JEFFERSON DAVIS AND THE
MISSISSIPPI GUBERNATORIAL CONTEST OF 1851
WITH SELECTED LETTERS AND
SPEECHES CONCERNING THE CAMPAIGN

by

Kathleen Bailey Davis

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ABSTRACT

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Traditional political parties in Mississippi fractured
and re-formed during the struggle that climaxed in the passage
of the Compromise of 1850. Convinced that these measures further
marked the usurpation of southern constitutional rights, Jeff¬
ferson Davis, a life-long Democrat, strove to unify his party,
his state, and the South in order to register southern disap¬
proval. The test of Mississippi's position on the Compromise
came in the elections of 1851. After the Democratic State
Rights party, led by gubernatorial candidate John A. Quitman,
was defeated in the September election for state convention
delegates, Quitman withdrew from the race. The Democratic
party immediately turned for leadership to Jefferson Davis, who
accepted the gubernatorial nomination as his duty and campaigned
as vigorously as possible despite ill health in the six weeks
remaining before the election. He lost the race, reducing the
Unionist party margin of 7,500 votes in the September election to
999, but gained national respect for his political principles and party loyalty.

The second part of the thesis consists of eleven selected letters and speeches concerning the campaign. They form a substantial portion of the primary source material on which the first part of the thesis is based. Clarifying footnotes follow each edited item.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Gratitude is due to a number of people without whom this thesis would not have been written. First of all, I gratefully acknowledge the support of my mother, Mrs. Weldon Bailey Davis, whose unwavering faith has been my strength. The members of my committee also have my sincere appreciation:

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All errors are my own.
PART 1

JEFFERSON DAVIS

AND

THE MISSISSIPPI GUBERNATORIAL CONTEST OF 1851
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## PART 1. JEFFERSON DAVIS

AND THE MISSISSIPPI GUBERNATORIAL CONTEST OF 1851

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A CANCEROUS SENSE OF GRIEVANCE: MISSISSIPPI, 1846-1850

The Mississippi gubernatorial contest of 1851 between Jefferson Davis and Henry Stuart Foote pivoted around issues that had begun to come into national focus six years earlier with the introduction into Congress of the Wilmot Proviso. Intensified by the 1848 presidential campaign, the questions of slavery and its extension in the territories precipitated a heated struggle over compromise in 1850, which climaxed in Mississippi the next year in a fiery race for governor.

War with Mexico had created new possibilities for annexation. On August 8, 1846, President James K. Polk requested an appropriation of two million dollars for "settling all our difficulties with the Mexican republic." That same evening a thirty-two-year-old freshman representative from Pennsylvania hit upon the idea of amending the appropriation bill to prohibit slavery in any of the territory acquired from Mexico with this money.\(^1\) Somewhat resembling the Northwest Ordinance of 1787, David Wilmot's proviso stated,

That, as an express and fundamental condition to the acquisition of any territory from the Republic of Mexico by the United States, by virtue of any treaty which may be negotiated between them, and to the use by the Executive of the moneys herein appropriated, neither slavery nor involuntary servitude shall ever exist in any part of said territory, except for crime, whereof the party shall first be duly convicted.\(^2\)
Whatever the motives behind this proposal to prohibit slavery in territory as yet unacquired, Wilmot's proviso when first introduced claimed relatively little attention in and out of Washington, though it brought about the defeat of Polk's Two Million Bill in the Senate. The next spring a similar appropriation bill for three million dollars was introduced; attached to it was an amendment, again carrying Wilmot's name, which called for the prohibition of slavery in any territory annexed by the United States in the future. Although the appropriation bill passed, representatives from all the slave states but Delaware joined to defeat the proviso.

To defeat the proviso, party lines within these states vanished momentarily, an occurrence that would grow more frequent. Political parties were beginning to function differently. Because some men believed that they failed to function, old parties splintered and political allegiances were re-formed along sectional lines more than ever before. Slavery and its extension during congressional debate on the Wilmot Proviso, although a point of consideration in many issues before 1846, now became the overt, pivotal issue, "the dangerous possibilities of which had startled Jefferson in the days of the controversy over Missouri, and began the great sectional controversy that was to end in the realization of his worst fears." Reverberations of the Wilmot Proviso began to be felt in Missis-
sippi almost as acutely as in traditionally sensitive South Carolina.

Unlike many southerners in 1847, South Carolinian John C. Calhoun viewed the issues aggravated by the proviso and the possible breakdown of old party lines as an opportunity for the South to gain national political strength. An open threat to the South's social and economic institution could forge the people of the section into a single southern party to preserve both national peace and southern rights. As he envisioned it, the South would stand united to defend slavery; the North would be divided equally between Whig and Democratic parties. One of the northern parties would accept southern terms—that is, abandon abolition ideas—in return for southern support. This political combination would elect its (the South's) candidate, and southern ideas would dominate the administration that followed. Calhoun's plan, however, disregarded northern suspicion of a prosouthern administration, northern advocacy of free-soil doctrines, and a growing moral abhorrence of slavery. Calhoun's vision did not materialize.

One of the many southerners who did not share that vision in 1847 but who conceded the possible necessity of such a course sometime in the future, although he never joined the nullification school, was the man upon whom the "mantle of Calhoun" later fell. Jefferson Davis was leading the First Mississippi
Rifles in the Mexican War during most of the Wilmot Proviso debate. A member of the Twenty-ninth Congress until his resignation to become colonel of the regiment, the hero of Buena Vista was adamant in his opinion that the South must adhere to the Constitution and make every effort to work within the national party organization. For Calhoun, southern partisan unity was an immediate necessity; for Davis, such a call would be necessary only if northern Democrats refused to "recognize" what he referred to as "principles," terms to be met before any compromise could be achieved in the party. These terms and the difference between Calhoun's and Davis' viewpoints are revealed in a letter published in the Washington Daily Union in the fall of 1847. Acknowledging imminent danger to party unity, Davis counseled intraparty cooperation and compromise before and during the convention. I am not of those who decry a national convention, but believe that present circumstances with more than usual force indicate the propriety of such meeting. On the question of southern institutions and southern rights, it is true that extensive defections have occurred among northern democrats; but enough of good feeling is still exhibited to sustain the hope that as a party they will show themselves worthy of their ancient appellation, the natural allies of the south, and will meet us upon just constitutional ground. . . . we should give them the fairest opportunity to do so, and furnish no cause for failure by seeming distrust or aversion. . . . let our delegates meet those from the north, not as a paramount object to nominate candidates . . . but, before entering upon such selection, to demand of their political brethren of the north a
disavowal of the principles of the Wilmot Proviso, an admission of the equal right of the south with the north to the territory held as the common property of the United States, and a declaration in favor of extending the Missouri compromise to all States to be hereafter admitted into our confederacy.

Withdrawal from the convention, Davis foresaw, would signal the breakdown of the Democratic party, engendering "the worst of all political divisions--one made by geographical lines merely." He greatly feared such a necessity and considered it only as a final resort. "We shall then have reached a point at which all party measures sink into insignificance under the necessity for self-preservation; and party divisions should be buried in union for defence." 9

The statement affirmed Davis' faith in the party, outlined a course of moderation, and revealed his preference for conciliation. Simultaneously, however, certain imperatives--concessions demanded from the North--were set forth. It is significant that essentially the same attitude characterized Davis' political philosophy throughout the following decade.

As the national party conventions of 1848 drew nearer, both Whigs and Democrats exhibited concern over sectionalizing effects of the Wilmot Proviso controversy. The Democrats, the traditional party of the South, were particularly worried. In September 1847 Vice-President George M. Dallas made a proposal which he hoped would resolve the slavery extension question
--for the benefit of his party and his own candidacy. Dallas called for "leaving to the people of the territory to be acquired the business of settling the matter for themselves. They have the right alone to determine their own institutions." Popular sovereignty, an idea glorious in its ambiguity, rejected congressional direction of domestic policies in the territories. The Free Soilers, northern Democrats and New England Whigs who were dissatisfied with the old parties and who opposed the extension of slavery in the territories, saw in popular sovereignty an essentially Free-Soil doctrine. If settlers in the territories were allowed to decide the question of slavery as soon as some sort of territorial government was formed, there could be little doubt slavery would be prohibited, since most settlers were small farmers, and Mexicans already inhabiting the area had long lived under a system in which slavery was not allowed. Thus, the institution could scarcely be established before its prohibition.

Like many Democrats, New York senator Daniel S. Dickinson was a proponent of annexation. Two months after Dallas' speech, he introduced a set of resolutions coupling the popular sovereignty idea with a strong statement for annexation. Although persuaded to forego vehement debate in the Senate for the sake of Democratic harmony, Calhoun made known his disapproval of these resolutions. At his behest, the resolutions were
denounced by the southern press as "incompatible with southern constitutional rights . . . ." Superficially, popular sovereignty could have appealed to the South; it seemed fair enough for the inhabitants of an area to determine the question of slavery there. Calhoun, however, quickly pointed to its disadvantages. The development of free states, as enthusiastically envisioned by the Free-Soil faction and other northern groups, seemed equally probable to South Carolina's state-rights champion, who saw in that development the destruction of balanced sectional representation in government. Indeed, he labeled the doctrine of popular sovereignty more detrimental to southern interests than the Wilmot Proviso itself.¹¹

Yet many Democrats were hopeful that the panacean potential of "squatter" sovereignty could bring the party factions together. Among them, Lewis Cass, a Michigan Democrat and known presidential aspirant, attempted to make the doctrine palatable to northern and southern Democrats alike, when on December 24, 1847, he wrote to his chief political supporter in Tennessee, Alfred O. P. Nicholson. Territorial intervention by Congress should be confined to the setting up of governments "and to the necessary provision for their eventual admission into the Union, leaving, in the meantime, to the people inhabiting them to regulate their own concerns in their own way."¹²

Calculated to advance his cause especially in the South, Cass's
statement compounded the ambiguity of the popular sovereignty doctrine. It did not mention slavery, the central concern with relation to the territories. Nor did it specify what the instrument for regulating the inhabitants' "concerns" might be. Whigs and Democrats were thus able to derive very different interpretations. The Whigs called the Nicholson letter an abolitionist proposal; Cass would allow the people of the territories to exclude slavery during the territorial period. Mississippi Democrat Jefferson Davis, by now a leading spokesman for his state, believed Cass's meaning was essentially as the Whigs interpreted it. But Davis held that territorial residents had no power to admit or exclude slavery until a state constitution was framed, which was the interpretation Cass's party chose to give the Nicholson letter.¹³

Regardless, the Mississippi delegation nominated Cass to head the party ticket, and the Nicholson letter undoubtedly helped him win the Democratic nomination in Baltimore in May 1848. The Baltimore convention, however, revealed some dangerous divisions in the party ranks. The most painful division occurred in New York from which came two distinct and dissenting delegations; when an agreement about their seating failed to be reached, the Barnburners led by John and Martin Van Buren bolted the convention and later united with various other party dissidents to nominate Free-Soil candidates. Another
painful rift was felt when Alabamian William Lowndes Yancey left the convention determined to secure in the South state-rights candidates independent of either national party. Democratic leaders north and south were apprehensive such difficulties would weaken total voting strength.

