gienapp, *Origins of the Republican Party*, 318; 333-334; Quotation: Thomas Spooner quoted in George W. Julian, “The First Republican National Convention,” *American Historical Review* IV, no. 2 (January 1899): 318.

With the North Americans' agreement to unite with the Republicans, both parties sought out the best strategy. Finally, they planned on the North Americans to nominate a presidential and vice presidential candidate that would then step down to support Frémont, uniting both parties under one candidate. However, they had to make sure the North Americans did not nominate Frémont at their own New York Convention, for fear that Republican voters would label the westerner a nativist and refuse to vote for him. Republicans chose House Speaker Nathaniel P. Banks as the North American candidate. They believed Banks could unite the anti-Democratic forces in Congress and was certain he would endorse Frémont. Although the plan almost failed when some Know Nothings refused to support Banks and bolted from the convention, the remaining delegates nominated Banks who immediately began promoting Frémont in Philadelphia.⁵⁷

During the Philadelphia convention, the Republicans' plan came to fruition and they successfully elected John C. Frémont as their first presidential candidate. The final platform was decidedly anti-slavery extension, calling for the admission of Kansas as a free state and the exclusion of slavery in new territories. The platform also laid out one of the key elements of the Republican Party, which was the belief that "the rights of the States, and the union of the States, must and shall be preserved." In Indiana, the announcement of Frémont's nomination was met with enthusiasm. The *Indianapolis Journal* wrote: "Shouts for 'Freedom and Fremont' went up from thousands of honest hearts."⁵⁸

⁵⁷ Gienapp, *Origins of the Republican Party*, 318; 333-334.

⁵⁸ *Indianapolis Journal*, June 20, 1856.

On July 15, Hoosier Republicans held a State Ratification Meeting in Indianapolis. An estimated 30,000 people attended the meeting and Lane spoke to those in attendance about the Republican cause. He mainly discussed the civil unrest in Kansas over whether or not its state constitution would include slavery and the Republicans' stance that the state should be admitted to the Union as a free state. At the end of his speech, he made a series of resolutions that the convention adopted. The Hoosier Republicans approved the principles of the national party, supported John C. Frémont and William L. Dayton as their candidates, and ratified the state ticket proposed in May.⁵⁹

While the People's Party in Indiana grew in number and in strength, the Hoosier Know Nothing campaign began to disintegrate. The Terre Haute *Wabash Express*, once having praised Fillmore and his platform, now turned on the ex-president. It criticized Fillmore for not addressing the slavery issue directly and disliked his policy that claimed he would support current legislation on the subject. According to the *Wabash Express*, to simply maintain current legislation meant a pledge to veto any bill that would restore the Missouri Compromise, which seemed like a pro-slavery platform. The paper claimed that Fillmore acquired a strong support system in the South and a waning following in the North. By late October, the paper that had once promoted Fillmore now stated that his former Hoosier supporters must realize that their candidate has as much chance at "succeeding Franklin Pierce as he does Pope Pius IX."⁶⁰

⁵⁹ Ibid., July 16, 1856.

⁶⁰ Terre Haute *Wabash Express*, September 3, 1856; October 22, 1856.

Hoosier Republicans, obviously vying for Frémont also laid out concerns about Millard Fillmore. The main anxiety over Fillmore was his ambivalence to the South. One anonymous writer claimed that Fillmore's indecisive stance on slavery meant, "He was nominated by the South, stands on a Southern platform and is supported by the South." Challenges were made to Fillmore supporters to point out in what ways he supported anti-slavery extension. In his party's platform, nowhere did it oppose the repeal of the Missouri Compromise nor did it take any position against the extension of slavery. In order to rally the anti-Democratic forces, Republicans asked voters to seriously think about throwing away votes for Fillmore, a man that could very well support slavery's extension once in office.⁶¹

The Democrats, having selected James Buchanan and John C. Breckinridge as their president and vice president candidates respectively, continued to portray the Republicans as agitators, abolitionists, and Know Nothings. The Crawfordsville *Review* harshly criticized its fellow Montgomery County citizen Lane for his "political degradation," as it labeled his movement from the "honorable" Whig Party to the Republican ranks. The paper claimed Lane's quest was to "abolitionize the great party of which Henry Clay was the founder and father." As an example, the *Review* pointed out that Lane had voted to remove abolitionist Joshua R. Giddings from the House on account of his anti-slavery views but now, in the Republican Party, he worked side-by-side with Giddings, promoting the abolitionist cause. The

⁶¹ Indianapolis *Journal*, August 5, 1856.

paper warned its readers to resist the Republicans and Know Nothings and to remain steadfast in Democratic principles.⁶²

Major national issues during the 1856 presidential campaign not only increased sectional tensions, but also pushed many northern old-liners and Know Nothings into the Republican ranks. In the spring of 1856, while in limbo over a state constitution, a pro-slavery group of men took over the town of Lawrence, Kansas. The Republicans nicknamed the territory “Bleeding Kansas” as a result of this event. In reality, no one in Lawrence had been killed in the takeover but the Republicans used Kansas to exploit the aggressiveness of slaveholders against settlers in order to secure the state for slavery. Republicans also exploited President Pierce’s declaration that the proslavery legislature was the legal authority in the area.⁶³ From the controversy surrounding Kansas, Republicans aroused the North by charging the Democrats with endorsing slavery and uniting with the South.

On May 22, 1856 violence once again reared its head, this time in the nation’s capital. Preston S. Brooks, a congressman from South Carolina, attacked anti-slavery Senator Charles Sumner in the Senate chamber after Sumner insulted Brooks’ uncle, Senator Andrew Butler, in a previous speech. Brooks’ attack with his cane severely injured Sumner, rendering him unconscious and unable to return to Congress until 1859. Southerners praised Brooks for his actions while Republicans made Sumner a martyr. The Republicans exploited the attack on Sumner as well as “Bleeding Kansas” to urge northerners to “unite behind a party with a backbone,

⁶² Crawfordsville *Review*, June 21, 1856.

⁶³ Holt, *Political Crisis of the 1850s*, 194-195.

which could resist the impudent Southerners.”⁶⁴ During the campaign, these two events pushed many in the North to side with the Republicans and some historians claim the party’s success stemmed more from its promotion of issues it was against rather than issues it supported.⁶⁵

The Hoosier Republican press stirred its readers about the horrors of pro-slavery men in Kansas and in Congress. It labeled Brooks’ attack on Sumner as a “most cowardly and brutal act” and criticized southern papers for justifying the action. Republicans also called out the Democratic press for its silence on these issues. The Indianapolis *Journal* claimed that the Indianapolis *State Sentinel* never condemned these acts and although the paper may “disclaim pro-slavery feeling till doomsday...its act *will* believe it professions.”⁶⁶

In October, Hoosiers travelled to the polls for the state elections. Although the fusion ticket had won a sweeping victory two years before, the Democrats emerged victorious in these state elections. The Republican candidate, former Democrat Oliver P. Morton, lost to Democrat Ashbel P. Willard by about 5, 000 votes. In the Indiana state legislature, the Republicans held on to its majority in the Senate with twenty-seven over twenty-three Democrats while in the House of Representatives, the Democrats secured sixty-three seats over the Republicans’

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Although many of my sources discuss the Republicans’ ability to capitalize on these events, I found the following three to be the most helpful: See Holt, *Political Crisis of the 1850s*, 195; Holt, “The Making and Mobilizing of the Republican Party, 1854-1860,” in *The Birth of the Grand Old Party*, 44-45; and James L. Sundquist, *Dynamics of the Party System: Alignment and Realignment of Political Parties in the United States* (Washington DC: The Brookings Institution, 1973), 69-70.

⁶⁶ Indianapolis *Journal*, May 27, 1856.

thirty-five and the Americans' two.⁶⁷ While the Americans and Republicans blamed each other for the Democrats' victory, both parties quickly focused on the November presidential election as a way to rebuild.

As seen in the Indiana state elections, the Democrats celebrated their success November 1856. Even though the Republican Party had witnessed a surge in its ranks as more northerners flocked to the new organization, they could not secure a national majority to elect John C. Frémont. The Democratic candidate, James Buchanan received one hundred and seventy-four electoral votes compared to Frémont's one hundred and fourteen and Know Nothing candidate Millard Fillmore's eight to secure the White House. The Democrats won many northern states that voted Republican or People's Party in 1854, including Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Indiana, Illinois and California. One of the most defining characteristics of the 1856 election was the sectional nature of voting. Frémont's strength came exclusively from the North whereas Fillmore gained more votes in the South. Buchanan secured every state in the South except Maryland, which voted for Fillmore. According to historian William E. Gienapp, fearful that Frémont might win the election, many southern voters who supported Fillmore at the campaign's beginning switched to Buchanan at the last minute, thus killing any chances the former president had at claiming the executive office once again.⁶⁸

In Indiana, Buchanan won the state with 118, 672 votes compared to Frémont's 94, 376 and Fillmore's 22, 386. Hoosier Republicans blamed the Know

⁶⁷ South Bend *St. Joseph Valley Register*, October 10, 1856; Van Bolt, "Rise of the Republican Party," 213; Zimmerman, "Origin and Rise of the Republican Party in Indiana," 267.

⁶⁸ Gienapp, *Origins of the Republican Party*, 414.

Nothings for Frémont's defeat. The Republicans argued that the Democrats could celebrate their victory but they believed that had the contest been between Frémont and Buchanan alone, Frémont would have emerged victorious. The Indianapolis *Journal* announced to Fillmore supporters in Indiana "that *they* have elected James Buchanan" and "without Indiana he could not be the President." Furthermore, the paper believed the Americans would regret their actions in the election and hoped that "they will learn from past folly the wisdom of avoiding the practice of putting weapons into the hand of their enemies."⁶⁹ George Julian, writing in 1884 about his political experiences, remembered that "a combination of weakness, instead of a union of forces" caused the Republican defeat in 1856. Julian believed that if the Fillmore men had merged with the Republicans, Frémont would have succeeded over Buchanan.⁷⁰

Although many Hoosier Republicans argued that the Americans allowed a Democrat in the White House, the fact remains that even if all Know Nothings voted for Frémont, Buchanan still would have won Indiana. Nationally speaking, Frémont appeared on only four slave state ballots and only one border state, Maryland, gave its electoral votes to Fillmore.⁷¹ Although, as the 1860 election would reveal, a completely sectional party could successfully elect its candidate, in this election there was too much hesitation by northerners to support such a party that would alienate southerners and further agitate the sectional issue.

⁶⁹ Election results: Indianapolis *Journal*, November 26, 1856; Republicans belief that the Know Nothings allowed the Democrats to win the election: Louisville [Kentucky] *Journal* quoted in the Indianapolis *Journal*, November 10, 1856.

⁷⁰ Julian, *Political Recollections*, 155.

⁷¹ Potter, *Impending Crisis*, 261.

Other factors played a part in the Republicans' defeat in 1856. First, the Whig Party had not disappeared completely and many of these old-liners remained hesitant to join a new coalition. In Indiana, these Whigs favored either Buchanan or Fillmore over Frémont.⁷² These conservative Whigs viewed Frémont's victory as a path to disunion based on his stance on slavery extension while Fillmore remained relatively silent on the issue and Buchanan vowed to keep the institution intact. Second, in the opinion of these conservatives, Fillmore seemed to have a better chance at securing victory. Lane's close friend in Louisville, John Speed, claimed that he was for Fillmore for two reasons: one, he was "eminently conservative" and two, "every vote thrown for Fremont [sic] tends to give the State to Buchanan." Rather than chance a Democratic victory, many old-line Whigs and conservatives threw their support to Fillmore. The inability of the Republicans to attract a majority of the anti-Democratic forces allowed Buchanan to succeed.⁷³

The 1856 presidential campaign was a major turning point for both the Republican and American parties. Over the course of the 1850s, the Republican Party secured incredible support in many northern states and began its emergence as the dominant anti-Democratic organization while the Know Nothings divided over the slavery issue and lost much of the support they had garnered in 1854 and 1855. The election also demonstrated that the anti-slavery cause had come a long way in four short years. John P. Hale—who ran as an anti-slavery candidate on the Free Soil ticket in 1852—received about 157, 000 popular votes and not one

⁷² Van Bolt, "Rise of the Republican Party," 216-217.

⁷³ Republicans inability of the Republicans to capture a majority of the Whig vote: Gienapp, *Origins of the Republican Party*, 414-417; John J. Speed to Henry Lane, July 24, 1856 in Henry S. Lane Papers, Box 1 Folder 4, Lilly Library, Bloomington, Indiana.

electoral vote. In 1856, Frémont, running on a similar platform, received more than a million popular votes, 114 electoral votes, and carried eleven states.⁷⁴ Although some northerners remained hesitant, the 1856 election demonstrated their growing commitment to an anti-slavery extension and free labor platform and also their willingness to vote for a highly sectional party.