Convening in Philadelphia on June 7, the Whigs found themselves in a slightly better position. They had been the party out of power, and considering the general dissatisfaction with Polk this was to their advantage. Further, they profited by the divisions in the Democratic party. Finally, they chose a candidate of wide appeal, who possessed "a perfectly clear, not to say blank political record." Zachary Taylor was a southerner, a planter, a slaveholder, and a very popular hero of the Mexican War. He had never held civil office, but he let it be known that he would accept his party's nomination if offered on a nonpartisan basis, which it virtually was.

The campaign and election in Mississippi, as elsewhere in the South, revealed that party loyalties were being supplanted by sectional ones. Jefferson Davis perceived the change and counseled adherence to the Democratic party. Although the warm friend and former son-in-law of Taylor, Davis campaigned for Cass. Along with almost everyone in Mississippi, he strongly opposed squatter sovereignty as presented in the Nicholson
letter. But Davis believed it far wiser for the South to support a national party organization than a single man whose political philosophy was at best obscure. Davis' unfaltering faith in the party during the 1848 election is especially significant since he was doubtless better acquainted with "Old Rough and Ready's" political views than most Whigs, at least on the question of the Wilmot Proviso. In a letter to Davis in April, Taylor had described it as "gotten up with no other object but to array the North against the South," and he added, "I much fear its injurious effects before it is finally disposed of . . . ." Davis reasoned, however, that if the Democrats won, southern interests would have more weight in national policy, and he was confident Cass would veto any "Wilmot Proviso" law passed by Congress since Cass was pledged to the resolutions of the Democratic National Convention, declarative of the cardinal principles of our party; . . . if elected, he would be surrounded by Democratic counsellors, and would . . . administer [t]he Government according to that political creed which [Davis] believed most conducive to public prosperity . . . .

Such reasoning did not prevail at the polls. Taylor won eight slave and seven free states for 163 electoral votes. Cass took eight free and seven slave states for 127 electoral votes, a crucial 36 electoral votes being lost in New York as a result of the Barnburner/Free-Soil coalition. New York's electoral votes would have been less crucial if many southern
Democrats had not felt compelled to vote for another southerner. Mississippi, a bastion of the Democratic party, gave Taylor 49 percent of the votes cast and very nearly the state. Southerners assumed his interests coincided with theirs, and this identification "canceled the issues which usually separated the major parties" in the South.  

After the election, Davis remarked that sectionalism appeared to be rapidly solidifying. He was not wrong. The growth of antislavery feeling in both house of Congress was apparent—as was the development of southern unity. A month after the election a group of southerners in Congress began holding caucuses, the result of which in January 1849 was a published list of grievances known as the Southern Address. Largely the work of Calhoun, the statement protested what the signers considered to be northern aggressions. Among other things, it opposed antislavery legislation for the District of Columbia, affirmed the right to take slave property into the territories, and deplored the lack of cooperation in the return of fugitive slaves. Calhoun hoped the statement would alarm and unify the South. It didn't. What did was the discovery of gold near Sutter's Fort, California. The surge of emigration that followed plus President Taylor's plan to admit California to statehood as quickly as possible rekindled the whole question of territorial slavery and the sectionally
unbalancing admission of new states. Taylor apparently sought to avert another clash over slavery by omitting the territorial stage in California. But it was a foregone conclusion justifying southern alarm that California when admitted would be a free state. Davis had once observed that slave labor might be well suited to gold mining, but he was not optimistic about its survival in the West and, further, he believed the principles of the Wilmot Proviso were embodied in the California constitution. Adding to unrest in the South was an overproduction of cotton that year which had driven prices dangerously down. Thus, the combination of circumstances, especially as Taylor's plan became clear in 1849, "supplied the Southern movement with a driving force that up to now it had lacked."22

The "driving force" in Mississippi was evident as early as May 7, 1849, in Jackson at a bipartisan meeting called to consider the position of the South. The conclusions of the men gathered there repeated in substance those of the Southern Address as well as traditional views with respect to the blessings of slavery and the common ownership of the territories by all the sovereign states. While it was their stated intent to preserve the Union, the delegates justified southern unity of action and called for another, statewide convention to be held in Jackson the following October.23

Applauded and encouraged by Calhoun, who considered
Mississippi the best choice to lead the movement, the October convention "acted from the beginning as though it spoke for the whole South." The convention resolutions proclaimed a "cherished attachment to the Union, but we desire to have it as it was formed and not as an engine of oppression." The federal government possessed only delegated powers. It could not, therefore, regulate slavery within the states or exclude slavery from the territories. Only the states themselves had the right to legislate with regard to such institutions; if this right were violated, the states must resist. Herein lay what was considered by some an ultimatum. Significantly, the resolutions did not mention California. The convention did declare that Congress did not have the power to abolish slavery in the District of Columbia or to prohibit the interstate slave trade. Because the people of the free states disregarded constitutional rights guaranteed the South and agitated the question of slavery, the resolutions called for unification of the South and a convention of all southern states to be held in Nashville in June 1850, "to devise and adopt some mode of resistance to these aggressions . . . ." The October convention thus contributed to the southern movement and showed Mississippi to be one of its most active supporters. Mississippi's state elections in November also demonstrated this fact. Democratic victories, symbolizing resistance sentiment,
were overwhelming. John A. Quitman, for example, a fervent advocate of resistance, garnered 59 percent of the votes for governor. And, curiously enough, the Whig convention, while nominating their own candidate, lauded Quitman and virtually endorsed him. 28

But between the Jackson convention in October and the Nashville convention in June, resistance sentiment began to subside in the South. For many southerners, the necessity for unification was allayed by the possibility of compromise. In January 1850 Henry Clay introduced a set of resolutions formulated to dispel immediate threats to the Union. Including the questions of slavery in the territories, slavery in the District of Columbia, the return of fugitive slaves, and other issues, Clay's resolutions aimed to match concession for concession from the two sections of the country, except in the application of California as a free state which had already been decided by the people there. 29

Although the Mississippi legislature at the prompting of Governor Quitman adopted the resolutions of the October convention and appropriated funds for the defense of the state if the compromise in Congress was passed, conservative sentiment on both sides of the Mason-Dixon line was generally growing. Perhaps Webster's speech on March 7 truly "had crystallized the conservative element of the country, both North
and South . . ."30 In Mississippi, too, a moderating force began to be felt. Southern leadership had suffered a great loss with the death of Calhoun. Without him it seemed certain that "cleavage in the Southern ranks was bound to widen,"31 an accurate prediction for the South and for Mississippi.

The Nashville convention in early June testified to the diminished fire in southern leadership and the emerging sentiment for moderation. Delegates arrived from only nine states; those from Mississippi and South Carolina alone were sent with solid backing. Chosen president of the convention was William L. Sharkey, conservative former chief justice of Mississippi, whose known intent was to keep the meeting calm. After considerable discussion, the convention ended with resolutions affirming extension of the Missouri Compromise line, a view long held by Calhoun and Davis,32 and warning that admission of California would be equivalent to enactment of the Wilmot Proviso. In view of what had been anticipated, it was a rather cautious statement. Although this convention deplored the compromise measures as presented by the committee of thirteen in Congress, it adopted a wait-and-see attitude calling a second session for November 1850. Delegates like Robert Barnwell Rhett who had come to Nashville with hopes for more forceful steps looked upon the first session as something of a failure.33

Division in the Mississippi ranks of the southern movement
can be traced in the course of Senator Henry Stuart Foote. Foote, along with fellow senator Jefferson Davis, had in the main supported Calhoun. When Calhoun, in his last speech in the Senate, had demanded a constitutional amendment securing southern rights, Foote vigorously protested the demand fearing a dissolution of the spirit of compromise, and called for a committee to study the resolutions. From this point, Foote moved at first unnoticeably to an acceptance of the compromise measures. By summer it was not only being noticed that he alone of the Mississippi delegation in Washington favored compromise, it was bringing him notoriety. Local meetings throughout the state, an increasingly frequent mode of popular expression, voted to censure him, and sundry calls for his resignation appeared in Democratic newspapers. A few state leaders, like Sharkey and Robert J. Walker, were coming to share Foote's position, while others, like Governor Quitman and Congressman Albert G. Brown, were seriously contemplating secession as a course of resistance to compromise.

Meanwhile, debate on the compromise in the nation's capital "seethed and rippled and roared." Finally, in September five measures forming the Compromise of 1850 became law. California was admitted as a free state, which Jefferson Davis and other southerners viewed as permanently unbalancing to the Union. New Mexico was organized as a territory without restriction
to slavery, and the boundary with Texas adjusted, the latter state being compensated for territory given up. Utah was provided with a territorial government. A more stringent and enforceable fugitive slave law was passed, and the slave trade abolished in the District of Columbia.\textsuperscript{36}

Opponents of the Compromise warned that submission to it would mean the abolition of slavery and the destruction of the South. Other southerners saw it as an alternative to disunion. Jefferson Davis lamented the divisions in the South more than the Compromise itself. "Had the South been united we should not have been forced into our present condition, were it united now all which is not irretrievable might be recovered."\textsuperscript{37}

The tumult revealed by Wilmot's proviso and catalyzed by Taylor's election came to a climax and was temporarily abated by compromise. Acceptance of the compromise measures remained to be tested. The test would come, in part at least, in the state elections a year later. For the time being, it was only too evident that "the magic of Compromise had not dispelled a cancerous sense of grievance."\textsuperscript{38} Mississippi did not secede, but a furious mustering of political energies began almost immediately.
CHAPTER II

THE MUSTERING OF POLITICAL ENERGIES: SEPTEMBER 1850–JUNE 1851

While the last of the Compromise debates were taking place in September, a rapid polarization was developing between Mississippi's Democratic senators, Henry Stuart Foote and Jefferson Davis. Although both voted against the measure to admit California, Foote stated his intention to back acquiescence in the Compromise and boldly contended that 90 percent of Mississippi would endorse his stand. In response to Foote's declaration, Davis asserted that a majority of Mississippians would join him to oppose acquiescence.¹ To sustain their claims, both men returned home soon after the long session of Congress adjourned on September 30 to align support for their respective positions. This promised to be a formidable task. The political spectrum in Mississippi had lately taken on new shades as groups of "moderates," people who hesitated to choose between the apparent alternatives of submission or secession, multiplied and grew louder. With numerous variations, they sought some middle ground, thereby fracturing party alignment even further.

By late October Davis had arrived at "Brierfield," his plantation near Vicksburg, where he spent only a few days before embarking to rally support for his views and his party.²
At Benton, Mississippi, on the morning of November 2, Davis delivered an impressive address, stating the views he had long held and would be repeating during this cursory canvass of the state. He began his speech by reviewing injustices the South had suffered. Davis believed the measures just passed in Congress had seriously compromised southern constitutional rights. The question now was what course of action should be taken. Davis proposed that each state hold a convention to elect delegates to a convention of all the southern states which would then decide a course for the South. Here was the possibility for a middle ground: neither "slavish submission" nor immediate secession. At Yazoo City, a meeting of the "friends of the Union" was postponed to accommodate the tall, dignified senator whose proposal for a convention gave pause to the Unionists. In their meeting later the same day, an amazing if unsuccessful attempt was made to amend a resolution commending Senator Foote's record by substituting the name of Jefferson Davis. Their final resolutions, moreover, affirmed that repeal of the fugitive slave law would be just "cause for dissolution of the Union."³

While home Davis took the opportunity of answering various inquiries from his constituents through local newspapers. One such reply was made to a group of Davis' constituents who had bluntly asked whether, in view of the recent Compromise, Davis
favored dissolution of the Union, the establishment of a southern confederacy, secession of Mississippi, or resistance of any kind. To the first three questions Davis replied that his past action and attitude would show he had always disapproved of such steps. In answer to the last question, Davis elaborated the proposal made at Benton. The state should prepare for defense "armed if need be," and call for a southern convention to demand certain guarantees from the free states. If these guarantees were denied, then, Davis stated, the choice of "slavish submission or manly resistance being presented to us, I shall be in favor of the latter." Resistance, however, he envisioned as a separation of the two sections "without bloodshed or severe shock to commercial interests." Such a step should be taken only when other alternatives were exhausted. Certainly it was not yet a question of union or disunion, as some proponents of acquiescence were trying unfairly to present it. In a similar letter a few days later, Davis explained the unfairness of presenting the issue as a choice between extremes and outlined the reasoning behind his own position:

there are those who speak of others as "ultra," and who declare that a violation of the letter of the Constitution justifies, if it does not demand, a dissolution of the Union. On the other hand, we, the so called "ultras," contend that it is only where Constitutional remedies fail, and after all other means have been tried in vain, that State interposition should be invoked and the last alternative be
resorted to. Is it then because we will not shut our eyes to the fact that this last alternative may be forced upon us, that the attempt is made fraudulently to conceal the true issue and substitute that of Union or Disunion as one which we had presented? Is it because a self-sustaining, sectional anti-slavery majority in violation of justice, of State equality and the spirit of the Constitution, have denied us the protection and tranquility the Union was designed to secure? and have reduced us to a permanent minority in both Houses of Congress, and in the electoral Colleges of the United States, that we are called on to join in the triumphal song as the execrated tyrant of Rome fiddled over the conflagration of that city?\(^5\)

To prevent the destruction of the Constitution, the South must unite.

The Constitution had already been violated. The South had been deprived of certain constitutional rights—especially protection of slave property in the territories—with the passage of the Compromise, and the final arbiter of constitutionality, the Supreme Court, had proved inadequate.

If the right of the States to interpose begins only on the palpable infraction of the letter of the Constitution, then they have no power to guard their reserved powers, none to confine the agent in the use of the grant to the purpose for which it was granted, and it would be difficult to conceive of a case such as is contemplated by the phrase, palpable violation of the Constitution, in which the Supreme Court of the United States would not furnish an adequate remedy. It is exactly in the case where the rights of the States and of the people thereof are withheld by evasion, or invaded by fraud, which deprive them of redress by appeal to the Supreme Court as the Constitutional arbiter, that the States have a right, which may become a duty, to interpose. Such is the refusal to give protection to slave property in the territories held by the federal government as the common property of the States. Such was the admission of California . . . .
While Davis was still in Mississippi writing letters and making speeches, the time came for the second session of the Nashville Convention. The first session in June had been hesitant and inconclusive. This was partly due, no doubt, to the relatively conservative bent of convention president William Sharkey. In the months that followed, Sharkey's growing apprehensions about the propriety and necessity of concerted southern action made him decide against calling the second session at all. Sharkey held that the convention's goal was to stay within the Constitution in making demands, and he was convinced that the demands of the South had been duly considered in the Compromise. Furthermore, he did not believe an ultimatum existed in the Nashville Convention's resolution that extension of the 36°30' line represented the only acceptable compromise. Sharkey's second thoughts, shared by an increasing number of Mississippians, were plainly pessimistic: "... we are to dissolve the Union in the anticipation of a good cause. This will not do; let us wait until it comes. It may never come." Although Sharkey did not call the second session, it convened on November 11 with seven states represented. Only the delegates from South Carolina, however, had been regularly elected, an indication of waning enthusiasm in the South for united action.  

Three of Mississippi's eight delegates had been appointed
as personal representatives by Governor Quitman. The other five had been chosen in various county meetings. Mississippip's delegation arrived in Nashville prepared to take a leading role in the November session. They were armed with a set of resolutions which the convention substantially passed. These resolutions included an assertion of state sovereignty concurrent with the right of a state to resume powers delegated to the federal government in the Constitution (that is, secede), a reiteration of the "wrongs perpetrated since the first meeting of this Convention" (that is, the passage of the compromise measures), and a plan of action for the South. The goal of this plan was southern economic and cultural independence brought about by development of the South's natural resources, trade, and manufactures, and by the cultivation of southern literature and arts. The formation of vigilance committees was advised to guard the public against "incendiaries and incendiary publications." The resolutions also called for a general convention of all the slave-holding states, whose delegates would be entrusted "with all the sovereign power of the people with the view of arresting further aggressions and restoring the constitutional rights of the South—if possible—and if not, then to provide for the safety and independence of the South in the last resort."
The resolutions revealed the powerful influence of Mississippi governor John A. Quitman whose address to a special session of the legislature on November 18 incorporated many of the same recommendations. He asked for enlargement of the state militia and for committees of public safety to be formed in all the southern states. In accordance with the resolutions of the Nashville Convention and the views of Mississippi State-Rights leaders like Jefferson Davis, he called for a state convention to choose delegates to a general southern convention. Quitman's requests had an alarming ring. But the governor viewed the situation into which he saw the South being manipulated as one of impending disaster. Convinced that the North sought the abolition of slavery in order to destroy southern political strength, Quitman argued that northern hostility was aimed at an institution possessing innumerable advantages to all civilization. It promoted trade, provided labor, and thus distributed wealth and comfort to millions of people. Indeed, domestic slavery made possible the "refinement of man on earth." The legislature endorsed the governor's stand except for his militia proposal and called for a state convention to be held the following November with the election of delegates in September 1851.10

Appropriately enough, the same day (November 18) that Quitman presented his address to the legislature, Jefferson
Davis delivered a eulogy in Jackson on the South's most eminent state-rights champion, John C. Calhoun. But perhaps more significantly, on the same day in Jackson, Henry Stuart Foote along with a group of Whigs and some "submission" Democrats organized the Union party of Mississippi. The "friends of the Union," presided over by Judge Sharkey, resolved to promote Mississippi's acquiescence in the Compromise in order to preserve the Union. They stated that the compromise measures were not inconsistent with the resolutions of the October convention of 1849, on which, curiously enough, the State-Rights Democrats under the leadership of Quitman based their opposition to the Compromise. The Unionists, however, did stipulate certain northern aggressions that would justify resistance. All of the stipulations concerned slavery; among them were congressional interference with slavery in the states or with the slave trade, abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia, refusal to admit new slave states, prohibition of slavery in the territories, and repeal or lack of enforcement of the fugitive slave law. The resolutions also included disapproval of any conventions agitating for redress until such aggressions had actually taken place. In addition, the Unionists resolved to commend Henry Foote for the course he had pursued in the Senate. After scheduling a Union convention the first Monday in May 1851 to nominate a ticket
for state officers, the "friends of the Union" adjourned.

Along with the numerous States-Rights groups, the predominantly Democratic Mississippi legislature formed the seat of the opposite political camp. Some Unionist newspapers, like the Port Gibson Herald and Correspondent, asserted that few legislators were really disunionists, "the rest of the disaffected expressing extreme devotion to the Union, after the manner of Senator Davis." The legislature, as a whole, was nevertheless much influenced by Governor Quitman. On November 30 it passed a resolution commending the actions of Jefferson Davis and the state's four House members and censuring Henry Foote for his stand during the Compromise struggle.13 On January 21, 1850, all six Mississippians had signed a letter to the governor asking what course, in the opinion of both the governor and legislature, Mississippi should follow in Congress with respect to the admission of California.14 The reply was to resist California's admission and other similar measures "by all honorable and constitutional means . . . ." In view of Foote's activities to promote acquiescence, the legislature did "not consider the interests of the State of Mississippi committed to this charge safe in his keeping." It must have been especially galling to Foote to have to present the resolutions censuring him to the United States Senate, but he remarked when doing
so that he had "no feeling at all relative to the proceedings of that body;" he merely considered the Mississippi legislature uninformed.15 Doubtless with the resolution of censure personal tensions as well as political polarization were increased between Senators Foote and Davis.