In the early 1850s, Hoosier Know Nothings dominated the fusionist organization and seemed to be the inheritors of the Whig Party. They choose state candidates at their conventions that the People's Party then endorsed. They capitalized on Hoosiers' anti-Catholic, anti-immigrant, and pro-temperance sentiments while also speaking out against the Kansas-Nebraska Act. However, when the slavery extension issue began to dominate all other issues, the national Know Nothing Party faltered. While the People's Party leaders, like Lane, John Defrees, and Schuyler Colfax "weighed the several *isms* carefully" and ultimately decided, "the extension of slavery must be resisted," the Americans divided over the explosive issue.⁷⁵ Some northern Know Nothings formed the North American Party and worked with Republicans in the 1856 presidential campaign to unite over the slavery issue while the national American Party attempted to downplay the issue and supported Millard Fillmore. In Indiana, an estimated forty percent of Fillmore supporters joined the Republican ranks by the 1860 election, looking to defeat the

⁷⁴ Julian, *Political Recollections*, 155.

⁷⁵ Wallace, *An Autobiography*, 233.

Slave Power in the South as well as the Democrats who supported popular sovereignty and the Kansas-Nebraska Act.⁷⁶

⁷⁶ William E. Gienapp, "Nativism and the Creation of a Republican Majority in the North Before the Civil War," *The Journal of American History* 72, no. 3 (December, 1985): 555. Gienapp provides a table measuring the percentage of Fillmore voters who cast either Republican or Constitutional Union ballots in 1860 for nine northern states.

Chapter III: A Republican Victory

As the year 1857 dawned, Hoosiers prepared themselves for the new session of the legislature. Before the governing body was scheduled to meet, two seats in the United States Senate would be empty and both parties looked for ways to ensure their candidate would win these coveted spots. In late January, Republican state Senator Samuel T. Ensey from Parke County wrote to Henry Lane assuring him that “twenty five Republican Senators will never under any circumstances consent to go into Joint Convention for any Election during the Session.” The Indianapolis *Journal* commented that in order to “nullify the infamous conduct of the Democratic party two years ago” the Republicans resolved, “that there shall be no election.”¹

As with the 1855 Legislature, the Senate and the House could not come together to caucus for the election of the state’s senators. Two powerful Hoosier Democrats, current U.S. Senator Jesse Bright and Indiana Governor Joseph Wright vied for the senatorial seat. Bright wanted to retain his seat and offered Wright a deal. If Wright would support his senatorial nomination, Bright would lobby President Buchanan to place the governor in his cabinet. While Republicans believed Wright would benefit the most from the deal, Bright maintained his seat without any perceived effort to promote Wright to Buchanan.²

¹ Samuel T. Ensey to Henry Lane, January 27, 1857 in Henry S. Lane Papers, Box 1 Folder 5, Lilly Library, Bloomington, Indiana; Indianapolis *Journal*, January 9, 1857.

² Indianapolis *Journal*, January 31, 1857; Gregory Peek, “‘The True and Living Principle of States Rights and Popular Sovereignty’: Indiana Republicans and Douglas Democrats Allied,” presented at the Indiana Association of Historians, February 2012, 3. Peek is a professor at Pennsylvania College of Technology and completed his Ph.D. at the University of Houston in 2010 on antebellum Indiana politics. After contacting him, he sent me a copy of his paper that he delivered at Hanover College in February 2012.

While the Republicans delayed the vote for a month by refusing to make a quorum—a constitutional necessity in electing U.S. senators—the Democrats continued to press for a vote.³ On February 4, 1857 Democrats in the legislature convened without the Republicans and nominated Jesse Bright and Dr. Graham N. Fitch. Twenty-three Senators voted with sixty-two Representatives, two voting for Fillmore supporter George G. Dunn, which resulted in less than a quorum in both Houses. Republicans deemed the election as unconstitutional and declared, “an election by any eighty-five men on Meridian street corner would be just as valid.” Bright and Fitch travelled to Washington to await their confirmation while Governor Wright believed Bright would recommend him to President Buchanan for a position in his cabinet. However, in June, Wright accepted the position of Minister to Prussia, apparently never having been offered a different job.⁴

After their defeat in the 1856 elections and their failure in the state legislature in 1857, Indiana Republicans searched for new ways to gain support. The American Party remained a national organization but many northern members entered into the ranks of the Republican Party after 1856. Republican leaders sought to attract new voters in their plans to mobilize and expand. First, they wanted to pursue dissatisfied Democrats who had resisted joining the fusionist coalition after the passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Act in 1854. Second, Republicans desired to secure conservative Whigs who had joined the American Party and supported Millard Fillmore for president because of their distaste of sectional

³ Peek, “The True and Living Principle of States Rights and Popular Sovereignty,” 3.

⁴ Quotation: *Indianapolis Journal*, February 5, 1857; Wright’s new position: *Indianapolis Sentinel* June 19, 1857 and Peek, “The True and Living Principle of States Rights and Popular Sovereignty,” 4.

agitation. Hoosier Republicans hoped that northerners' growing interest in both anti-southern and anti-slavery extension would lead these two groups to desert the Democrats and the weakening American Party.⁵

In March 1857, the Supreme Court made a ruling on a case regarding the slavery issue that fueled anti-southern sentiment within the Republican Party. Dred Scott was a slave who petitioned the Circuit Court of St. Louis County in Missouri for his freedom in 1846. He believed that because he had resided with his owner in the free state of Illinois and the Wisconsin Territory, he was now free. Eventually, Scott's case reached the Supreme Court in 1856. On March 6, 1857 Chief Justice Roger B. Taney issued his opinion in which six other justices concurred. Taney first argued that slaves, emancipated slaves, or their descendents were not citizens of the United States and therefore could not sue in court. Secondly, the chief justice claimed that Congress could not constitutionally exclude slavery in the territories.⁶ Because Republicans stood on the principle of non-slavery extension, they strongly opposed the Dred Scott decision.

The press in Indiana varied on their responses to the Dred Scott decision. The Indianapolis *Journal* viewed the decision and Buchanan's inauguration as "exactly the consummation that the Republicans have predicted" in that the federal government would become "the supporter and propagator of slavery." The Vincennes *Daily Vincennes Gazette* worried that the decision meant if Dred Scott's owner could bring his slave into a free state and keep him a slave then another slave owner could bring all of his slaves to Indiana to work his farm or on railroad

⁵ Peek, "The True and Living Principle of States Rights and Popular Sovereignty," " 1.

⁶ Potter, *Impending Crisis*, 268-269; 275-276.

construction. The paper vowed Republicans would not let this happen, believing the party would stand “for the rights of the free white men, against the encroachments of slave owners.” The New Albany *Daily Ledger*, although not in favor of the decision, believed that the Supreme Court was “the best safeguard of the institutions of the country” and that the “Judiciary should be upheld in its decisions by every good conservative citizen.” The Indianapolis *Sentinel* criticized the Republican press for its outspokenness against the Dred Scott case. It argued that regardless of what the Republicans said about the slave-holding Chief Justice Taney or the Democrats’ support of the case, the decision of the Supreme Court “is beyond the whims and caprices of political mountebanks and demagogues.”⁷

The Dred Scott decision strengthened Republicans’ fear of a Slave Power. As Eric Foner argues, this court case caused many Republicans to believe that eventually the Supreme Court, under the logic of the Dred Scott decision, would deny any state the right to exclude slavery. The Supreme Court’s decision rendered the Republicans’ central principle of the congressional prohibition of slavery’s extension into the territories null and void. Furthermore, while many Democrats still held on to the idea of popular sovereignty, with this decision, the people within the territories could not vote to exclude slavery. As the Madison *Daily Evening Courier* pointed out, ‘squatter sovereignty,’ as well as the Missouri compromise, has been repudiated by this great federal tribunal.”⁸

⁷ Indianapolis *Journal*, March 11, 1857; Vincennes *Daily Vincennes Gazette*, March 12, 1857; New Albany *Daily Ledger*, March 28, 1857; Indianapolis *Sentinel*, March 21, 1857.

⁸ Foner, *Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Men*, 97; Madison *Daily Evening Courier*, March 16, 1857.

In late 1857, another national event occurred that offered the Republicans a chance to gain northern votes. With all of the controversy surrounding the territory of Kansas, it still needed a state constitution. The debate over whether it would enter the Union as a free or slave state still hung in the balance. In September, the territorial legislature met in Lecompton, Kansas to establish a new constitution. The proposed document guaranteed slaveholders the right to keep around two hundred slaves that were already in the territory. In regards to the overall slavery question, the constitution resolved to allow a referendum vote on whether settlers would adopt a constitution with or without slavery. However, voters were not given the opportunity to accept or reject the constitution outright.⁹

The Lecompton Constitution immediately caused a sensation. In December, James Wilson, a Hoosier congressman in Washington, wrote to Lane informing him of the passage of the constitution and laying out the party's concern. The constitution had been passed with slavery and Wilson believed the "South will now make a desperate effort to carry it through and I am fearful they will succeed."¹⁰ Because settlers in Kansas were not allowed to vote against the constitution altogether, many northerners viewed this document as a scheme by slaveholders to make the territory a slave state. The Republican press claimed that although the Lecompton Constitution in itself might seem unimportant, this legislation

⁹ Potter, *Impending Crisis*, 307.

¹⁰ Letter from James Wilson to Henry Lane, December 29, 1857 in Henry S. Lane Papers, Box 1 Folder 5, Lilly Library, Bloomington, Indiana.

represented a turning point for the government because it was “the pivot about which the Administration swings into the pro slavery rank.”¹¹

Despite outrage in the North over the Lecompton Constitution, President Buchanan defended the document as well as the convention that drafted it. He claimed that under the Kansas-Nebraska Act, the only section of the constitution to be under submission to the people was the slavery clause. If the people of Kansas refused to vote in regards to that clause because it meant accepting the rest of the constitution, the fault remained their own and “they must bear the consequences.” Furthermore, Buchanan viewed confiscating slaves already in the territory as “an act of gross injustice” and “contrary to the practice of the older States of the Union which have abolished slavery.”¹² The president’s stance on Lecompton contributed greatly to the fragile state of the Democratic Party, especially in Indiana.

Hoosier Democrats turned on Buchanan as a result of the Lecompton Constitution. The Indianapolis *Sentinel* believed that the Lecompton Convention only represented a small portion of Kansas’s citizens and labeled the proposed constitution as “an usurpation of power...an act of despotism.” The paper also called for Democratic representatives to denounce the document, should it be proposed to Congress. Hoosier Democrats who temporarily joined the People’s Party and the Know Nothings in 1854 against the Kansas-Nebraska Act again found themselves dissatisfied with the current administration as well as the strength of the Slave Power in the government. In Indiana, as well as other northern states, many

¹¹ Indianapolis *Journal*, December 10, 1857.

¹² First quotation: *Ibid*; second quotation: Indianapolis *Sentinel*, December 11, 1857.

Democrats did not want to see Kansas become a slave state, especially under the Lecompton Constitution.¹³

Senator Stephen Douglas was one of the most outspoken Democrats against the Lecompton Constitution. While Douglas stood firm in his party when many northerners defected in 1854, the present situation led him to reevaluate his position. With an already strained relationship with President Buchanan, Douglas not only risked alienating the administration's supporters and southerners, but he also placed his own political ambitions for the presidency on the line by opposing the Lecompton Constitution. However, as Douglas biographer Robert Johannsen points out, as a "northern and western man, opposed to the institution of slavery and dedicated to the democratic principle of popular sovereignty, there was no real doubt which path he would follow."¹⁴

When Douglas decided to support popular sovereignty and stand against Buchanan, the Democratic Party stood shocked and confused. Many southern Democrats regretted Douglas' actions while southern extremists wanted him read out of the party.¹⁵ In Indiana, the *Crawfordsville Review* claimed the policy surrounding the Lecompton Constitution resulted in a great argument, "which we are free to admit is no longer confined to the great opposing parties, but has extended to the Democratic party itself." The *New Albany Daily Ledger* attempted to reassure Hoosier Democrats that although different opinions abounded over

¹³ Indianapolis *Sentinel*, December 3, 1857; Indianapolis *Journal*, November 7, 1857.