Meanwhile in Mississippi the political embroilments of John Anthony Quitman were attracting more than the usual popular attention as the new year arrived. Rumor had it that the governor was about to be indicted for violation of the Neutrality Laws of 1818 because of his connection with a filibustering expedition to Cuba in May 1850. There was even speculation in the Unionist camp that Quitman had called the special legislative session primarily to delay his arrest. Quitman's involvement with the ill-fated Cardenas Expedition had begun early in 1850 when the governor was approached by Cuban annexationists Narciso Lopez and Jose Ambrosio Gonzalez. Like many southerners, Quitman viewed the prosperous little island off the Florida peninsula as a place where the southern economy and southern political strength might someday expand.16

As the potential harmony in Cuban and southern ambitions became apparent, filibuster recruiting groups composed of American expansionists and Cuban annexationists concentrated in New Orleans. The recruiters particularly sought to attract Mexican War veterans and hoped to convince a hero of that war to lead
the expedition. Jefferson Davis had been visited by Narciso
Lopez in Washington in the summer of 1849. Lopez assured the
senator from Mississippi that the liberation movement was ready,
well equipped, and lacked only a leader; he offered Davis a
large sum of money to take the command. Because of senatorial
duties, Davis declined but suggested Lopez ask Robert E. Lee,
who subsequently also refused. In March 1850 Lopez traveled
to Jackson, Mississippi, to offer the command to Governor
Quitman. The filibusterers' proposal was an extremely tan-
talizing one for John Quitman since

> these grand ideas of revolution and progress, of
> changes to be accomplished by liberal principles
> and energetic rule, were his own. To lead such a
> movement in aid of an oppressed people, and for the
> introduction of American civilization and Southern
> institutions, had been the dream of his life.\(^{18}\)

Quitman declined to lead the expedition ostensibly because of
the crucial struggle over state rights then going on. He prob-
ably also considered the warnings issued by Presidents Taylor
and Fillmore that American citizens participating in such
activities would be guilty of invading a friendly nation and
a letter from the New York Cuban Council stating that Lopez
acted on his own initiative and possessed fraudulent evidence
about the independence movement. Quitman would have had other
reasons to doubt the imminence of revolution in Cuba because,
although under the protection of Spain, Cuba's wealth was ample
and widespread enough to discourage such an uprising. Only if
Cubans made the first moves for independence could United States soldiers or private volunteer troops legitimately go to their aid. Governor Quitman did give Lopez generous and enthusiastic military advice and probably also contributed money. The liberators occupied Cardenas, Cuba, on May 19, but within a few weeks the project had to be abandoned when Cuban cooperation in the "rebellion" failed to materialize. Very nearly overtaken by Spanish ships, the escaping filibusterers landed at Key West, Florida, to face American authorities, who promptly indicted sixteen men, including John Quitman, for participating in or being accessories to the expedition. 19

Trials were scheduled for December at New Orleans. The evidence against Mississippi's governor was scanty, based on his alleged loan of $1,000 to leaders of the expedition. Unstated but more questionable was the discovery of arms owned by the state of Mississippi in the possession of filibusterers. Quitman was told by his friend and district attorney Horatio J. Harris that he must either submit to trial or be arrested. For a while the governor maintained he would do neither, claiming immunity as chief executive of a sovereign state. Finally, on February 3, 1851, Quitman resigned as governor, professing his wish to avoid a direct clash between federal and state authorities, and went to New Orleans to stand trial. 20

The first man to be tried was former Mississippi senator John
Henderson. After three mistrials all the indictments were dropped.\textsuperscript{21}

Feted with a banquet in New Orleans, the ex-governor returned to an equally warm reception in Natchez. Quitman's interest in Cuba had never been a secret to his constituents, and Mississippians were shocked at the indictment. To State-Rights extremists, his resignation had spelled martyrdom. Many citizens believed Mississippi had suffered a serious insult, "because the executive functions of the sovereign state had been degraded by the monster of federal encroachment and interference."\textsuperscript{22} Some thought the indictment had been an attempt to embarrass Quitman as leader of the States-Rights movement in Mississippi.\textsuperscript{23}

That this was an opinion held by Jefferson Davis became apparent in the Senate during debate over execution of the fugitive slave law in Boston. An oblique comparison was made by Senator John P. Hale of New Hampshire between the laxity in enforcement of the fugitive slave law in Boston and the refusal of an officer of the federal judiciary "to execute the law of the United States for the surrender of a person belonging to another State."\textsuperscript{24} It was clear to most of his audience that Hale referred to the delay in arresting John Quitman. Both of Mississippi's senators rose to answer the charge. Foote briefly recounted that the arrest was delayed
while the legislature was in session but that the governor
had been arrested and gone to New Orleans to stand trial.
Davis' answer was at once a wise defense of Quitman and an
offensive for State-Rights views.

Process in the case to which reference was made was
delayed, and I have yet to learn sufficient cause
why it was not longer delayed, when the Executive
of a sovereign State, charged with high functions
of office which he could not lay down except by resig-
nation, proposed to give the Government security to go
to New Orleans and stand a trial, if they would sus-
pend the process until his term of office closed.
This . . . they could not grant. Justice was hungry
for that sacrifice. . . . Many others have passed
unnoticed. Offenders against this fugitive slave
law have gone unpunished. Actors in the Cuba inva-
sion avowing the fact, have remained unnoticed. Still
there was one against whom the shaft unerring must be
levelled, and that was the State-rights Governor of
Mississippi . . . . He must be dragged from the du-
ties of his station to answer the charges of aiding
and abetting an expedition from the United States, in
which it was well known from his public position he
could not have been a participant.25

The Cuban affair was not settled with the dismissal of indict-
ments; it had profound reverberations in Mississippi during
the campaigns for state office which were soon to begin.

Moreover, the sort of cooperation which Foote and Davis
exhibited as they joined to answer Senator Hale's charge
was becoming less and less frequent as their prominence in
opposite political camps grew and the state conventions ap-
proached. The personal tension between Mississippi's sena-
tors had visibly increased since the divergence of their
political views during the Compromise struggle. Now old
enmities and new animosities were surfacing. A brief but
telling incident occurred in the Senate chamber in mid-
February. During debate on the resolution to confer the rank
of lieutenant general on Winfield Scott, Jefferson Davis
chided Henry Foote for not correctly giving the history of
the resolution and noted that Foote would have been able to
had he read the report of the Committee on Military Affairs.
Davis also attacked a generalization made by Foote praising
Scott and reminded his colleague that the issue was the es-
ablishment of a title, which Davis opposed, not a single
personality, for whom Davis professed great admiration. Foote
retorted sarcastically, and the discussion quickly became
heated by remarks which ceased to pertain to the topic under
debate. Finally, with considerable argument from Foote, the
chair ended what had turned into an exchange of personal in-
sults.

After the second session of the Thirty-first Congress ad-
journed on March 30, 1851, Mississippi's senators wasted little
time returning home to campaign as vigorously as possible be-
fore the state conventions. The Unionists were to meet on
May 5, and the State-Rights Democrats on June 16. Davis
reached "Brierfield" in early April and, characteristically,
began sounding out trusted political advisers on the course
to be taken by the party, the state, and the section. A
particularly incisive reply came from Horatio J. Harris, attorney for the Southern District of Mississippi. The southern movement, Harris observed, had lost its momentum; South Carolina and Mississippi alone among southern states did not mirror indifference. The Constitution could not be changed nor the Compromise acceptably modified; the southern states would not unite until the institution of slavery had suffered more direct attacks from the North. To preserve constitutional rights, the South would then form a separate government. But, Harris warned, Quitman and his supporters were

plucking the fruit before it is ripe. . . . the great body of the people of Mississippi are hostile to what are called the compromise measures; but those measures are not so clearly violative of the constitution as to leave no ground for diversity of opinion; hence, united action is impossible; and without union, the course which Quitman favors and advocates must end in disaster and disgrace—a result the more sure, as no cause can carry such a man. . . . you should decline taking a stand upon the issues Quitman has made; much more should you refuse to recommend his policy as worthy of public approval. . . . the people will not come up to his support; and by identifying yourself, in any way, with his fortunes, you will but weaken your own influence, and impair your capacity for usefulness, at the proper time. . . . for the present you should rest satisfied to let the record speak for you."

While Davis apparently agreed with Harris' analysis of the South's situation, he did not heed the admonition to avoid issues Quitman had agitated. Party strength and unity rather than his own political safety remained foremost concerns for Jefferson Davis.

During the summer of 1850 when the Southern State-Rights
party organized in Jackson, sentiment against the compromise measures was at fever pitch. The magnetic immediacy of State Rights diminished, however, as the feeling of imminent disaster in the South ebbed during the fall. Organization of Union parties throughout the South contributed to this change by substituting an appeal to rational testing of the new law in place of the gusto of resistance. Before the end of 1850 the stances of the State-Rights and Union parties in Mississippi had crystallized, respectively, into resistance or submission. And, as other southern states began to back away from plans for united action, the extreme State-Rights argument for separate secession became far more dangerous to consider. Some degree of acquiescence began to seem more reasonable than seceded isolation. To John Quitman, however, acquiescence remained unthinkable. His correspondence with State-Rights leaders of other southern states, especially Governors Seabrook and Means of South Carolina, reveals a faith that separate secession, failing united action, would be the impetus to effective resistance. Other states, he claimed, would follow Mississippi and South Carolina within a short time. Quitman did concede that South Carolina was in a better position to secede first since Mississippi lacked sufficient wealth and strength and a seaport. Mississippi, he felt confident, would join in South Carolina's course as soon as possible, despite geographical separation.
While a majority of Mississippians opposed the Compromise, these economic and geographical disadvantages in addition to disbelief in the effectiveness of separate state action combined to shift the position of State-Rights Democrats. At the beginning of the campaign in late 1850, the State-Rights party asked Mississippians "to respond to the call of South Carolina and meet her in a Southern convention for the purpose of obtaining guarantees for the protection of their rights in the Union or of seceding from it; [the Unionists] proposed to follow the lead of Georgia and agree to acquiesce in the compromise as a permanent settlement of the controversy between the two sections."^30 The Unionists charged State-Rights advocates with trying to destroy unanimity in Mississippi by agitating the compromise issues in more conventions. The State-Rights Democrats responded by protesting that the Unionists were really disunionists, who by allowing northern aggressions would bring about the destruction of the South. As recorded by Jefferson Davis, his party reasoned that citizens "most devoted to the Union of the Constitution might, consequently, be expected to resist most sternly any usurpation of delegated power, the effect of which would be to warp the Federal Government from its proper character, and, by sapping the foundation, to destroy the Union of the States."^31 Yet in spite of such arguments, the State-Rights party was identified in the minds of many people with
disunion. And now, Davis believed, it was more crucial than ever before for the Democratic party in the South to maintain unity.

Since he had just been re-elected to the United States Senate, Davis reasoned, Mississippians would be assured he had no personal aspirations at stake in the convention; with that justification, Davis set out to campaign strenuously during May and June, 1851. On May 6 he spoke in Jackson endorsing the legislature's resolutions of November 1850 and stating once again his approval of a southern congress which he believed would be worthwhile if only Mississippi and South Carolina met and the latter was dissuaded from going out of the Union alone, which Davis considered a hazardous step. Ever defending his party and seeking to strengthen it now, he proclaimed

that the true and real Union men are those who contend for the perfect equality of the South in the confederacy, and the right of the States to regulate their own internal policy without molestation from the general government, or interference from the people of other States—in a word who struggle for the compact of the Constitution in its purity.

Repeating this argument throughout the state, Davis spoke a few days later at Brandon in nearby Rankin County, completely overwhelming a Union party speaker. Then, with his Washington colleague, former governor Albert G. Brown, Davis made a tour into eastern Mississippi speaking in Westville on May 10,
Raleigh on May 12, Paulding on May 14, and Enterprise on May 15. The speaking tour then swung north to Marion in Lauderdale County and on to De. Kalb and Wahalak in Kemper County before reaching Aberdeen in Monroe County on May 24, having covered about 200 miles in two weeks.  

At Aberdeen Davis elaborated on his opposition to each of the parts of the Compromise and on the fugitive slave bill which he did not consider to have been included in the measures introduced by Henry Clay. While the Union party held that an infraction of this statute was just cause for resistance, Davis judged the fugitive slave law relatively unimportant to the Deep South or planting states. Rather, it offered justice for border-state slaveholders. A greater danger than infraction of the fugitive slave law, Davis argued, was encirclement of the South by free states. Without additional area into which southerners could emigrate with their slaves, black overpopulation could "destroy the institution [of slavery] and reduce the whites to the degraded position of the African race." Here was the ultimate effect of northern aggressions so feared by the South. In a defense of the South and of slavery, Davis explained how this would come about. As it was, color distinction but not property distinction existed in the South; all white men enjoyed equality. If the slaves were freed, on the other hand, class distinctions by property would arise. The rich man would remain rich, while
the poor white laborer would be reduced to competition with
the free Negro, thus decreasing his chance to acquire wealth. Slavery, therefore, was essential to "the equality of the white race." After leaving Aberdeen, Davis traveled west and then southward through Choctaw, Carroll, and Attala counties. At Carrollton, disregarding Harris' advice, he appeared on the speaker's platform with John Quitman. Democratic as well as Unionist newspapers had been linking their names throughout the spring campaign. The Unionist Carrollton Flag, shortly after their visit proclaimed, "no body hereafter will deny that Jeff. Davis and Quitman stand on the same secession platform." By thus fostering fears of disunion, the Unionists could undermine Democratic strength, despite the efforts of Davis and others.

The Union party had met in Jackson on May 5. Henry Stuart Foote, considered since its inception as the party's most eminent spokesman, won the gubernatorial nomination easily. The platform adopted embodied the resolutions of the Union meeting of November 18, 1850, reasserting aggressions by the North that would justify southern action. Such a platform, the Unionists understood, would attract many moderates who feared secession and who could be reassured by the qualifications placed on acquiescence. It was, furthermore, a platform from which Foote and other Union candidates could project
the choice as one of peaceful Union or perilous secession, especially if the State-Rights nominee was John Quitman.

Quitman's indictment and arrest had increased his popularity among many avid State-Righters; moreover, his resignation signified to Democratic party leaders, like Jefferson Davis, "a consequent obligation to renominate him for the office of which he had been deprived." Responding to the charge of disunionism and to the threat of losing the nomination if he appeared too radical, Quitman had restated his position, vowing that separate state action could ruin the South's chances of resistance while concerted action of the southern states might save the Union. Still, leaders of the Democratic State-Rights party, especially after the Union convention nominated Foote as expected, increasingly doubted the wisdom of advancing a candidate whose reputation was one of inflexible and extreme positions.

Reuben Davis, a delegate to the Democratic convention from Monroe County gives an account of the dilemma and the intraparty maneuvering as the convention began in Jackson on June 16. En route to Jackson, Reuben Davis had conducted a poll asking every man along the way whether he preferred Quitman or Jefferson Davis for governor. Three-fourths answered for Davis, and many declared that in a choice between Quitman and Foote, their votes would go to Foote. As a member
of the committee of eighteen appointed to present a candidate
to the convention, Reuben Davis dutifully reported these find¬
ings. To his surprise and to the chagrin of Quitman's forces,
a majority of the committee also preferred Jefferson Davis.

Davis, who was confined by illness to his Jackson hotel room,
was promptly visited by a group of Quitman supporters "and
finally induced, most likely from pure weariness," according
to Reuben Davis, "to say he would not accept a nomination."^2

When the committee remained unmoved in their choice, the Quit¬
man supporters and possibly Quitman himself went to see Davis
again and obtained a written note refusing candidacy. Jeffer¬
son Davis' own account confirms that he was approached for
candidacy by the nominating committee—whether before or during
the convention is not clear—and agreed to accept the nomina¬
tion if Quitman would decline it in exchange for appointment
by Acting Governor John I. Guion to the Senate seat vacated
by Davis' candidacy; if the Democrats won control of the in¬
coming state legislature, Quitman's election to the Senate
would be assured. Quitman refused the bargain.43 Finally,
the committee of eighteen submitted Quitman's name to the
convention, and he was nominated by acclamation.44

Thus began one of the most rigorous and exciting campaigns
in Mississippi history. As a Washington newspaper observed,
in a state where candidates were expected to canvass widely
in person and where issues had so lately threatened the existence of institutions, the campaign could scarcely have been otherwise. State-Rights Democrats first of all had to allay fears of secession. Success demanded that they rekindle concern over state and federal relationships, the possibilities of joint southern resistance, and the ubiquitous danger of emancipation. Unionists vowed loyalty to the Union, asked patient observation to judge the effects of compromise before seeking redress, and inveighed against secession as the solution proposed in the opposite camp. "Both parties were pervaded by a spirit of intolerance, and the presence of ten men at any one point involved the possibility of serious trouble." Although a wave of reticence and moderation had passed over the political scene in late 1850 and early 1851, the state campaigns sharpened viewpoints and shortened tempers.
CHAPTER III

A SPIRIT OF INTOLERANCE: THE SUMMER CAMPAIGN

Furnaces of political activity intensified the heat of a sultry Mississippi summer. In Unionist and State-Rights camps the fire of campaigning was fanned by both circumstance and issue. As circumstance would have it, two campaigns raged simultaneously in Mississippi during the summer of 1851: in September delegates would be elected to a state convention to consider Mississippi's relationship with the national government in view of the Compromise of 1850; on November 3 and 4 the election of state officials would take place. Inextricably bound up with both sets of campaigns were the issues of convention or no convention and union or disunion which had developed as a result of the Compromise.¹

Leaders of both parties recognized that the September election could well decide the position of Mississippi with regard to the compromise measures. If a majority of the delegates elected were Unionists, the convention requested by Quitman in the special legislative session of November 1850 would meet only as a formality, with acquiescence in the Compromise assured. Moreover, Mississippi would probably not participate in the congress of southern states which such state conventions as this were expected to call. If on the other
hand, a majority were State-Rights delegates, the November convention called to describe Mississippi's relation with the national government and chart the state's course in a southern movement would likely do just that. Disunion or the threat of it would thereby remain a possibility.

Throughout the struggle that had hardened in Mississippi with the formation of State-Rights and Union parties, the State-Rights party suffered from the disquieting and unceasing Unionist charge of secessionism. If a secessionist be defined as a person who under certain conditions would feel forced to consider such a step, then Jefferson Davis was a secessionist in 1851. Yet if that label is restricted to men like John Quitman, William Lowndes Yancey, or Robert Barnwell Rhett, it cannot apply to Davis. In 1850 and indeed throughout the decade that followed, Davis held to an increasingly bleak but dogged optimism that the conflict could be resolved, that it was not irrepressible. "He had not reached the point of despair with regard to slavery, and of disgust with regard to the Union . . . ."² However, as Davis himself plainly stated in November 1850, he would "prefer to go out of the Union, with the Constitution, rather than abandon the Constitution to remain in an Union."³ Repeatedly in the Senate and in speeches and letters to his Mississippi constituents Davis expressed the view that he would advise the peaceable with-
drawal of Mississippi only if all other remedies failed and if other states joined in the movement. Without cooperation of other southern states, secession had no chance of success. But Davis did not believe such a drastic measure would be necessary, at least not in 1851. He did believe in the necessity of southern unity. He therefore called for a state convention and a southern congress that would be empowered to take whatever action was deemed essential to preserve southern constitutional rights. Davis was convinced that the meeting of such a congress would be enough to jolt the North into awareness and concessions. More feverish State-Rights campaigners did not vest as much hope in this potential of the conventions, and Unionists discounted it in order to brand the State-Rights advocates as harbingers of Mississippi's immediate secession and consequent destruction.

Such accusations had to be nullified to keep the large segment of moderate Democrats from forsaking the State-Rights party out of fear. As the Democratic convention met in June party leaders brought the platform for approval to Jefferson Davis, whose views had wide appeal for their reasonableness and moderation. Davis apparently qualified and rephrased portions of the statement; he modified, for example, the fifteenth resolution to read that secession, "under existing circumstances would be inexpedient, and is a proposition which
does not meet the approbation of this convention." Success in the campaigns of 1851 depended on bringing back many old-line Democrats who had grown apprehensive of the State-Rights movement. "Under such circumstances," Davis wrote,

the least favorable for a forward movement we have entered the canvass for members to the state convention. I feel confident that the Southern rights men will have a majority but I fear not large enough for a decided policy or for moral effect on our northern aggressors. Indeed the ground generally taken is that we must maintain our position reaffirm the declarations heretofore made; and wait for cooperation by other planting states.  

Counseling moderation and caution, Davis was instrumental in setting this tone for his party's campaign.

State-Rights gubernatorial nominee John Quitman did not keep it. Few leaders really expected that he would, and to their consternation some newspapers immediately announced that Quitman's nomination signaled State-Rights advocacy of disunion. While the ex-governor had temporarily softened his stand on secession in order to get the nomination he so desperately desired, his approval of both nullification and secession was well known and of long standing. At the same time he was toning down his views before the convention, Quitman had been privately urging the secession of South Carolina. Moreover, Quitman's interest in Cuba for both the extension of southern strength and the realization of personal ambitions affirmed his place as an extremist on the State-Rights spectrum. Now, having
garnered the nomination, Quitman sought to win vindication at the hands of the people of his State-Rights views and his Cuban involvement.