¹⁴ Robert W. Johannsen, *Stephen A. Douglas* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973), 582-583.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 592-593.

admitting Kansas into the Union, “these differences, we are confident will lead to no permanent divisions among Democrats.”¹⁶

Regardless of the hope that the Hoosier Democratic Party would remain undivided, the party met in early 1858 with “much excitement and much angry feeling manifested.”¹⁷ At the January state convention, delegates accepted resolutions in line with the national party, including a “popular sovereignty resolution.” At the end of the month, those dissatisfied with the earlier convention called for an anti-administration mass meeting scheduled for January 23. The Indianapolis *Sentinel* labeled the second meeting as a complete failure, dominated by a group determined “to rule or ruin.” At the meeting, delegates denounced President James Buchanan, Jesse Bright, and even the *Sentinel*. The meeting also adopted its own set of resolutions, including a different “popular sovereignty resolution,” which called for the reaffirmation of the Kansas-Nebraska Act and the doctrine that guarantees “the people of a State or of a Territory are vested with the right of ratifying or rejecting, at the ballot box, any Constitution (the whole of it) that may be framed for their government.” Delegates at the meeting also pledged to follow the leadership of Stephen Douglas. In response to being read out of the party, the *Sentinel* blamed Black Republicans and Abolitionists.¹⁸

The Republicans viewed the rupture between Douglas and the Buchanan Administration as a chance to further weaken the Democratic Party. In Indiana, the *Daily Vincennes Gazette* exploited the divisions within the Hoosier Democratic ranks,

¹⁶ Crawfordsville *Review*, November 28, 1857; New Albany *Daily Ledger*, December 22, 1857.

¹⁷ New Albany *Daily Ledger*, January 12, 1858.

¹⁸ Indianapolis *Sentinel*, January 24, 1858.

claiming that the Joseph Wright and John G. Davis men were rallying against Jesse Bright and Buchanan: “Meetings have been held in every county—in some counties three or four—endorsing Wright over Bright; and depend upon it, there is a big fight just ahead.” The Indianapolis *Journal* claimed that with this recent crisis, the northern and southern sections of the Democratic Party, with an already strained relationship, would soon split, “leaving an impassable chasm between them.”¹⁹ Just as the Democrats exploited the divisions within the People’s Party in 1854, the Hoosier Republican Party amplified the arguments over the Lecompton Constitution to weaken Democratic power in the state. This strategy continued into 1858 as the Republicans prepared for their state convention.

The Republicans held their state convention on March 4, 1858. Oliver P. Morton served as president of the proceedings. Morton opened the meeting with a speech endorsing compromise, which he believed would unite the different factions that stood against the Lecompton Compromise, ensuring a Republican victory. Lane also attended and spoke to the well-attended meeting. He called for the rejection of the Lecompton Constitution and the denunciation of President Buchanan’s Administration. The convention then adopted resolutions that endorsed popular sovereignty principles, a doctrine central to the Democrats’ platform since 1854. Political leader George Julian represented a small faction against this resolution and spoke at the convention reminding Republicans of the ideals the party developed in the presidential campaign of 1856. The party’s “confession of faith” of anti-slavery

¹⁹ Vincennes *Daily Vincennes Gazette*, December 5, 1857; Indianapolis *Journal*, November 7, 1857; See also Johannsen, *Stephen A. Douglas*, 593-594 for more information on some Republican leaders’ attempts to sway Douglas into the Republican Party.

extension and the commitment to free soil, free labor, and free men should not be abandoned.²⁰

While the delegates adopted the principle of popular sovereignty, Julian pushed for anti-slavery resolutions and condemned the acceptance of “the Douglas dogma.” When the state convention surrendered the policy of Congressional prohibition, he viewed it as “the shameful surrender of the cause.”²¹ George Julian might have wanted the Republican Party to adopt a stance more vested in the anti-slavery cause but other leaders—like Morton and Lane—believed a moderate position that adopted popular sovereignty principles would attract former Know Nothings as well as Douglas Democrats into the Republican ranks.

In April 1858, Hoosier Representative William English introduced a bill to the United States Congress. The English Bill proposed to offer Kansas a land grant if its citizens would agree to the Lecompton Constitution. If the people rejected the bill, the territory would not receive the land nor enter the Union until its population reached sufficient size to elect a U.S. Representative. After debating five months, Congress passed the bill over the combined opposition of Republicans and Democratic followers of Douglas with President Buchanan’s approval. However, according to George Julian, the citizens in Kansas rejected the English Bill having “suffered too much and too long in the battle for freedom to make merchandise of their conventions and sacrifice the future of a great commonwealth.”²²

²⁰ Peek, “The True and Living Principle of States Rights and Popular Sovereignty,” 6-7; quotation: *Indianapolis Journal*, March 5, 1858.

²¹ Julian, *Political Recollections*, 167-168.

²² *Ibid.*, 163.

In October 1858, the Republicans believed the ballot box would affirm Hoosier's distaste of the Lecompton Constitution and the Democrats. Although the Democrats won the state ticket, Republicans gained significant ground in the state legislature. During the campaign, Republicans had devoted much of their energy to the southern counties, an area of strong Democratic support. Their hard work paid off. For example, in the third congressional district—home district of Democrat Jesse Bright—Republicans emerged victorious. William Dunn beat Democrat James Hughes by a majority of over one thousand votes. In 1856, it was Hughes who held the same majority over the Republicans.²³

Overall, the Republicans gained seven seats and took a majority in the Indiana legislature. The press attributed its success, and the failure of the state ticket, to anti-Lecompton Democrats. Those Democrats united with Republicans on the congressional ticket but generally opposed its state ticket, thereby ensuring a Democratic victory. Regardless, Republicans gained significant strength in this off-year election.²⁴

With more Republicans and anti-Lecompton Democrats in the newly elected Indiana legislature, efforts were made to quell Democratic control in the state. In November 1858, the issue over Indiana's senator resurfaced. Republicans clamored for the removal of Jesse Bright and Dr. Graham Fitch, continuing to view their election as illegal. At the end of the month, both the Senate and the House passed a resolution officially declaring the election of the two Democrats as unconstitutional.

²³ Indianapolis *Journal*, October 19, 1858; Peek, "The True and Living Principle of States Rights and Popular Sovereignty," 8.

²⁴ Indianapolis *Journal*, October 18, 1858.

The Indianapolis *Journal* declared this resolution “the first step of the retribution that we trust may soon overtake two of the most daring usurpers that have ever disgraced and degraded a free government.”²⁵

The state legislature immediately called for an election to send two new senators to Washington D.C. Lane stood among those who supported another election. He believed that if the Republicans in the legislature failed to elect new senators, “we give our opponents the occasion to charge us with want of honesty or at least inconsistency.” On December 22, the legislature elected Lane and William M. McCarty to replace Bright and Fitch. Republicans rejoiced in their victory. Republican newspapers praised Lane, claiming he was well known, “honest, able, true, generous, and eloquent.” Of William McCarty, a Douglas Democrat, the press admired his anti-Lecompton stance and his “qualities of character and intellect.”²⁶ At the beginning of 1859, Lane and McCarty travelled to the nation’s capital to await confirmation in the U.S. Senate.

When the two Hoosiers arrived in Washington D.C., they did not find a welcoming Congress. In 1859, the Democrats controlled the U.S. Senate and did not want to replace two pro-Buchanan Democratic senators with a Republican and a Douglas Democrat. In January, the Senate voted thirty-one to twenty-two against Lane and McCarty, thus validating Bright and Fitch as the legal Indiana senators. Lane remained in Washington, hoping to argue his case but by February, all seemed hopeless. Hoosier Republicans were outraged but claimed they never expected any

²⁵ Ibid., November 29, 1858.

²⁶ First quotation: Henry Lane to W.K. Edwards, November 2, 1858 in Henry S. Lane Papers, Box 1 Folder 5, Lilly Library, Bloomington, Indiana; second quotation: Indianapolis *Journal* December 23, 1858.

other result, “for we have too thorough a knowledge of Democratic character to ever hope for justice.”²⁷

Lane returned to Indiana in February more popular than ever. His quest to fulfill the will of the Hoosier people in Washington earned him respect and further solidified his leadership position in the Republican Party. On February 24, he delivered a speech in Indianapolis discussing his recent interaction with Democrats in Washington as well as the future of the Republican Party and the nation. Lane viewed his rejection in the Senate as an infringement of Indiana’s sovereignty, criticizing both Democrats and Buchanan. He also labeled Buchanan as a Federalist, asking “for an increase of executive powers which [Alexander] Hamilton never dreamed of.”²⁸

As for the Republican Party, Lane reiterated the fact that the party stood on the issue of slavery non-extension. He believed Republicans were bound by the Constitution to uphold slavery where it existed and Lane called for a balance between the North and the South. He believed that the continued coalition of ex-Whigs, Americans, and anti-Nebraska and anti-Lecompton Democrats could defeat Buchanan. Lane ended his address with his proposed platform for the Republicans in 1860: the government should secure equal rights for its citizens, a tariff, a complete transformation of foreign and domestic policy, and a change of administration in Indiana. Lane then spoke to the necessity of the Republican cause, claiming that if all should fail, “let me step in that grave which shall entomb our

²⁷ Indianapolis *Journal*, February 16, 1859; quotation: *Ibid.*, January 28, 1859. See Peek, “The True and Living Principle of States Rights and Popular Sovereignty,” 10.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, March 5, 1859.

common hopes, and the hope of our common humanity.” After speaking for an hour, loud cheers echoed, supporting Lane and the principles he stood for.²⁹

Not only did Lane canvas Indiana for the Republican cause, he also ventured to other states to speak on behalf of the party. In June 1859, he attended the Republican Ohio Convention. The *Ohio State Journal* reported that Lane’s speech was full of “eloquence and power” as he criticized Buchanan’s administration and the Democratic Party. The *Cleveland Herald* also praised Lane’s speech, commenting that Lane reiterated his commitment to the idea that Republicans were not set to destroy slavery completely, only to keep it confined to where it already existed. Lane remained loyal to the Constitution and its laws regarding slavery. Although he was against the Fugitive Slave Law, he claimed he would “counsel no opposition to it by force or violence.”³⁰ Lane, like many Republicans, wanted to appeal to anti-slavery men but also to those who did not want agitation with the South. His moderate background could help sway voters who possessed anti-party sentiments and formed their opinions based on specific issues like slavery, the economy, or a fear of the Slave Power.

Throughout his speeches and letters, Lane remained loyal to the United States. Although a leader in the Republican Party, he preached unity that spanned political issues as well as parties. In his speech in February 1859, he hoped that the upcoming presidential race would bring together men of different backgrounds and political beliefs for the betterment of the country. Lane wanted to meet with Old

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ *Ohio State Journal* quoted in *Indianapolis Journal*, June 6, 1859; *Cleveland [Ohio] Herald* quoted in *Indianapolis Journal*, June 7, 1859.

Whigs who remembered the battle cry from 1840 and 1844. He wanted to meet with anti-Lecompton Democrats “who recently have battled with us for the true and ever living principle of State rights and popular sovereignty.” He also expected to meet with Americans “who banded together to assert the rights of the people and to purify the government.”³¹ Lane wished to side with anyone who wanted the best for the nation, regardless of their party politics.

Meanwhile, Hoosier Republican leaders continued to emphasize the issue of slavery extension. Schuyler Colfax wanted Hoosiers to understand the dangers of allowing another Democratic victory in the upcoming presidential election. He argued that if Democrats remained in the White House, the ruling party would “enlarge” its slavery policy. They would promote filibustering, slave trading in the Union, and corruption would run rampant, leaving the nation “in such a condition that twenty years of righteous administration cannot restore it.” Buchanan’s administration had simply been a continuation of Pierce’s and another Democratic president would only perpetuate the problems that abounded throughout the country. Colfax and others called for Hoosiers to holdfast in their beliefs in freedom and to fight against another Democratic victory.³²

Even before parties elected candidates for the 1860 presidential election, southerners warned that if a Republican won, disunion could be the end result. On December 19, 1859 the Indianapolis *Journal* printed a quotation from Clement C. Clay, a Senator from Alabama regarding many southerners’ view toward a

³¹ Henry Lane Speech at Indianapolis, February 24, 1859 printed in the Indianapolis *Journal*, March 5, 1859 in Henry S. Lane Papers, Box 1 Folder 1, Lilly Library, Bloomington, Indiana, 1.

³² Schuyler Colfax’s arguments explained in the Indianapolis *Journal*, June 8, 1859.

Republican victory. Clay addressed the Senate asking, “Does the North suppose we of the South intend to bow our necks to the yoke, to submit to the domination of our masters?” He believed that many southern states would never submit to a Republican administration, an administration that Clay and others believed would trample on southern rights and institutions.³³

The *Journal* labeled Clay’s statements as the embodiment of “the Democratic view of disunion.” How could, the paper argued, the Democrats reject a legal and constitutional election of a president by leaving the Union? Did the Democrats consider themselves the “anointed rulers of this country that they may ruin the Government the moment they can’t rule it?” Once again, Hoosiers were called to join the Republican ranks to combat the Democratic Party that called for disunion and a violation of the Constitution. While Democrats continued to label the Republican Party as “abolitionist,” the *Journal* reiterated that anti-slavery extension is as far as the party’s stance went. By presenting the Democratic Party in favor of disunion while keeping Republican motives relatively conservative, Hoosier Republican leaders hoped to take advantage of voters still unsure of the Republican platform. In the upcoming election, Republicans wanted to believe that even if voters disregarded the slavery extension issue, they would vote against a party responsible for “every bit of ill feeling that exists between the North and the South.”³⁴

At the end of 1859, Republican leaders were hard at work deciding who should head the party as the presidential candidate. As in 1856, Republicans needed a candidate who could appeal to former Whigs, former Know Nothings, and

³³ Clement C. Clay quoted in the Indianapolis *Journal*, December 19, 1859.