A man of commanding physical stature, Quitman held a podium by the force of appearance and reputation if not by oratory. Foote characterized his opponent as "honest, brave, of a slow and plodding intellect, but in regard to ordinary matters, sound and practical" while "singularly deficient in rhetorical energy and grace." Quitman's speaking style was straightforward but unrelieved by the richness of language that sparks a crowd's imagination. Alone, Quitman's orations claimed attention and respect; compared with Henry Stuart Foote's performances on the hustings, they paled to colorlessness. If Foote's manner of speaking sometimes offended the dignity of his colleagues in the Senate, it was perfectly tailored to the style of political canvassing expected and savored by Mississippians. The "pertinacious, explosive bantam" had been known to engage in dueling, and only the year before Foote had climaxied an exchange with Senator Thomas Hart Benton by drawing his pistol on the Senate floor. Wit, imagination, and taunting sarcasm were the deadly weapons Foote wielded against an opponent on the stump. They could also drive an audience to frenzy.

In early July the two candidates began a joint canvass to be comprised of some forty-nine appearances. Although they
agreed at the start of the canvass to refrain from personal attacks, neither Quitman nor Foote was really equipped by personality for much restraint. Memory weakened restraint; more than a tinge of bitterness doubtless lingered from 1847 when Foote had been elected to the Senate over Quitman by the Mississippi legislature. The former governor's relative ineffectiveness on the stump with Foote prompted Quitman's supporters to urge more personal assaults as a means of defense. One of Foote's most devastating ploys was to force his opponent into various defensive positions. Aggravating what was at best a tenuous linking of personalities, Foote announced repeatedly from the podium that his life had been threatened during the canvass and that he fully expected assassination. By implying that the opposing party would in some way be responsible, Foote created a charge that it was both essential and ridiculous to refute. Quitman attacked Foote for disobeying the will of the people of Mississippi with regard to the Compromise and for deserting the Democratic party. When Quitman denounced federal encroachment in state affairs, citing as example the necessity of his resignation, thereby "virtually suspending the executive power of the State Government," Foote alluded, at first subtly and then with more daring, to Quitman's connection with the Cuban expedition and especially to the filibusterers' possession of Mississippi arms. At
Panola on July 17 Foote got a brief but angry response from Quitman. When Foote repeated the insinuations the next day at Sledgeville, Quitman called them "false and cowardly, scandalous and ungentlemanly." Foote considered this a serious, personal affront; he struck at Quitman, and the ex-governor "dealt him a blow with my fist, and one with my boot," leaving no doubt that the joint canvass had to be terminated. Quitman and his supporters unfortunately agreed to allow Foote to keep the previously announced schedule of appearances and planned to follow the same route two days behind him. Like the joint canvass, it proved a disadvantage to the State-Rights party: at each stop prejudice had been freshly built before Quitman's arrival, and Foote boasted he had chased his opponent from the stump.17

In spite of precarious health, Jefferson Davis had set out campaigning immediately after the convention. On June 18 he attended a barbecue in Madison County. A schedule published as the convention adjourned announced another speaking tour from June 25 through July 16 with Albert G. Brown, once again a candidate for Congress from the fourth district in southwestern Mississippi through which the tour would go.18 Brown appeared alone, possibly because of Davis' health, at Eldwood Springs on June 26, but Davis joined him at Fayette on June 28. The handsome, amiable Brown and the learned, reserved Davis
made a complementary pair and an impressive appeal for State Rights. Although the fourth district in which Brown enjoyed incomparable popularity was composed of both poor coastal and pine woods counties in the east and rich river bottom, planting counties around Natchez in the west, he spoke mainly for the state's small slaveholders and non-slaveholders. Davis, on the other hand, represented the planter class in the Democratic party. Both men had forcefully opposed the Compromise.

At Fayette and throughout the summer, Davis called for unity in Mississippi and asked that Mississippians call for unity of the South through the November convention. If southern states met in a congress to discuss means of gaining security from northern--synonymous with federal--aggressions and unanimity was reached, the South might demand guarantees from the North. Mississippi must not secede alone, even if South Carolina did, a proposition with which Quitman privately disagreed; indeed, Davis hoped action of the southern congress might prevent South Carolina from taking such a step. Mississippi must stay in the Union to aid and inform her if she did.20

Davis believed that a state possessed the right to secede from the Union just as the colonies had had the right to declare their separation from Great Britain. The right of secession was the right of revolution. Revolution did not, however, necessitate bloodshed. The right of secession--
and thereby possibly revolution—was not a constitutional right; it was an inalienable right above the Constitution. Such a declaration seemed a departure from Davis' almost obsessive observance of constitutional rights. Yet this view is consistent with a preference he had expressed many times before, that extreme conditions might demand extraordinary measures to protect the Constitution. Indeed, it might be better preserved outside the Union if it were not faithfully followed within "an Union." Exercising the right of secession to preserve the Constitution would thus be the lesser of two evils. Davis was emphatic however in his opposition to Mississippi's seceding alone.

At Woodville on July 5 Davis described the extreme condition warranting secession: "When the South can no longer be considered an equal—when the gates of justice shall be shut against her—when her institutions and citizens shall be derided and condemned as menials and slaves should this Union still be preserved? should Mississippi still submit?" What the State-Rights Democrats labeled submissionism was the policy of acquiescence to the compromise measures advocated by the Union party. Davis lost no opportunity to argue against that policy and to criticize the acts of Congress for which it had been formulated. At Claiborne on July 9, at Vicksburg on July 24, and at Raymond on August 5, Davis repeated his argument.
attacking the Compromise measure by measure. The admission of California, for instance, amounted to enactment of the Wil¬mot Proviso. Prohibition of the slave trade in the District of Columbia was unconstitutional in the sense that it effectually confiscated private property without just compensation; any slaveholder could infer the extensions of such a precedent. The Texas bill was contrary to southern interests in that it made a large area of a slave state into perpetually free territory. In sum, the Compromise was yet another and so far the worst aggression committed against the South.

... in every instance where there had been a contest in Congress, the South, from a desire to preserve the Union, had conceded her clear constitutional rights, and each concession, instead of appeasing only served to make her opponents more importunate in their demands and more bold in their aggressions. In contradiction of the miserable pretext that we were at least to have "peace and quiet" now that we had again surrendered our rights, the passage of the so-called "peace measures" had wholly failed to produce a cessation of agitation and hostilities on the part of the Northern States. Their denunciations were as bitter and insulting, and their war as uncompromising since as it had been before.

Davis rested his appeal for the election of State-Rights delegates in September and state officers in November on both patriotic and personal grounds. The election of State-Rights delegates, he explained, might preserve the Union. A State-Rights majority at the November convention would assure Mississippi's summoning of a southern congress. Davis'
optimism decreed that if the South met in such a congress, "bristling up and showing her teeth," to assert the right of secession, aggressions by the North might well come to a halt. By this means, therefore, real alleviation of the conflict was a possibility. Davis also appealed to the voters on the ground that he held then the highest and last office he sought to attain; he would interpret the vote in September as approval or disapproval of his course as a United States senator. 27

Davis' course in the Senate had been approved in November 1850 by a resolution of the special legislative session. In the same resolution the Mississippi legislature had severely censured Henry Foote. Foote's campaign during the summer of 1851 was thus even more intense because a Union victory in September would mean vindication of his views on the Compromise and perhaps as well a repudiation of the legislature dominated by John Quitman. A cursory review of Foote's political activities prior to the Compromise struggle shows that his allegiance had been meandering at best. Foote was a warm supporter of John C. Calhoun in the late 1820s; a few years later, when Andrew Jackson's ascendancy became certain, he forsook Calhoun's camp. By the mid-1830s Foote was furiously denouncing Martin Van Buren, and in 1838 the Whigs elected him to the Mississippi legislature. In 1840, however, he ran as a Van Buren elector. 28 Elected to the Senate in 1847, Foote considered himself a
Democrat but played a major role in the formation of the Union party of Mississippi in the fall of 1850. Converted to the policy of acquiescence, Foote became one of the foremost spokesmen of the Union party and campaigned largely to defend the Compromise. He pointed out, for example, that contrary to State-Rights forebodings, the Texas bill opened the way for the strengthening of the South. In only a few years Texas would become the strongest slave state in the South, he believed. Utah and New Mexico, moreover, could be made into as many new slave states as the people living there demanded. With regard to the fugitive slave law, Foote adhered to the position favored by a majority of the Unionists:

Some say this law will be repealed—I say never, never; . . . if Congress were to repeal it, if the government refuse to enforce it, if any act were passed preventing the slave trade between the States, if slavery were abolished in the District of Columbia, why then I conceive the South would have a right to despair. . . . Then we would peaceably secede, and then only.

Curiously, this last statement, in retrospect at least, is similar to Davis' view that continued northern aggressions might force the South to a bloodless revolution, a peaceable secession. Yet one of Foote's most frequent accusations was that Davis conspired to dissolve the Union.

The courses advocated by Mississippi's warring parties had far more in common than the passion of politics and the
color of personalities would allow in 1851. Both parties were oriented to the preservation of southern institutions; both sought to protect slavery. They differed sharply however in how much the North was to be trusted, in how much protection was enough. Reuben Davis, a member of the Democratic nominating committee and also a friend of Henry Foote speculated that "perhaps, because we had no other grievance, . . . the slavery question became such an absorbing one, and . . . the idea of secession took such deep root, and grew and expanded until it possessed the State in 1851." Slavery and secession would have been volatile material in any campaign. It was much more so in this one because the fears for that institution and considerations of recourse that had been threateningly stirred by the Wilmot Proviso and squatter sovereignty debates had now been thrust into a glaring national spotlight with the passage of the Compromise.

The passion of campaigning reopened old political wounds and inflicted new ones among the participants. Quitman still remembered that Foote had defeated him for the Senate in 1847. The Compromise struggle was a fresher memory. Stung by the resolution of censure and maintaining that a seceded state could not support a republican form of government, Foote had envisioned the "future Emperor of Mississippi upon his imperial throne--John Anthony the First--arrayed in purple, and
with the sceptre of command. . . . the body guard of the new monarch [would have] their hands doubtless ready to be imbued in blood" in taking over all Unionist interests in Mississippi.\textsuperscript{33}

While Foote proclaimed that Davis and Quitman were trying to split up the Union, it was rumored in early June that he sought to foster a breach between the two State-Rights leaders.\textsuperscript{34}

Relations between Davis and Quitman had not always been amiable. During the Mexican War, they were at variance in their opinions of Zachary Taylor: Quitman disapproved of Taylor, while Davis was his friend, his former son-in-law, and great admirer. Just before the battle of Buena Vista, Quitman had written his wife Eliza that Davis was "envious, impatient of restraints of superiors, selfish" and generally unworthy of respect.\textsuperscript{35} Davis, on the other hand, disapproved of Quitman's disunionist bombasts and privately criticized his vanity in demanding the gubernatorial nomination.\textsuperscript{36}

If party allegiance muffled the personal ill-feeling between Davis and Quitman, partisan differences inflamed the considerable history of grievances between Davis and Foote. Their first known political conflict had taken place during the presidential election of 1844; serving as electors, the two men disagreed over who was to carry Mississippi's votes to Washington. Davis' candidate won, much to Foote's chagrin.\textsuperscript{37} A second, far more serious clash had occurred in Washington on December 25, 1847.
Davis recalled there was

a dispute with Foote about the doctrine of squatter sovereignty, and, for offensive language, I crossed the room to where he was and whipped him until I was pulled off. He started to leave the room, and at the door turned round and said he struck first. I went after him, called him a liar, and shaking my fist in his face, told him, if he dared to say that I would beat him to death. He was silent, and I, though at the time a cripple, felt myself so much his superior that after a moment's delay I turned around to leave him and he struck me, whereupon I knocked him down, jumped on him and commenced beating him, when the gentlemen in the room again pulled me off. 38

The affray very nearly ended in a duel, but mutual friends intervened to prevent it and swore to keep the encounter a secret, although no one there could scarcely have forgotten it, least of all the combatants. As Democratic senators, Davis and Foote came to represent polar views with respect to a number of issues but most significantly with regard to the Compromise and Foote's consequent break with the Democratic party. In public and private, Davis increasingly questioned Foote's honesty; by mid-summer 1851 he judged Foote was "industrious as a bee, and as reckless of truth as himself." 41

Davis himself was far from idle. After his appearance at Raymond in Hinds County on August 5, he embarked on a tour through the northern counties speaking at Olive Branch, Panola, Chulahoma, Oxford, and Pontotoc. At Chulahoma Davis was suffering chills and fever, but he spoke the next day at Oxford. The day after at Pontotoc he spoke for two hours despite apparent ill health.
Writing to his friend Stephen Cocke, Davis explained he would not be able to speak at Athens, Monroe County, because of illness. Unable to continue the canvass, Davis was taken to the home of a Dr. Dozier where he stayed until well enough to make the journey back to "Brierfield." Davis had been scheduled to appear at the barbecue in his honor at Pontotoc on August 18. Newspaper notices during the last part of August confirmed his serious illness; not until September 11 was he reported en route to his home, where he arrived on September 14.

Davis was subject to frequent, severe attacks—very possibly of recurrent malaria—that brought on painful inflammation of his eyes, especially the left one, which eventually became blind. This particular bout with illness was described by his wife Varina.

The exposure to the sun had its usual effect upon Mr. Davis, and he was stricken down with fever which brought on acute inflammation of his left eye and threatened ulceration of the cornea. Fortune favored him in his being taken ill at the house of kind and self-abnegatory friends, who nursed him with care and skill until he was well enough to reach . . . the nearest landing on the river. . . . he came home, a shadow of his former self, and not able to bear a ray of light upon either eye. For three weeks he slept all day, arose after sundown, and walked through the house all night.

On September 23 Davis wrote to his friend and physician, Samuel A. Cartwright of New Orleans that "the inflammation has greatly
subsided, and the sight of that eye which was entirely blind has been partially restored. There is still great irritability," but, Davis added, his "general health has so much improved [that] I suffer little except from extreme debility . . . ."46 Not until October 21 was Davis reported canvassing again. After such a long illness, his effectiveness and appearance on the stump were impaired by weakness, weight loss, and the necessity of wearing green goggles.47

During Davis' confinement in September a rapid succession of events altered the course of the State-Rights party and catapulted Davis to its leadership. Six weeks before the election, Davis became the gubernatorial candidate of his party. The race, he later judged, was "a forlorn hope, especially as my health had been impaired by labors in the summer canvass, and there was not time before the approaching election to make such a canvass as would be needed to reform the ranks of the Democracy."48 Nevertheless, it was his duty.
MISSISSIPPI, 1851:

September election for delegates to November convention:

- Democratic State Rights Party
- Union Party
CHAPTER IV

A FORLORN HOPE: THE FALL CAMPAIGN

The Unionists won forty-one of fifty-six counties in September. Only a concentrated group of Mississippi's south-central counties, excluding all those bordering the Mississippi River, gave majorities to Democratic State-Rights candidates. The defeated party was shocked; its leaders had been "sanguine of success." Despite his reservations about Quitman's appeal, Jefferson Davis had remained confident although not anticipating a wide margin of victory. It was now expected by most Democrats that when the November convention met—Unionists outnumbering State-Rights delegates five to one—it would vote acquiescence or tacit approval of the Compromise. Opinions varied on how the Democratic campaign should be continued. Some leaders believed the Compromise question was completely settled by the election and urged that the party stand on old Democratic principles, including in their campaign an attack on the "whiggery" of the Union party. In late September one Democratic paper even claimed that the Whigs hated Foote and had been using him as the English had used Benedict Arnold. Mississippi's leading Democratic newspaper, the Jackson Mississippian and State Gazette, was quick to interpret the defeat in September as not in any way foreshadowing the results in Novem-
ber. The returns merely showed that the people of Mississippi opposed disunion and the convention they were persuaded would promote it. In truth, the Democratic State-Rights party had never called for disunion—though some of its members advocated this step—only for some expression of resistance to the Compromise to be decided on by a southern congress. Democrats claimed that the Unionists, by charging their opponents with secessionism, 'had thus won votes out of fear or had made the issue submission or secession, a choice many voters would not make at all. Certainly not as many votes were cast in this election as in the preceding state election. Indeed, the number of voters who apparently chose not to vote approached the number of votes of the Unionist majority. The Mississippian further claimed that the outcome in September did not reflect the attitude of the state toward the Compromise: Mississippi still opposed it.

Interpreting the defeat in September as a popular renunciation of his views and no doubt fearful of a crushing personal defeat in November, John Quitman resigned as the State-Rights gubernatorial candidate on September 6. Quitman withdrew his candidacy out of "respect for the apparent decision of the people" and a sense of "duty to the noble and patriotic party, who are struggling to maintain the rights of the South against Northern aggression, and to preserve our institutions from the
fatal effects of consolidating all power in the Federal Government . . . ."9 The Democratic State-Rights committee created to fill any vacancies which might occur in the ticket immediately turned to Jefferson Davis to lead the party. Local conventions had taken place in only Madison and Attala counties for the purpose of suggesting a new gubernatorial candidate when the committee announced on September 16, 1851, that Davis had been nominated by the "people and the Democratic press of the whole State . . . ."10 At "Brierfield" the next day Davis wrote out his acceptance, which Democratic leaders had already assumed. He accepted the nomination because

my whole political life has been devoted to the Democratic cause, and the maintenance of those principles in which originated the party of strict construction, and faithful adherence to the Constitution. It is not in an hour when clouds have darkened our fortune that I can refuse any poor service it is still in my power to render. That cause, and those principles, seem more dear to me now than in the day of their triumph.11

Nowhere in Davis' letter is there an affirmation of expected victory, although he promised to campaign extensively and vigorously as soon as his health permitted it. Davis recognized the nomination required certain sacrifices; one of them was his seat in the Senate, to which he had been elected to serve a six-year term from March 4, 1851. On September 23 he sent his resignation to Acting Governor John I. Guion. Regardless of the outcome of the election, Davis viewed this step as a
necessity: if he were elected, he could not hold both offices; if he were not, it would mean he no longer had the confidence of his constituents and therefore could not serve as their senator.  

The question of resignation became a major issue in the campaign after Davis' nomination. In the same situation as Davis, Foote had yet to resign. Shortly after the Union convention in May, a statement was circulated that Foote had "done nobly in sacrificing his place as Senator, to bear the State Union (Whig) banner . . . ." Despite periodic rumors to the contrary, however, his resignation had not been received by the governor; and after Davis' prompt resignation, Foote met increasingly harsh criticism from the Democratic camp. His reticence had scarcely gone unnoticed before; for example, in Natchez in July Davis pledged that "he [Davis] should never wait to be torn from his Senatorial seat by a legislative drag chain!" Foote was finally compelled to publish an explanation: he fully intended to resign before the November election but had not done so earlier because he believed Acting Governor Guion would appoint a secessionist to fill his seat with "most mischievous consequences." Now Foote planned to entrust the Lauderdale County delegates to the November convention with his commission "to be disposed of as the convention, in its wisdom, might decide to be right and proper under all
the circumstances of the case." Many Mississippians did not believe it was in the least "right and proper" for the convention to decide Foote's successor. "What that Convention has to do with his commission," Acting Governor Guion wrote, "I am at a loss to conceive . . . ." Guion publicly announced he had no intention of using his appointive power as chief executive to fill vacancies in the Senate. Since he had become governor not by popular will but on the resignation of Governor Quitman, Guion felt obliged to wait for the governor elected in November to make appointments, "reflecting truly the popular feeling, and truly representing the people of the State, until the legislature shall make a choice." 17

In addition to designating his successor, Foote assumed, along with most Unionists and no doubt a good many Democrats, that the November convention would do little more than pass a resolution formalizing Mississippi's acquiescence in the Compromise. Davis envisioned the convention's tasks as somewhat less perfunctory. It was left to this convention, he believed, "and the subsequent action of the people upon its proceedings, [to] fully determine the position of the State on its Federal relations." 18 Thus, in an address written September 25, 1851, Davis claimed his campaign would not be waged on the Compromise issue, which was now for the convention to decide. Rather, in the last paragraphs of the address, he submitted a platform of domestic policy. He called
for the building of schools on land set aside for that purpose and the reclamation of swampland for cultivation; he encouraged manufacturing and urged railroad construction by "voluntary contributions" supplemented with whatever state funds were available without increased taxes. 19

But before concluding with this policy, Davis reviewed extensively, "yet too briefly for a full exposition," his course in the House and Senate with regard to the issues leading to the crisis in state-federal relationships brought on by the Compromise of 1850. He began with a review of events of the mid-1840s. Reluctant political bargaining which characterized Davis in his efforts to keep his party, the South, and the nation together is evident in his expressed stand on the treaty with Mexico by which United States territory was greatly increased. He particularly objected to that treaty because of the boundary line it set up; but when his amendment to change the boundary failed, he voted for the treaty. The alternative, continuation of the struggle with destruction of the Mexican government as a probable outcome, was a greater evil. He judged then that repeated attempts to pass Wilmot Proviso doctrines--and the passage of the Oregon bill--revealed northern intentions to keep southern slaveholders out of new territory.