³⁴ Indianapolis *Journal*, December 19, 1859.

Democrats who stood against the Kansas-Nebraska Act as well as the Lecompton Constitution. Pleasant A. Hackleman—Hoosier politician and editor of the *Rushville Republican*—believed that the candidate for president should come from the West. He claimed he would vote for Abraham Lincoln, Lyman Trumbull, both from Illinois, Edward Bates from Missouri, Salmon Chase of Ohio or even the more radical William Seward from New York.³⁵ Former Democrat Charles Leib from Illinois wrote to Henry Lane explaining the movement for the nomination of General Simon Cameron of Pennsylvania for president. For vice president, Abraham Lincoln had been mentioned but Leib explained to Lane “there are many gentlemen in the movement who would unquestionably prefer your nomination.” Lane’s influence in the Republican Party had not gone unnoticed by others and politicians, like Leib, believed he deserved a more prominent position.³⁶

Although many recognized Lane’s talents and suggested he run for office, he remained sluggish to accept. As in 1852 and 1856, political leaders around the state wrote to Lane, encouraging him to pursue a career in public office. James Wilson attempted to persuade Lane to run as governor writing, “You would canvass the state anyhow so that being a candidate would impose no more labor on you than if you were not.” Wilson also believed Lane had a good chance of defeating Governor Hendricks. To further convince Lane of running, he suggested that if the Republicans carried the state, Lane would then be elected to the U.S. Senate. Republican leader John D. Defrees also wrote of the plan to send Lane to Washington, claiming that “we

³⁵ Pleasant A. Hackleman to Henry Lane, December 13, 1859 in Henry S. Lane Papers, Box 1 Folder 7, Lilly Library, Bloomington, Indiana.

³⁶ Charles Leib to Henry Lane, November 28, 1859 in Henry S. Lane Papers, Box 1 Folder 7, Lilly Library, Bloomington, Indiana.

shall carry our State and, if we have the Legislature, we mean to send you to the Senate.”³⁷

With the Republican State Convention coming up in February, Lane still needed convincing that he was suitable to run for governor. Some believed that Lane was the only man who could appeal to Hoosiers in the southern part of the state, a section with more Democratic and pro-southern sentiments. Others appealed to Lane’s former ties to the Whig Party to suggest the necessity of his campaign to the Republican cause. Republican William K. Edwards from Vigo County urged Lane that “There are many old Whigs ready to vote for you who otherwise would hold back.”³⁸

Lane remained steadfast against running in the gubernatorial race. He claimed that he did not desire to canvass for office and that the title held no charms for him. Furthermore, he argued, “If the use of my name was thought to be absolutely necessary to insure harmony & success in the coming struggle I might consent to receive a nomination but I do most sincerely hope & trust that no such necessity will exist.”³⁹ While other Republican leaders, like Oliver Morton, actively pursued the governorship, Lane always remained uninterested in the job. In 1852, Lane rejected his party’s offer to make him a candidate for governor and now, four

³⁷ James Wilson to Henry Lane, January 23, 1860 in Henry S. Lane Papers, Box 1 Folder 8, Lilly Library, Bloomington, Indiana; John Defrees to Henry Lane, January 19, 1860 in Henry S. Lane Papers, Box 1 Folder 8, Lilly Library, Bloomington, Indiana.

³⁸ Lane’s appeal to southern Hoosiers: Christopher Miller to Henry Lane, February 4, 1860 in Henry S. Lane Papers, Box 1 Folder 8, Lilly Library, Bloomington, Indiana; quotation: W.K. Edwards to Henry Lane, February 13, 1860 in Henry S. Lane Papers, Box 1 Folder 8, Lilly Library, Bloomington, Indiana.

³⁹ Henry Lane to Orlando Greeg, February 10, 1860 in Henry S. Lane Papers, Box 1 Folder 8, Lilly Library, Bloomington, Indiana.

years later, he still resisted the proposal, even though he stood a better chance of victory than before. While Lane did not seek this public office and stood against running for governor in early February, the question remains: why did he eventually accept the candidanship later that month? The answer lies with the Republican strategy in Indiana.

Several political leaders continued writing to Lane about the Republican strategy both for state and for national offices. Schuyler Colfax believed the way to success was to place Lane at the head of the ticket and fill the rest with “capital stump speakers.” Once Lane was elected, Colfax assured him that the Senate seat would be his.⁴⁰ By late February, Republican leaders convinced Lane of the necessity of his nomination to the ticket as well as the probability he would then be elected as U.S. Senator.⁴¹ Wanting to redeem himself from his failed attempt in the Senate in 1858, Lane agreed to the Republicans’ plan. The next question to address for the party was the nomination of the lieutenant governor, who would then take Lane’s place after his resignation.

The Hoosier Republican Party contained several popular and able men to choose for the nomination of lieutenant governor. Leaders approached Morton for the job in February 1860. Morton served as the Republican’s candidate for governor in 1856 and many expected him to lead the ticket again in 1860. However, Lane’s

⁴⁰ Schuyler Colfax to Henry Lane, February 13, 1860 in Henry S. Lane Papers, Box 1 Folder 8, Lilly Library, Bloomington, Indiana.

⁴¹ Speech of Henry Lane declaring he would run for governor on February 25, 1860 in Henry S. Lane Papers, Box 1 Folder 8, Lilly Library, Bloomington, Indiana. Lane finally accepted the nomination in late February after many colleagues urged him to run, some of which include Schuyler Colfax, W.G. Coffin, W.K. Edwards, John Defrees, and James Wilson. These letters are found in Henry S. Lane Papers, Box 1 Folder 8, Lilly Library, Bloomington, Indiana.

“personal popularity” along with his brilliant oratorical style and ability to attract the conservative vote gained him the gubernatorial nomination. Morton did not receive this arrangement very well at first, preferring to head the ticket himself. However, after some convincing, he accepted the role as candidate for lieutenant governor.⁴²

The Republican Party officially nominated Lane and Morton at the State Republican Convention held in Indianapolis on February 22, 1860. The party also adopted a state platform which denounced doctrines of disunion perpetuated by Democrats, stood against the expansion of slavery in the territories, claimed Congress should not tamper with slavery where it already existed, and supported the construction of a railroad to the Pacific Ocean. The Republican press labeled the convention a great success, describing the large, enthusiastic crowd cheering in support of the Republican candidates and its platform. If anything could be measured by the “spirit, zeal, and numbers” of the crowd, it is that the election in the fall will be a great success “that will reach a correcting hand not only to the disorder and recklessness of our State government, but the corruption and slave subservience of the National Government.”⁴³

Immediately following the State Republican Convention, Lane travelled around Indiana, rallying Hoosiers behind the Republican cause. On February 25, he spoke to a crowd in Putnam County, located in central Indiana. He reassured the crowd that a vote against the Democrats was not a vote for abolitionism. “That man who does not know the difference between Republicanism and Abolitionism,” Lane

⁴² Seeds, *History of the Republican Party of Indiana*, 29-30.

⁴³ *Indianapolis Journal*, February 23, 1860.

argued, “cannot surely exercise the elective franchise with an degree of intelligence.” As for the Democrats, Lane pointed out that it was they who clamored for disunion if a Republican candidate succeeded in the election. Never had Republicans spoke about breaking up the Union, and the party “never gave birth to such a traitor or disunionist.”⁴⁴ Lane once again attempted to appeal to those Hoosier moderates who might have believed in anti-slavery extension but who would never vote for an abolitionist candidate. These moderates also did not want to see the Union destroyed by Democratic radicals in the South and Lane presented the Republican Party as a party dedicated to keeping the nation together.

During the 1860 campaign, Republicans focused heavily on the southern counties of Indiana. These counties remained a stronghold for the Democrats, with many citizens possessing southern sentiments. In the state election of 1854 and the presidential election in 1856, Lane received many letters requesting his presence in these southern counties to make a stand for the Republican Party. As one letter from the Committee of the Republican Party of Dearborn County—located on the Indiana-Kentucky border—pleaded with Lane to speak in the county in hopes “of redeeming this County from the miserable of ‘Old Liners.’”⁴⁵

In April 1860, Lane once again devoted time to Dearborn County and travelled to Lawrenceburg to deliver a speech, in response to Democratic candidate Thomas Hendricks’ speech also made in the city. Here, he devoted the majority of

⁴⁴ Henry Lane Speech, February 25, 1860 printed in the Crawfordsville *Journal*, March 8, 1860 in Henry S. Lane Papers, Box 1 Folder 8, Lilly Library, Bloomington, Indiana.

⁴⁵ Committee of the Republican Party of Dearborn County to Henry Lane, September 14, 1853 in the Lane-Elston Family Papers, Box 2 Folder 3, Indiana Historical Society, Indianapolis.

his speech to the economy and to the state budget. Lane argued that Governor Willard did not handle the depression of 1857 correctly and as a result, Indiana was now over seven million dollars in debt. He promised to apply every dollar that could be spared “from the necessary expenses of the government” to the state debt without an increase in taxes for the citizens.⁴⁶

While Lane canvassed Indiana, the national Republican Party prepared itself for its nominating convention, set for May in Chicago, Illinois. With rumors circulating that southerners would secede if a Republican candidate won the presidency, the party grew concerned about who would head the ticket. Before the convention, four men vied for the presidential nomination.

William H. Seward, considered one of the most prominent leaders in the Republican Party, seemed the obvious choice for president. Seward was an influential senator from New York, a former Whig, and a well-known anti-slavery advocate. On October 25, 1858, Seward made a speech in Rochester, New York that caused Republicans to celebrate and southerners to curse. He discussed the two opposing political systems of the North and South, which over time resulted in two different cultures and economies. While the two sections coexisted within the Union, the differences had grown too great and put a strain on the country. Seward argued that those who blamed fanatical anti-slavery men for the growing tension, did not understand the case. “It is an irrepressible conflict between opposing and

⁴⁶ Cincinnati [Ohio] *Gazette* quoted in the Indianapolis *Journal*, April 20, 1860.

enduring forces, and it means that the United States must and will sooner or later, become either entirely a slaveholding nation, or entirely a free-labor nation.”⁴⁷

Forever known as the “Irrepressible Conflict Speech,” Seward received mixed reactions. For abolitionists and anti-South northerners, this speech represented exactly what they believed in without sounding too fanatical. For southerners and more moderate northerners, this speech was radical and threatening.⁴⁸ Although talented and experienced, Seward’s electability in 1860 concerned some Republicans. Many Hoosier Republicans opposed Seward’s nomination, because of the impact it would have in Indiana. If Republicans nominated Seward, the state ticket might not succeed with the probability that the southern population of the state would reject a party with such a perceived radical candidate as president. Hoosier Republican James Williams wrote to Henry Lane wondering if he feared Seward’s nomination like he did. As for Lane’s planned trip through southern Indiana to speak, Williams believed he could “gather the probability of a strong vote for Seward then.”⁴⁹ If the Hoosier Republican Party could not garner support for its presidential candidate, then surely its state ticket would suffer defeat as well. Such was the dilemma for Seward, remaining steadfast in his beliefs while at the same time appearing less radical than he was perceived.

Another presidential hopeful, Salmon P. Chase, also had to worry about his radical, abolitionist reputation in his quest to secure the Republican nomination.

⁴⁷ William H. Seward, *The Works of William H. Seward, Vol. 4* (New York: Houghton, Mifflin and Co., 1884), 292.

⁴⁸ Doris Kearns Goodwin, *Team of Rivals: The Political Genius of Abraham Lincoln* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2005), 192.

⁴⁹ James Williams to Henry Lane, April 5, 1860 in the Lane-Elston Family Papers, Box 2 Folder 6, Indiana Historical Society, Indianapolis.

The Ohio Governor was deeply religious and devoted to his anti-slavery principles. As historian Doris Kearns Goodwin points out, Chase was more radical than Seward but because his speeches were not as eloquent or quotable as the New York Senator's, "his positions were not as notorious in the country at large, and, therefore, not as damaging in more moderate circles." Hoosier politician and editor Pleasant Hackleman claimed he could vote for Chase, but for Seward, he believed "that would ought not to take a man who ever belonged to the Abolition or Birney party for President."⁵⁰ This sentiment reflected many Hoosiers' take on Chase and Seward, even though Chase was actually the abolitionist out of the two men. Preparing for the convention in Chicago, Chase remained popular with anti-slavery northerners and his chances of securing the nomination seemed attainable.

Westerner Edward Bates also stood at the forefront of the choices for the Republican presidential candidate. Bates, a judge from Missouri, was a former Whig turned Free-Soiler, having freed all of his slaves. Political leaders believed that Bates would successfully unite Whigs and anti-slavery Democrats under a conservative ticket, opposing both radicals in the North and South. During one of Lane's speeches in southern Indiana, when he claimed that he was "for that honest and eloquent, conservative and very pure statesman and peerless orator," shouts of "Bates, Bates" were heard from the crowd, demonstrating his popularity with the Hoosier conservatives. Although Bates never officially joined the Republican Party, his appeal to moderates served as a useful tool to the party's leaders who wanted to

⁵⁰ Goodwin, *Team of Rivals*, 19-20; Pleasant A. Hackleman to Henry Lane, December 13, 1859 in Henry S. Lane Papers, Box 1 Folder 7, Lilly Library, Bloomington, Indiana.

downplay any radical connotations associated with the Republican name.⁵¹ If somehow William Seward was rejected in Chicago, Edward Bates seemed a logical second choice.

Lesser known than the other three men, Abraham Lincoln had risen from an Illinois lawyer to an accomplished orator and flourishing politician. Having served only one term in the United States House of Representatives, he gained national recognition after his nationally reported political campaign for the Senate against Stephen Douglas in 1858. Although unsuccessful in that election, Lincoln demonstrated his talent for oratory and made a lasting impression on both constituents and political leaders.⁵²

Like Lane, Abraham Lincoln was a former Whig and follower of Henry Clay, adopting his anti-slavery extension views and his devotion to the Union. Before his public debates with Stephen Douglas, Lincoln made a speech on June 16, 1858 at the close of the Illinois Republican State Convention in Springfield, revealing his opinion on what the slavery question meant to the country. "A house divided against itself cannot stand," Lincoln started, "I believe this government cannot endure, permanently half *slave* and have *free*...It will become *all* one thing, or *all* the other."⁵³ Unfortunately after this speech, many Republicans viewed Lincoln as a more radical

⁵¹ Goodwin, *Team of Rivals*, 24-26; Henry Lane's Speech, February 25, 1860 printed in the Crawfordsville *Journal*, March 8, 1860 in Henry S. Lane Papers, Box 1 Folder 8, Lilly Library, Bloomington, Indiana.

⁵² Goodwin, *Team of Rivals*, 209-210.

⁵³ Don E. Fehrenbacher, ed., *Abraham Lincoln: Speeches and Writings, 1832-1858* (New York: Literary Classics of the United States, 1989), 426. The texts in this volume are from Roy P. Basler, ed., *The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln* (Abraham Lincoln Association, 1953) and Roy P. Basler, *The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln Supplement 1832-1865* (Reprinted by permission of Rutgers University Press, 1974).

type, in the same way they did with Seward and his “Irrepressible Conflict” speech. However, Lincoln did make it clear that his devotion was to the Union rather than intervening upon the institution of slavery, which reflected the stance of the Republican Party’s moderate wing.⁵⁴ In Indiana, the success of the Republican Party in the upcoming election relied on appealing to its southern constituents and only a conservative would break the Democrats’ stronghold.

Now, more than ever, Republicans needed to pay attention to the conservative element in Indiana. In the 1856 election, John C. Frémont failed to win Indiana, even after the success of the People’s Party two years prior. Hoosier moderates who perceived Frémont as too radical and who did not want to vote for Democrat James Buchanan turned to Millard Fillmore. Nativists and voters who feared agitating the slavery extension issue voted for Fillmore, a candidate who basically ignored the slavery question during the campaign. The American Party press labeled its party as “the only absolute conservative party in the Union.” As a result, Fillmore received over 22,000 votes, demonstrating the effectiveness of his conservative platform and the number of Hoosiers unwilling to support a northern sectional party in 1856.⁵⁵

The battle for Indiana—first in 1856 and then in 1860—progressed geographically. During the state’s infancy, New Englanders had generally settled in the northern and central portions of the state, while southerners migrated to Indiana’s southern counties. Unsurprising, the state split upon the slavery question.

⁵⁴ Foner, *Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Men*, 214-215.

⁵⁵ Quotation: Terre Haute *Wabash Express*, April 9, 1856; Election results: Indianapolis *Journal*, November 26, 1856.

In the 1856 election, southern counties overwhelmingly voted for Buchanan and his lenient position towards the South while northern counties supported Frémont. The strong sentiment of southern sympathy in Indiana, and neighboring Illinois, led George Julian to characterize the states as “provinces of the empire of slavery.” He further claimed, “Their black codes and large Southern population bore witness to their perfect loyalty to slave-holding traditions.”⁵⁶

Hoosier Republicans had to weigh carefully the different potential candidates heading into the national convention. If Indiana’s delegates supported a perceived radical, the state might once again swing Democratic. If its delegates supported a Fillmore-like conservative, radical Republicans might balk at the polls rather than support a southern sympathizer. This dilemma plagued not only Indiana, but other battleground states as well. Preparing for the convention, delegates from New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Indiana, and Illinois sought out a plan that would lead to a Republican victory in their respective states. As George Julian writes, these delegates plead for a strategy that would ensure “Success rather than Seward.”⁵⁷ The delegates from these states headed to Chicago ready to do whatever it took to elect a Republican president.

Hoosier delegates arrived in Chicago the week of the convention. Some of these men included Caleb Blood Smith, Pleasant A. Hackleman, and William T. Otto. Lane also travelled to Chicago although he was not an official delegate. However, being one of the leaders of the party and candidate for governor, his presence at the

⁵⁶ Sharp, “Henry S. Lane and the Formation of the Republican Party in Indiana,” 94; Julian, *Political Recollections*, 115.

⁵⁷ Julian, *Political Recollections*, 177.

convention was necessary.⁵⁸ Before the convention commenced, many speculated about the results of the proceedings. An unnamed Chicago correspondent to the *Indianapolis Journal* wrote of the strong support of William Seward. However, he believed that many battle ground states, “are indisposed to accept Mr. Seward, not because of the doubt of his honesty or ability, but because they know how strong the prejudice is against him.”⁵⁹

As for the other candidates, the correspondent recognized that the nomination could go in any direction. He claimed that “Illinois is for Lincoln always, and all the time” and that Indiana “leans in the same direction.” However, the Hoosier delegates are determined to support any candidate who demonstrates reliability and strength. Also, there was a strong effort to nominate Edward Bates, an effort “stronger than anybody at home could have suspected.”⁶⁰ The atmosphere around the convention seemed to take on a conservative element. The nomination was surely Seward’s to lose and those who deemed the New Yorker as too radical to win the presidency began working on a plan to nominate a candidate who could unite the different factions behind the Republican Party.

On Saturday May 12, before the convention officially commenced, many politicians from various parts of the nation made speeches in Chicago. Lane made one of these speeches and a main subject of his speech was disunion and how the issue had spread from the Democratic Party. “Disunion,” Lane began, “now and in the times past as been the Democratic disease—the Locofoco disease.” He also

⁵⁸ *Dawson’s Fort Wayne Weekly Times*, May 16, 1860.

⁵⁹ *Indianapolis Journal*, May 16, 1860.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

claimed the “Republican party has never nourished or matured a disunionist, or one single disunion sentiment.” The Democrats, because of this issue, were now divided into two groups: the extremists of the South and the “popular sovereigns of Illinois.” Even though Democrats claimed that the party was still the same in the North and the South, it was evident that a major split had occurred, leaving the organization weak.⁶¹

Once again, Lane also addressed the different factions that made up the Republican Party. He appealed directly to former Whigs, discussing Henry Clay and his own devotion and involvement in the Whig Party. Lane urged these men to follow the political teachings of Henry Clay, especially in regards to the slavery extension question. In his speech, Lane referenced a speech made by Clay in 1850 where he said: “Coming as I do, from a slave State, it is due to truth and candor that I should say that no human power shall ever compel me to extend slavery one inch beyond its present limits.” Lane proposed to make that sentiment his platform. Like so many times before, Lane addressed the slavery issue but not in terms of morals or equality, but on a moderate platform, appealing to those who desired for slavery to stay where it already existed. If the Republicans were going to defeat the Democrats, they needed to unite the groups that made up the new party and continue to promote a relatively conservative platform.⁶²

The Republican National Convention began on May 16 and was held in a structure called the “Wigwam,” erected especially for the meeting. Immediately,

⁶¹ Henry Lane’s Speech quoted from the *Chicago Tribune* in the *Indianapolis Journal*, May 16, 1860.

⁶² Ibid.

work began on nominating candidates as well as adopting a platform. Delegates adopted the Republican platform on the second day of the convention. The platform included resolutions supporting the Homestead Bill, the construction of a trans-continental railroad, and a protective tariff. Also, it included resolutions against the spread of slavery in the territories, threats of disunion, and any changes to the naturalization laws. After members of the convention voted on and adopted the platform, delegates turned their attention to the nomination process.⁶³

Delegates from Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Indiana declared their apprehension over the possibility of Seward's nomination. The Hoosier delegates claimed that if the New Yorker was nominated, Lane would lose his election, the Democrats would once again regain the legislature, and there would be no Republican senators. Members from Pennsylvania and New Jersey believed that their losses in the election would be "counted by tens of thousands" if Seward were chosen.⁶⁴

Delegates from these battleground states, as well as those from Illinois, worked long into the night on May 17 to strategize the prevention of Seward's nomination the following day. Newspaper editor Murat Halstead, serving as a correspondent at the Republican Convention, claimed that there were hundreds of Hoosiers, Pennsylvanians, and Illinoisans "who never closed their eyes that night." These men wanted all of their states' votes to go to Abraham Lincoln and sought out a plan to persuade other state delegates to support the Illinois lawyer. Halstead saw

⁶³ Indianapolis *Journal*, May 19, 1860.

⁶⁴ Murat Halstead, *Caucuses of 1860: A History of the National Political Conventions of the Current Presidential Campaign* (Columbus: Follett, Foster and Company, 1860), 132.

Lane that night “pale, and haggard, with cane under his arm, walking as if for a wager, from one caucus-room to another...He had been toiling with desperation to bring the Indiana delegation to go as a unit for Lincoln. And then in connection with others, he had been operating to bring the Vermonters and Virginians to the point of deserting Seward.”⁶⁵

As Lane went to each caucus, he reiterated the fact that the nomination of Seward would mean a Republican failure in Indiana. Furthermore, he threatened to give up on the canvass, because “he did not feel like expending his time and money in carrying on a hopeless campaign.” That night, Lane and his compatriots had convinced Virginia and Vermont to desert Seward but the Pennsylvania delegates were not united for Lincoln. In fact, these men supported their own Simon Cameron and were unhappy in being told that only Seward or Lincoln were to be nominated.⁶⁶ Although Lane worked tirelessly, it remained unclear whether his efforts would secure Lincoln’s nomination.

The final day of the convention commenced on Friday, May 18. When it came time for the nomination process, Norman Judd of Illinois nominated Lincoln and Caleb Blood Smith seconded the nomination. Seward, Salmon P. Chase, Simon Cameron, Edward Bates and others were also nominated but only Seward and Lincoln’s names produced the most applause. When Lincoln was nominated again, there was a great uproar. Lane “leaped upon a table, and swinging hat and cane, performed like an acrobat.” Murat Halstead further described the scene: “Imagine all

⁶⁵ Ibid., 142.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 142-143.

the hogs ever slaughtered in Cincinnati giving their death squeals together, a score of big steam whistles going...and you conceive something of the same nature.”⁶⁷

After the initial nominations, the balloting began. When the vote came to Indiana, the state pledged all of its twenty-six votes for Abraham Lincoln. Lane rejoiced over his state’s vote. Halstead claims that his eyes “glittered” as the vote was read because Lane “was responsible for it.”⁶⁸ Lane not only persuaded the Hoosier delegates to vote for Lincoln but he also worked tirelessly alongside Pennsylvanian candidate for governor, Andrew G. Curtin, to convince other delegations to support Lincoln’s nomination.⁶⁹ As the balloting continued, Lane and Curtin waited to see if their efforts would make a difference. For the presidential ballot, a candidate needed 233 votes to win the nomination. Among the front-runners on the first ballot, Seward received 173.5 votes, Lincoln 102 votes, Bates 48 votes, and Chase 49 votes. On the second ballot, Seward and Lincoln both gained votes, 184.5 and 181 respectively. Support for Chase and Bates went down and Pennsylvania all but dropped Simon Cameron in favor of Lincoln.⁷⁰

On the third ballot, Chase received only four votes from his home state of Ohio. Cameron did not receive a single vote and Bates’ votes were cut in half. Seward also lost four and half votes. Lincoln received 231.5 votes on the third ballot, short of the nomination by one and a half votes. David Cartter of Ohio then stood up and announced that Ohio would change its four votes from Chase to Lincoln, thus securing Lincoln’s nomination as the Republican’s presidential candidate. The

⁶⁷ Ibid., 144-145.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 146.

⁶⁹ Julian, *Political Recollections*, 177.

⁷⁰ Halstead, *Caucuses of 1860*, 146-148.

delegates then nominated Hannibal Hamlin, a former Democrat from Maine, as its vice presidential candidate on the second ballot.⁷¹ Republicans achieved an unconceivable feat in Chicago, where a relatively unknown Westerner secured the presidential nomination of a party whose existence spanned less than ten years.

For Lane, the convention represented another step to securing a Republican victory in Indiana. Also, Lane's significance at the convention cannot be overlooked. Writing in 1895, historian Charles W. Taylor credited Lane and Andrew Curtin as the two men mostly responsible for nominating Lincoln over Seward for president. Another historian, Ronald Ridgley, writing almost eighty years after Taylor also stressed Lane's significance at the convention. He argued, "No one worked harder or longer than Lane to persuade other delegations to swing to Lincoln."⁷² After helping secure Lincoln's nomination, Lane returned to Indiana and focused on his own election for governor as well as the presidential campaign.

As the Hoosier Republican press reported on the convention in Chicago, the Indianapolis *Journal* labeled the work of nominating Lincoln as "well done." The paper promoted Lincoln as a self-made man, a man "moderate in his views" and "pure in character." The *Dawson's Ft. Wayne Weekly Times* praised Lincoln, citing his campaign against Stephen Douglas. Any man, the paper claimed, that was able to conduct such a strong campaign against the formidable Douglas, "is worthy the highest rank in the scale of ability and statesmanship."⁷³ According to these papers,

⁷¹ Ibid., 148-149; 153.

⁷² Taylor, *Biographical Sketches and Review of the Bench and Bar of Indiana*, 66; Ridgley, "Henry Smith Lane," in *Their Infinite Variety*, 67.

⁷³ First quotation: Indianapolis *Journal*, May 21, 1860; second quotation: *Dawson's Ft. Wayne Weekly Times*, May 23, 1860.

Hoosier Republicans deemed Lincoln as the man who would unite their party and successfully redeem the nation from Democratic rule.

However, the Democrats remained unconvinced that a Republican could win Indiana. They argued that if the Republicans believed Seward could never carry Indiana based on his stance on slavery, then why did they assume that Lincoln would fare any different? The Indianapolis *Sentinel* claimed, "Mr. Lincoln is as ultra in his anti-slavery ideas as Mr. Seward, and the principles of the former 'harmonize exactly' with those of the latter."⁷⁴ The Democrats viewed Lincoln as too radical and the Republican Party's stance on slavery extension unacceptable to southerners.

After Lane's hard work and the triumph of Lincoln at the Republican National Convention, the party continued the fight in the gubernatorial race. Lane and Thomas Hendricks met in Tipton, Indiana on June 4 for a joint debate. Lane opened the debate, discussing his plan to eradicate Indiana's debt, his support of the Homestead Act, and the idea of perpetuating the system of free labor. In regards to the territories and the question of slavery, Lane once again made his stance known. "Gentleman, say it is not Abolitionism to believe that Congress has the right to exclude Slavery. Washington believed it; the first Congress believed it; Thomas Jefferson believed it..." Again appealing to conservatives and moderates, Lane pronounced his belief that while the Constitution protects slavery where it exists, that same constitution does not automatically allow slavery in the territories.⁷⁵

⁷⁴ Indianapolis *Sentinel*, June 7, 1860.

⁷⁵ Joint Debate of Messrs. Lane and Hendricks, June 4, 1860, 12 in Henry S. Lane Papers Box 1 Folder 2, Lilly Library, Bloomington, Indiana.

Lane charged that disunionists made up the Democratic Party. Many Democrats and southerners were claiming that if a Republican was elected, the Union would be dissolved. Lane remarked to the absurdity and radicalism of this claim. He found it appalling that the “great legacy bequeathed by our fathers is to be annihilated, simply because a portion of the people of the United States shall dare to exercise the elective franchise, and elect whoever they please for President.”⁷⁶ Lane promoted the Republican Party as the organization that would continue the legacy of the founding generation and perpetuate the sanctity of the Union and the nation’s ideals of freedom and liberty.

While many Hoosiers regarded Lane as an accomplished public speaker, Democrats criticized his debate with Hendricks. For them, Lane had merely shouted about Kansas, remained fixated on African Americans, and reiterated all of the supposed defamation done by the Democratic Party in Indiana. However, he “failed to show any good fruits of Republicans, or give any plausible reason why that party should be placed in power.”⁷⁷

Regardless of the Democrats’ opinion of him, Republicans around the state continued to clamor for Lane to speak on behalf of himself, the party, and Lincoln. In 1860 alone, Lane made over eighty speeches, tending to focus on the southern counties of the state. After one such trip southward, Lane wrote to Richard W. Thompson—a Whig who briefly joined the Constitutional Union Party and later became a Republican—about the Republicans’ chances of success in the region. “When I visited the Southern portion of our State,” he began, “the American party

⁷⁶ Ibid., 31-32.

⁷⁷ Indianapolis *Sentinel*, June 5, 1860.

seemed as heartily for me as did the Republicans, but I fear the influence of Kentucky on this side of the river.”⁷⁸ With a slave state bordering the southern counties of Indiana, many of these citizens sympathized with southerners and voted overwhelmingly Democratic. However, some Kentuckian’s looked toward the upcoming election as a chance for defeating the Democrats. Lane’s friend, John Speed wrote from Louisville that although Indiana “has been so hopelessly Democratic,” he felt that if Republicans could win Indiana, Lane was the man to do it.⁷⁹

Days before the election, the Indianapolis *Journal* reminded Republicans of the task before them and their duty to vote. Also, the paper claimed that the state legislature was more important to the people of Indiana than the Congressional seats. “The interest attaching to national politics will secure a full Republican support of the latter, but the former may be affected by local questions and personal prejudices, to the lasting injury of the State.”⁸⁰ Often in the 1800s, state elections were deemed more important than national elections. State legislatures elected U.S. Senators and possessed more control over each individual state than the national government. In 1860, Hoosier Republicans looked to rid themselves of Jesse Bright and Graham Fitch—the Democratic senators—and wanted to regain control of the legislature.

⁷⁸ Wernle, *Henry Smith Lane*, 49; Henry Lane to Richard W. Thompson, September 3, 1860 in Henry S. Lane Papers, Box 1 Folder 10, Lilly Library, Bloomington, Indiana.

⁷⁹ John Speed to Henry Lane, September 8, 1860 in Henry S. Lane Papers, Box 1 Folder 10, Lilly Library, Bloomington, Indiana.

⁸⁰ Indianapolis *Journal*, October 2, 1860.

On October 9, 1860 the Republicans defeated the Democrats in the state elections, electing the ticket of Lane and Morton as well as gaining a majority in the legislature. The Republican state ticket won in Indiana with a majority of over nine thousand votes. Lane secured 136,725 votes while Hendricks received 126,968 votes. Comparatively, in the 1856 state election, Democrat candidate Willard defeated Morton 117,911 votes to 112,039. In the state legislature, the Republicans now held a majority of six in the Senate and twenty-four in the House.⁸¹ Although the Republicans failed to carry many of the southern counties, the party made significant gains, cutting the Democratic majorities in this section of the state. For example, in Knox County, located in the southwestern portion of the state nicknamed “The Pocket,” Republicans made a gain of 300 votes. John Davis from Floyd County reported that in his district, Republicans gained three members of the legislature, although he lost his election and his county went to the Democrats.⁸²

While many Hoosier Republicans viewed the state election results as promising for the presidential election, they also remained cautious about the vote in the southern counties. John Davis believed that his defeat in the election resulted from the influence of the Louisville *Journal*. Similar to Lane’s reservations, Davis worried about “the vast Kentucky influence against us” and feared the worst about

⁸¹ 1856 election totals: Indianapolis *Journal*, October 12, 1856; Lane and Hendricks vote totals and Republican state legislature majorities: Zimmerman, “Origin and Rise of the Republican Party in Indiana from 1854 to 1860,” *Indiana Magazine of History* 13, no. 4 (December, 1917): 408.

⁸² Cyrus Allen to Henry Lane, October 11, 1860 and John S. Davis to Henry Lane, October 14, 1860, both letters in Henry S. Lane Papers, Box 1 Folder 10, Lilly Library, Bloomington, Indiana.

Lincoln's election.⁸³ In the 1852 presidential election, Franklin Pierce won over 17,000 votes in the Hoosier counties that directly border Kentucky while Winfield Scott only received around 13,000. In those same counties in the 1856 election, James Buchanan received 18,000 votes compared to John Frémont's measly 5,000 votes. Even with a victorious Republican state ticket, Lincoln's ability to carry Indiana could be unsuccessful unless the party showed strong support in the southern counties.⁸⁴

After the Republican's success in the state election, the question once again turned to the party's plan of sending Lane to Washington and making Morton the new governor. Once the new Republican dominated legislature convened in January 1861, the party wanted to redeem themselves from their failed attempt to send senators to the capital in 1858. Having received strong support for his battle in Washington to be recognized as a legitimate senator two years prior, Republicans encouraged Lane to carry out their plan. Samuel Hall from southern Gibson Count claimed that Lane was "now first, last and all the time for the U.S. Senate," and citizens of the county "will entertain no pleasant feelings towards the Republican who permits his name to be uses in opposition to you for that position."⁸⁵

The Republicans could not wholly concern themselves with the question of who would become a Senator until after the presidential election. During their

⁸³ John S. Davis to Henry Lane, October 14, 1860, in Henry S. Lane Papers, Box 1 Folder 10, Lilly Library, Bloomington, Indiana.

⁸⁴ Voting returns from 1852 election: Indianapolis *Journal*, December 5, 1852; Voting returns from 1856 election: Indianapolis *Journal*, November 26, 1856. For each election, I added the voting totals from the thirteen Indiana counties that directly border Kentucky.

⁸⁵ Samuel Hall to Henry Lane, October 30, 1860 in Henry S. Lane Papers, Box 1 Folder 10, Lilly Library, Bloomington, Indiana.

national convention, the Democratic Party had fractured over sectional lines, which led to the northern wing nominating Stephen Douglas and the southern wing choosing John C. Breckinridge as their candidate. Furthermore, a group of northern conservatives deserted both parties and formed the Constitutional Union Party, nominating John Bell.⁸⁶ Just as Millard Fillmore had done in the 1856 election, Bell threatened to split the conservative vote with the Republican Party. However, Lincoln could also benefit from the strong divisions within the Democratic Party, as Franklin Pierce had accomplished when the Whigs had split over sectional lines in 1852.

In Indiana, Senator Jesse Bright fought tirelessly to sway Democrats away from supporting Douglas to voting for Breckinridge. Bright held a grudge against Douglas because he had voted in favor of Lane and William McCarty in the Senate during the 1858 controversy.⁸⁷ Bright and his fellow Hoosier Breckinridge followers believed that Douglas better represented the principles of the Republican Party, since he also stood against the extension of slavery. On this issue, Breckinridge held that slavery could not be prohibited by congress or a territorial legislature. In Indiana, as in many northern states, the election for Democrats then came down to supporting either the position of popular sovereignty or protection of slavery by the government.⁸⁸ The success of the state election and the divisions within the Democratic Party made the chance of a Republican victory in Indiana very possible.

⁸⁶ Potter, *Impending Crisis*, 413; 417.

⁸⁷ Lane acknowledged those who supported him in a speech, Indianapolis Journal, March 5, 1859.

⁸⁸ Zimmerman, "Origin and Rise of the Republican Party in Indiana," 399; 402-403.

Not only did the 1860 election have parties fragmenting, there also seemed to be a real threat to the disunion of the nation based on the results. During the campaign, Lane and other Republicans addressed the idea of disunion, labeling it a Democratic scheme.⁸⁹ However, after the state elections, southerners' ideas of secession seemed sincere. Reports came in to the Republican press that South Carolina would declare itself independent thirty days after the election, if Lincoln won the presidency. The state would then send an ambassador to Washington, "who will demand recognition as the Minister of a foreign power." If this minister were recognized, other southern states would then follow.⁹⁰ As election day neared, many wondered if a Republican victory would drive the southern states out of the Union and how the new president would deal with such a crisis.

In November 1860, after existing for only six short years, the Republican Party successfully elected their candidate for president of the United States. Lincoln became the sixteenth president without winning any state in the South, something that had never occurred before 1860. Lincoln received about 1,865,000 votes and carried all of the free states except New Jersey. Douglas came in second with about 1,000,000 votes, carrying only Missouri. Breckinridge ended the race third with Bell trailing in fourth.⁹¹ As a result of the election, the Republican Party could now officially be labeled as a sectional party, which only fueled southerners' argument in favor of secession. While Lincoln had been elected fairly, with the necessary majority of electoral votes, southerners still argued that because he carried no

⁸⁹ Joint Debate of Messrs. Lane and Hendricks, June 4, 1860, 31-32 in Henry S. Lane Papers Box 1 Folder 2, Lilly Library, Bloomington, Indiana.

⁹⁰ *Indianapolis Journal*, October 31, 1860.

⁹¹ Potter, *Impending Crisis*, 442.

southern state, Lincoln would never represent them or their interests. As the *Washington Constitution* argued, the southern man would now have to decide for himself and future generations whether he would “submit tamely to the rule of one elected on account of hostility to him and his, or whether he will make a struggle to defend his rights, his inheritance, and his honor.”⁹²

As in the state elections, Indiana voted Republican and gave its electoral votes to Lincoln. He received around 137,000 votes while Stephen Douglas secured 114,000 votes. John C. Breckinridge came in third with 12,000 votes while Constitutional Unionist John Bell received around 5,000 votes. In a state that had been dominated by Democrats, the Republicans won Indiana with a majority of almost 23,000 votes. Even though many Hoosiers voted in the presidential election, the Republican press viewed this election as relatively quiet compared to other years. The *Indianapolis Journal* attributed this to the fact that Hoosiers were certain of Lincoln’s election as the result of the Republicans’ victory in the state elections.⁹³

Democrats who labeled Lincoln “too dangerous” to elect now viewed his victory as abolition triumphing over “conservatism and reason.”⁹⁴ Many Hoosier Democrats believed that their loss came at the hands of Breckinridge supporters. They argued that Republican gains in the state contest resulted in counties that voted for Breckinridge in the presidential election. While the split within the Democratic Party might have affected the state elections, in the presidential race,

⁹² *Washington Constitution* quoted in the *Indianapolis Sentinel*, November 10, 1860.

⁹³ Voting results: *Indianapolis Journal*, November 20, 1860; the nature of elections day: *Ibid.*, November 7, 1860.

⁹⁴ First quotation: *Crawfordsville Review*, October 20, 1860; second quotation: *Ibid.*, November 10, 1860.

Lincoln's popular majority in Indiana was greater than the other three candidates' combined.⁹⁵

An attributing factor to Lincoln's victory in Indiana was the decline of the Democrats' power. Since the 1852 presidential election, the Democrats strength in Indiana had slowly dwindled. For example, Franklin Pierce won fifty-two percent of the vote in 1852 while Douglas and Breckinridge combined only received forty-six percent.⁹⁶ This comparison suggests that some of those who voted Democratic in 1852 actually supported Lincoln in 1860. Hoosier Republicans believed that a strong number of Democrats voted for Lincoln, if only to "prevent the agitation and alarm of an election by Congress."⁹⁷ Regardless of the rationale, the Democrats lost ground in Indiana from 1852 to 1860, allowing for a Republican legislature, governor, and the first Republican President.

With the state and national elections over and the Republicans' victory secured, Hoosiers once again addressed the issue of the state's new U.S. Senator. Speculation surrounded the upcoming appointment, where it seemed that either Lane or Morton would abandon their elected office in favor of the Senate. While many Republican constituents admired these men, some worried about the consequences of choosing either of them. One Hoosier from Columbus explained this concern: "Should either Col. Lane or Judge Morton be removed from the offices to which they have been elected, how are the promises made to the people to be

⁹⁵ Indianapolis *Sentinel*, October 11, 1860; Indianapolis *Journal*, November 20, 1860.

⁹⁶ 1852 election results: Indianapolis *Journal*, December 6, 1852; 1856 election results: *Ibid.*, November 26, 1856; 1860 election results: *Ibid.*, November 20, 1860.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, November 7, 1860. See also Mildred C. Stoler, "The Democratic Element in the New Republican Party in Indiana," *Indiana Magazine of History* 36, no. 3 (September 1940): 206 for more information on the Hoosier Democrats.

redeemed, or our expectations to be realized? Would it not look as though we cared but little for our State Government?"⁹⁸

Not only were Hoosiers concerned about losing their elected governor or lieutenant governor, some seemed reluctant to support men who they believed had engaged in back room politics to secure a political office. Republican leader John Defrees wrote to Lane in late 1860 about a rumor circulating that Lane, Caleb B. Smith, and Morton made an arrangement "to portion out the offices" in the state. Defrees claimed that he addressed the rumor as "an unqualified lie" and that if Lane was elected to the Senate, it would result from the desire of the people.⁹⁹

Perhaps Defrees meant to dispel this rumor simply because he understood that it would damage Lane's chances at claiming the Senate seat. However, Republican leaders only managed to convince Lane to run for governor based on two grounds: that his candidacy was essential to a Republican victory in Indiana and that he would then be elected as a U.S. Senator. Lane himself had declared as late as February 1860, "I do not desire to be nominated neither the Canvass for Governor nor the office itself has any charms for me..."¹⁰⁰ Throughout the 1860 canvas, Republicans wrote to Lane supporting his run for Governor but also proclaiming their desire to see the legislature choose him for Senator. Clearly a deal had been made between Lane and Morton, where Morton would assume the role as governor when Lane resigned.

⁹⁸ Indianapolis *Journal*, November 23, 1860.

⁹⁹ John D. Defrees to Henry Lane, December 4, 1860 in Henry S. Lane Papers, Box 1 Folder 11, Lilly Library, Bloomington, Indiana.

¹⁰⁰ Henry Lane to Orlando Greeg, February 10, 1860 in Henry S. Lane Papers, Box 1 Folder 8, Lilly Library, Bloomington, Indiana.

Lane desired to return to Washington, D.C. as a result of his failed attempt in the U.S. Senate in 1858. After his election, he wrote a letter addressed “Dear Sir,” where he made it clear that the Senate was his ultimate desire. He claimed that the only reason he had accepted the candidacy for governor was that his party convinced him it was necessary to the success of their cause. He yielded to their wishes, but now that the Republicans controlled the legislature, he desired a re-election as Senator. Lane wrote that if members of the legislature could support him for the Senate, it would be “fully appreciated by your friend.” If anyone had any doubt about Lane’s intention, this letter firmly declared that he did not want to remain Indiana’s governor.¹⁰¹

Before the year 1860 concluded and before Indiana’s legislature met to decide the fate of Lane and Indiana’s next U.S. Senator, the nation faced its greatest challenge yet. On December 20, 1860 South Carolina voted to secede from the United States. By February 1861, six more states would follow and form the Confederate States of America, all before Lincoln’s inauguration in March.¹⁰²

Hoosiers met the secession crisis with varying opinions. Some believed that if the Union should be divided, others should not fight to preserve it. The *Indianapolis Journal* asserted that if the entire South wanted to leave the Union, the North should let it. The Union should be preserved if possible but not “ruined in the act of preservation.” The opposition paper, the *Indianapolis Sentinel* essentially echoed the *Journal’s* opinion. “The Union can not be maintained by blood,” and the government

¹⁰¹ Henry Lane to “Dear Sir,” November 27, 1860 in Henry S. Lane Papers, Box 1 Folder 10, Lilly Library, Bloomington, Indiana. In the collection, someone wrote that this letter was most likely sent to every member in the Indiana Legislature.

¹⁰² Holt, *Political Crisis of the 1850s*, 219.

can not force states to remain in a Union “which they believe to be hostile to their rights, interests, and happiness.”¹⁰³

Republican leader Defrees’ opinion of the crisis reflected the concerns of many Americans during this time. He wrote to Lane describing that the very idea of preparing for war is terrible but “a preparation for the meeting of father with child and brother with brother, in a civil war is a thought too horrible for endurance...” However, he concluded the letter wondering what could be done. Would the Union endure or would it dissolve like so many others in the history of the world? Defrees prophesized that if the United States dissolved, “there will never be another attempt at self government.”¹⁰⁴ With the national government in its hands, the task laid before the Republicans had never been greater.

Reflecting upon opinions like Defrees’, others desired to maintain the country’s unity. Democrat Abram A. Hammond, who took over as Indiana’s governor after Willard’s death in October, addressed the legislature in January 1861. He believed that Indiana, always the conservative state, should prefer any “practical mode of settling the present trouble” and that settlement “must flow from a restoration of amity and cordiality among all our people, North and South.”¹⁰⁵ Lane in his inaugural speech also spoke to the necessity of preserving the Union. He argued that every citizen of the United States is obligated to protect the constitution and its laws against foreign enemies and domestic traitors. Furthermore, he

¹⁰³ First quotation: *Indianapolis Journal*, December 22, 1860; second quotation: *Indianapolis Sentinel*, December 22, 1860.

¹⁰⁴ John D. Defrees to Henry Lane, January 1, 1861 in Henry S. Lane Papers, Box 1 Folder 12, Lilly Library, Bloomington, Indiana.

¹⁰⁵ Abram A. Hammond quoted in the *Indianapolis Journal*, January 13, 1861.

believed that the “reasonable assumption” that a state has the right to secede “is a doctrine unknown to the Constitution and at war with the principles on which our government was established.”¹⁰⁶ Regardless of what Hoosiers believed about the secession crisis, it was Lincoln and the national government that would ultimately decide whether or not to allow the southern states to separate or wage a war to preserve the Union.

Two days after Lane’s inauguration as governor, the legislature elected him to succeed Graham N. Fitch in the U.S. Senate for a term of six years. The Democrats attempted to elect Joseph Wright but he lost by twenty-five votes in the House and six votes in the Senate. Lane offered his resignation as governor to Cyrus Allen, the Speaker of the House on January 16, 1861. He asked Allen to thank the people of Indiana for honoring him by electing him to the high office of governor and also “to assure them that nothing but a strong sense of public duty could have induced me to tender this resignation.”¹⁰⁷ Lane finally accomplished his political goal in 1861 and prepared to travel to Washington to assume his seat in the Senate.

With Lane’s resignation, Morton assumed the role as governor. While Lane technically served as Indiana’s first Republican governor, Morton was the first in the party to carry out his term. Therefore, Indiana’s first full-term Republican governor was actually a former Democrat, which demonstrated the appeared success of the fusionist movement in the state. Morton, the Republican’s candidate for governor in 1856, would prove himself a strong leader. He possessed “an air of practiced ease”

¹⁰⁶ Indianapolis *Journal*, January 15, 1861; Crawfordsville *Review*, January 19, 1861.

¹⁰⁷ Democrats’ attempt to elect Joseph Wright: Crawfordsville *Review*, January 19, 1861; Lane’s resignation: Henry Lane to Cyrus M. Allen, January 16, 1861 in Henry S. Lane Papers, Box 1 Folder 12, Lilly Library, Bloomington, Indiana.

as well as “a precision and clearness in his statements, an acuteness, a strength and clearness in his arguments.” In his address to the Indiana Legislature after assuming his new position he claimed he would cooperate with the governing body “in all measures having for their purpose the prosperity and well-being of our believed commonwealth and the preservation of the glorious and precious Union of these States.”¹⁰⁸ Morton would indeed perform his duty well, becoming one of the influential war governors in the Union.

While the “Secession Winter” continued, the bargaining tradition between the North and the South also resumed, as compromise measures were introduced as a way to reconcile the two sections and prevent a civil war. A distinguished Kentucky politician—and at the time U.S. Senator—John Crittenden proposed such a compromise in December 1860. In its basic form, the “Crittenden Compromise” proposed to extend the Missouri Compromise line to the Pacific, thus allowing the spread of slavery in territories below the famed 36°30’ line. In Indiana, the Republican press warned that this measure would only protect slavery in the territories, the main issue on which the party stood against from its conception.¹⁰⁹

Lane claimed that he did not support the Crittenden Compromise, especially its call for a slave code for the territories, but that he would be willing to vote for the reinstatement of the Missouri Compromise line. Ever the Henry Clay Whig, he said if the Missouri Compromise line “would make peace between the North and the

¹⁰⁸ William M. French, *Life, Speeches, State Papers and Public Services of Gov. Oliver P. Morton* (Indianapolis: S.L. Marrow & Co, [19--?]), 18; 138.

¹⁰⁹ Potter, *Impending Crisis*, 531-532; *Evansville Journal*, February 16, 1861.

South” he would support it, even with its extension to California.¹¹⁰ Lane’s comments on the Missouri Compromise line caused the Democratic press to charge that Lane supported Crittenden’s proposal and appeasing the South. The Indianapolis *Journal* came to Lane’s defense claiming that at a meeting in Crawfordsville, “he caused the defeat of an endorsement of the Crittenden compromise” and that Lane “has opposed it all the time and with all his might.” While Lane might have endorsed parts of the Crittenden Compromise as a possibility of negotiation, a majority of Hoosier Republicans stood firmly against the measure.¹¹¹

Republicans viewed the Crittenden Compromise as a measure that would weaken the Republican Party and its platform. Abraham Lincoln stood firmly against compromise. He believed the extension of the Missouri Compromise or the instatement of popular sovereignty “would lose us every thing we gained by the election.” He proposed to remain “inflexible” on the territorial question. Lincoln’s strong stance on rejecting any compromise with the South killed the Crittenden Compromise and united the Republican Party as the party and the nation looked towards Inauguration Day in March.¹¹²

Lincoln’s inauguration, the culmination of the Republicans’ first presidential victory, came on March 4, 1861. More than thirty thousand gathered in the nation’s

¹¹⁰ Henry Lane to A.H. Donihue and Others, January 17, 1861 in Henry S. Lane Papers, Box 1 Folder 12, Lilly Library, Bloomington, Indiana.

¹¹¹ Indianapolis *Journal*, January 11, 1861; See also Kenneth Stamp, *Indiana Politics During the Civil War* (Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Review, 1949): 52-53.

¹¹² Quotation: Abraham Lincoln to Thurlow Weed December 17, 1860, Don E. Fehrenbacher, ed., *Abraham Lincoln: Speeches and Writings, 1859-1865* (New York: Literary Classics of the United States, 1989), 192; Lincoln’s strong stance on compromise: Goodwin, *Team of Rivals*, 297.

capital to listen to Lincoln's first major speech after his election, wondering how he would address the secession crisis. Lincoln stood on a platform in front of the unfinished Capitol building dome, and delivered his address to the anxious crowd.¹¹³ The President-elect began his speech by pledging himself to the Chicago platform as well as his devotion to uphold the principles of the Constitution. Next, he deemed the idea that a state could leave the Union unconstitutional. Lincoln promised to uphold the laws of the Union in every state, as the Constitution required of the President.

Addressing the South, Lincoln once again reiterated the fact that he believed the national government had no lawful right to interfere with slavery where it existed, and declared he had no purpose to do so. However, he viewed the country as "unbroken," proclaiming that the Union "*will* constitutionally defend, and maintain itself." Lincoln hoped that this secession crisis would not result in violence. He gave the responsibility of war to the South: "In *your* hands, my dissatisfied fellow countrymen, and not in *mine*, is the momentous issue of civil war...*You* have no oath registered in Heaven to destroy the government, while *I* shall have the most solemn one to 'preserve, protect and defend' it."¹¹⁴

After promising that he would not be the first to attack the secessionists and that the war, if it did come, would be at the hands of these southerners, Lincoln ended his inauguration with what would become one of his most often quoted words. "We are not enemies," he started, "but friends. We must not be enemies.

¹¹³ Goodwin, *Team of Rivals*, 327-328.

¹¹⁴ Lincoln's First Inaugural Address, March 4, 1861, Fehrenbacher, *Abraham Lincoln: Speeches and Writings, 1859-1865*, 215-224.

Though passion may have strained, it must not break our bonds of affection. The mystic chords of memory, stretching from every battle-field, and patriot grave, to every living heart and hearthstone, all over this broad land, will yet swell the chorus of the Union, when again touched, as surely they will be, by the better angels of our nature.”¹¹⁵ With these words, the nation’s first Republican administration began, along with the last month of peace the country would witness for the next four years.

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

Conclusion

History often views Lincoln's election as the event that finally drove the southern states out of the Union. It remembers how remarkable that election was, where a relatively unknown Illinois lawyer secured a party's nomination and became president without winning a single southern state. Even more remarkable—although perhaps paling in comparison to the Civil War—remains the fact that a party, which was non-existent at the beginning of the 1850s, grew in strength and successfully elected a president in six short years. Although third parties were not unusual in the nation's history, the Republican Party emerged from a grass-roots movement to establish itself as a major political party that would continue its success up until present day. No other third party has achieved so much and because of this fact, the rise of the Republican Party remains a significant political feat.

The Republican Party in Indiana emerged triumphal from the ashes of the Second Party System but not without a struggle. Reacting to the Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854, Hoosiers flocked to the new "fusionist" party, willing to leave their old partisan allegiances behind. At first, Hoosier Know Nothings dominated the fusionist organization, gaining strength from divisive issues like anti-Catholicism, temperance and anti-slavery. However, when the slavery extension issue began to dominate all other issues, it was the Republican Party that benefited. In Indiana, leaders successfully pulled former Whigs, Douglas Democrats, and nativist "Know Nothings"

into their ranks, running on prohibition of slavery in the territories and protecting free labor.

With tension growing between the North and the South, the Republicans successfully exploited issues like the caning of Charles Sumner, Bleeding Kansas, and the Lecompton Constitution. As George Julian claims, the attack on Sumner and the violence in Kansas over slavery “perhaps did more to stir the blood of the people of the Northern States than any of the wholesale outrages thus far perpetrated in that distant border.”¹ Republicans also gained support from the split within the Democratic Party. In 1858, Stephen Douglas led a group of northern Democrats to oppose a president of their own party and in the 1860 election, the Democratic Party split between regular nominee Douglas and southern Democrat John C. Breckinridge. This break benefited the Republicans, just as the division of fusionist votes in 1856 between Republican John C. Frémont and Know-Nothing Millard Fillmore helped the Democrats. Unlike any third party before or since, the Republican Party expanded from a movement against a piece of legislation to a major political party in just six years.

Lane, using his conservative ideals and his talent for oratory, emerged from the 1850s as an influential political leader in the new party. As a former Hoosier Whig, he joined other Whig leaders like John Defrees and Schuyler Colfax in bringing together different political groups to establish a new organization. Lane led the first People’s Party convention in Indianapolis and helped establish a platform that gave the party its first success in the state elections in October 1854. In 1856, Lane

¹ Julian, *Political Recollections*, 153.

served as the chairman of the Republican's first national convention and spoke to the necessity of laying down any lingering allegiance to the Whig Party in order to strengthen the Republican ranks.² Canvassing the state for John C. Frémont, Lane continued to stress the party's stance on anti-slavery extension and used national issues to demonstrate the horrors of the Slave Power and the evils of slavery.

Continuing to build up the Hoosier Republican Party after the failure of the 1856 presidential election, Lane's influence within the party grew in 1859 when he was elected to reclaim Indiana's senatorial seats from Jesse Bright and Graham Fitch. Although the Democratic Senate rejected Lane as Indiana's constitutionally valid senator, his attempt to fulfill the will of the Hoosier Republican Party enhanced his reputation and his popularity. In the 1860 election, other Republican leaders understood the value of Lane's influence and ability to win votes. The party developed a plan where Lane would run for governor and if successful, the Republican legislature would elect him to serve as Indiana's U.S. senator. Although Morton, chosen to run as lieutenant governor, wanted to head the ticket himself, the Republicans believed that Lane was "the only man on whom the strength of the opposition could be united."³

Lane's nomination as governor solidified his leadership position within the Hoosier Republican Party. As he travelled to the party's national convention in Chicago, he realized that if a conservative candidate did not secure the nomination,

² Henry Lane's Address before the Republican National Convention at Philadelphia, June 17, 1856 printed in the *Rushville Weekly Republican*, July 2, 1856 in Henry S. Lane Papers, Box 1 Folder 3, Lilly Library, Bloomington, Indiana.

³ Christopher Miller to Henry Lane, February 4, 1860 in Henry S. Lane Papers, Box 1 Folder 8, Lilly Library, Bloomington, Indiana.

his election and other northern states' elections would fail. During the convention, Lane used his influence to guarantee that all of Indiana's votes went to Lincoln and pushed other states to switch their votes to support the Illinois lawyer. Having successfully orchestrated the nomination of a candidate who he believed would win the election and allow for his own victory in October, Lane travelled back to Indiana and finished out the summer of 1860 relentlessly canvassing the state for the Republican cause.

In October, the Hoosier Republican Party emerged victorious and in November, Lincoln was elected president. In January, after serving as governor for two days, the state legislature elected Henry Lane to the U.S. Senate. Having finally achieved his political goal in 1861, Lane arrived in the United States Senate ready to execute his duty to save the Union. Although he did not earn any great distinction in the Senate, Lane faithfully supported President Lincoln and the war effort.⁴

In January 1862, when the Senate moved to expel Hoosier Democratic Senator Jesse Bright, Lane spoke out against his old political opponent. Bright's expulsion hearing resulted from two letters he sent; one of which was addressed to Jefferson Davis, causing many to believe he sympathized with the Confederacy. Lane pointed out that although he opposed Bright, he would not let his prejudice affect his decision in this matter. From the evidence given, Lane voted in favor of the resolution to expel the Hoosier but it was his comments on loyalty to the government that made a lasting impression. He wondered if anyone could distinguish between opposing a political party and opposing the government itself.

⁴ Woollen, *Biographical and Historical Sketches of Early Indiana*, 123; Woodburn, "Henry Smith Lane," 286.

He criticized those who labeled the war as “Lincoln’s abolition war” and praised the president for being a servant of the people. Lane continued, saying this government is a government of the people, “and the man who, in a crisis like this, can talk of ‘Lincoln’s war’ is a ready-made slave to the hand of any tyrant who chooses to use him.”⁵ This case demonstrated Henry Lane’s devotion to country over party and his commitment to President Lincoln and the war effort.

Labeled as an “advanced moderate” Republican in the Senate, Lane supported some radical measures with a conservative feel. For example, although Lane supported Lincoln’s idea to enlist slaves in the Union forces, he believed that loyal slaveholders should be compensated for the loss of their slaves. In Lane’s opinion, only the slaves belonging to Confederate slaveholders should be set free without compensation. After the war, Lane stood with Radical Republicans against President Andrew Johnson, supporting a more comprehensive Reconstruction plan. Although Lane proved himself a Union man and dedicated to saving the country, he served his term in the Senate without any great distinction and decided to retire in 1867.⁶

While he returned to Crawfordsville, Lane did not leave politics behind completely. Under Ulysses S. Grant’s Administration, he served as a member of the United States Indian Commission from 1869 to 1871. He also was a Hoosier delegate to two Republican National Conventions, one in 1868 and the other in 1872.⁷

⁵ Henry Lane, “*Speech of Hon. H.S. Lane, of Indiana on The Resolution to Expel Hon. Jesse D. Bright from His Seat in that Body,*” *Delivered in the Senate of the United States, January 21, 1862* (Pamphlet: Indiana Historical Society), 3-8.

⁶ Ridgley, “Henry Smith Lane,” in *Their Infinite Variety*, 72-74.

⁷ Woodburn, “Henry Smith Lane,” 287.

Lane died in Crawfordsville on June 18, 1881 at the age of seventy. His death was telegraphed throughout the nation and both his political opponents and political friends mourned the loss. Upon hearing of Lane's death, Indiana Governor Albert Porter ordered the state offices to be draped in mourning for thirty days and to be closed on the day of his funeral. The people in Crawfordsville held a meeting on the day he died, passing resolutions expressing their respect and love for Lane. According to historian William Woollen, Lane was considered a "gentleman, a patriot and a Christian" and an esteemed statesman who devoted his life to his state and his country.⁸

A lawyer, colonel, governor, and senator, Lane is remembered for his stirring oratorical skills and his appeal to the rank-and-file voters. Two years after his death, William Woollen wrote that Lane could "enthuse a crowd as but few other men could do."⁹ However, Lane should also be remembered for his leadership during a chaotic time in state and national politics. During the years where Indiana politics were shifting, with old parties crumbling and new ones emerging, Lane stood at the forefront in Indiana, leading men and the Republican cause in which he believed in so dearly.

Lane, although an ambitious man with keen leadership qualities did not influence the Republican Party on a national scale. Lane did not possess all of the traits of a successful politician. He served an uneventful term in the U.S. House of Representatives early in his political career and twenty years later, found himself out classed in the U.S. Senate during the nation's most turbulent years. He belonged

⁸ Woollen, *Biographical and Historical Sketches of Early Indiana*, 123-125; 129.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 128.

in state politics. Lane excelled in the realm of Hoosier politics and demonstrated his leadership abilities during the grassroots stage of the Republican Party. Although other historians do not consider Lane a leader in terms of holding office and influencing national politics, Lane represents a different kind of leader. He accomplished much in Indiana and in the new Republican Party without having to run for office. He stood as a leader in the way he spoke to Hoosiers and in the way he explained the new party and its ideals. Lane understood how to lead various factions, including antislavery men, nativists and former old-line Whig and Democrats, and brought together these groups under one political organization. Lane serves as a case study of the role of state politicians in the transition into the Third Party System during the 1850s. Lane's political career demonstrates the role that conservatives played in the Hoosier fusionist movement and his personal interests and political activities helped define and transform the Republican Party in Indiana.

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