This sectional issue climaxed with the passage in 1850 of the compromise measures. Davis believed the admission of Cali-
fornia permanently upset the balance of representation from slaveholding and non-slaveholding states; the North had forced aside the practice of admitting new states in pairs to maintain that balance. Furthermore, adjustment of the Texas boundary line was a bad bargain for Texas and for the South. Texas gave up for ten million dollars—the alternative, Davis says, was coercion by the United States Army and Navy—land which had formed a part of the state at the time of annexation. Not only would additional funds now be required to maintain territorial government there, but the legal protection of slavery was lost in the relinquished area. That slavery could not long exist in any area without legal protection was equally known to Webster, the Senate, and the South; thus, congressional failure to provide such laws in the territories effectually prohibited the institution there. Davis was even more explicit in his objections to the provision of the Compromise abolishing the slave trade in the District of Columbia. The new law discriminated against a kind of property; it described a crime "hitherto unknown to the United States" and unprovided for in the Constitution. By depriving owners of their property in slaves without compensation, if intent to sell that property could be proved, it violated the Fifth Article of the Constitution which states that private property cannot be taken for public use without just compensation. No public use, Davis noted, required the confiscation of slave
property. Further, abolishing the slave trade went against "the great principle of free trade within the States." Behind this measure then was the surge of abolitionism. Leaving the question of slavery to the discretion of Congress set a dangerous precedent: it paved the way for the usurpation of other powers heretofore exercised by the states.

In response to this threat of federal consolidation of power, no party in Mississippi, Davis recalled, ever advocated the secession of the state. Indeed, the fifteenth resolution of the State-Rights party asserted the right of secession but pronounced such a step inexpedient and inadvisable. Yet Missisipians had not approved and did not now approve such provisions as the Compromise contained. The Mississippi convention of 1849 as well as the Southern Address coauthored by her representatives in January 1850 opposed specifically, for example, federal tampering with slavery in the District of Columbia. The September vote meant, therefore, that the people "will bear the evil . . . and shape their future action by the course of future events." As an obedient servant of the people, Davis vowed to abide by this decision. Underscoring the theme of constitutionalism which consistently characterized his political philosophy, Davis stated his growing fear that "the government of our fathers would no longer exist, save as a memory and a name."

Although printed instead of delivered by the ailing Davis,
the address was an eloquent and forceful statement of his party's position. His written arguments, lavishly buttressed with precedents, revealed the depth of learning that so impressed Davis' audiences. Tremendous faith in this ability, in Davis' leadership, and in his reputation had prompted Democratic party leaders to tender the nomination to him immediately, knowing very well that his canvassing would be limited by ill health. Ethelbert Barksdale, editor of the Mississippian, had written Davis on September 19 to assure him that many Democrats had not gone to the polls in September and that the Union ticket had not received a majority of possible votes in the state. He asked for Davis' views on how the campaign should be conducted and requested an address from Davis which Barksdale promised to print "by thousands in extra-form . . . ." To spare him unnecessary efforts, party leaders prepared a statement for Davis to issue. Impatient with an address not his own, Davis had dictated his major campaign statement on September 25 to his wife.

While Davis proposed in this address, ostensibly at least, to shift the emphasis of his campaign to domestic policy, the Union party had gleaned too much success from using the secession issue to abandon it after the September election. Threatened by Davis' personal popularity and the popular approval of his resignation, they feared the State-Rights ticket could win back former Democratic supporters as well as voters who had stayed
away from the polls. A broadened campaign strategy was needed, and Foote met the need by launching into a defense of his party and himself on the ground that he represented the true Democratic tradition of Mississippi. At a Unionist victory celebration in Jackson on October 9 and 10, he accused former Governors Quitman and Brown of having broken up the old Democratic party by the formation of the State-Rights Association advocating disunion as a means of resistance to the Compromise. The "friends of the Union" had been organized in defense of the Constitution and the laws. Foote further stated he had no doubt the old Democratic party would have won in September and would still have been winning if it had not been split apart by the "managers of the hour" capitalizing on opposition to the compromise measures in the heat of that struggle.

Repeating this interpretation of political history in Vicksburg on October 21, Foote asserted once again that the special legislative session which censured him for his votes on the Compromise had been either ignorant or reckless. He did not believe, moreover, that Davis' nomination expressed the wish of the Democrats of Mississippi since only two local meetings—and those under the most rabid State-Rights leadership, according to Foote—had been held before the nomination was announced. Foote accused the opposition of changing fronts in an attempt to mask their secessionist proclivities. The next day Foote was
reported in New Orleans (he had no doubt taken a boat from Vicksburg) preparing to canvass across Mississippi's seashore counties.\textsuperscript{29} By contrast, on October 21 Davis had left Jackson on a northeastward trek through Mississippi, reaching Columbus in Lowndes County four days later.\textsuperscript{30} After a brief tour of the coastal area, Foote's canvass proceeded north into the eastern counties also, during which time he allegedly circulated rumors of Davis' death.

From all indications, Foote espoused an "all's-fair-in-politics-and-campaigning" policy. Certainly the mudslinging that had heightened rivalry during the summer campaign did not cease in the fall. In addition to the charge of desiring to break up the Union, Davis was accused of aspiring to lead a southern confederacy.\textsuperscript{31} Aware of his opponent's avowed reputation of party loyalty, Foote taunted Davis for lukewarm support in 1848 of Democratic presidential nominee Lewis Cass.\textsuperscript{32} More venomously, in Woodville Foote pronounced himself the true Democratic nominee and called Davis "a traitor to his country, and as blood-thirsty as Robespierre, himself—a changeling, .. a renegade . . ."\textsuperscript{33} And Foote predicted that Davis' election would bring a dissolution of the Union.\textsuperscript{34} The threats and promises of political combat were not absent from Democratic State-Rights artillery. But perhaps because of his innate reserve, Davis' vituperations were more subtle. In his major campaign address of September 25, Davis did not once refer to his
opponent by name. In his review of congressional issues through the passage of the Compromise, Davis remarked only on the inconsistencies of "my colleague." In 1848, for example, Foote endorsed the doctrine that slavery must have legal protection to exist; in 1850 he voted against Davis' amendment to provide such protection in the territories. In recalling the campaign, Davis claims he "published [Foote] as constitutionally a liar." But most of the mud slung in Davis' behalf came from other Democrats and especially the Democratic press. The Jackson Mississippian promised that Foote's election would be heralded by the Whigs as their victory, that abolitionists would look upon it as an invitation, and that it would mean Mississippi had cast off her "ablest and truest defender . . . ." Davis himself announced he would consider Foote's election as nothing short of a condemnation of his own course.

Soon after Davis' nomination, Foote had proposed a joint canvass, which Davis declined because of his health. The decision was probably to his advantage. Foote's audacity and imagination had been expanded by months of continuous campaigning. His confidence prescribed that every audience be "an applauding multitude, ready to sustain him . . . ." The "garrulous little man" spared no oratorical device. In contrast, Davis' usual precise, formal speeches with their strong appeal to reason reflected his military training and an inborn dignity. When
Davis spoke, the ranting resonance typical of southern hustings was absent; his voice was usually calm, but almost spellbinding in its fine modulation. "His speeches were legal briefs, except when he touched on northern aggression and southern cowardice and submission." Having been ill during half the period of his candidacy, Davis was forced to write more than he spoke during the campaign. When he did begin canvassing, his appearance was less appealing, and he lacked the stamina essential for stump debating. Although of dubious overall benefit, a joint canvass with Foote would have precluded rumors of Davis' death which reportedly kept a number of Democrats away from the polls.41

The election took place on November 3 and 4, 1851. 57,717 votes were cast--1,600 more than had been cast in the gubernatorial election two years before, over 8,000 more than had been counted in September. Foote had not lost support; indeed, he had gained some, but Davis was beaten by only 999 votes, compared to a Unionist majority of 7,500 in September. Other Democratic candidates fared much worse. The Unionists gained a majority of the Mississippi House and won the seats of three of Mississippi's four Democratic representatives to the United States Congress. Only Albert G. Brown, the most vociferous State-Rights advocate among the four, was returned by his "piney woods" district which, as in September, proved
the state's center of Democratic strength.\textsuperscript{42} Despite defeat, Davis' gain, in so little time and with such disadvantages, was spectacular. In September the northern half of Mississippi had been almost solidly Unionist. Among the counties gained by Davis in November were Marshall and Yalobusha in the far north and Lowndes, Winston, Leake, Newton, and Lauderdale counties in the east. All of the Mississippi River counties again went Unionist except for Jefferson.\textsuperscript{43} Davis' candidacy was credited with reducing the Unionist majority. His contemporary Reuben Davis as well as other friends and most future chroniclers agree that a Democratic victory would have been assured in the governor's race had Davis been nominated earlier and had he not been sick. Many of Davis' supporters in fact considered Foote's slim margin a personal victory for Davis that would only increase his reputation.\textsuperscript{44} Nevertheless, Davis had lost the race, and he was humiliated. The sting was sharpened because of the narrowness of defeat, the sacrifices made, and the crowing taunts of Foote who ridiculed his beaten opponent at every opportunity as he made his way back to Washington to claim his Senate seat.

For Jefferson Davis the partisan and personal defeat brought both bitterness and melancholy. More significantly, Davis' optimism that the sectional conflict would be solved was now shadowed by doubt. In a letter of November 22, 1851,
he analyzed that a coalition of Whigs and rejected Democrats had risen to power in Mississippi through the "false issue" of disunionism. And he lamented that from his station in private life, away "from the exciting strife of politicians we more profitably look on the whirl of their bubbles, and perhaps better than they see when and why their bubbles will burst. As the spectator detests the errors of the player in games where the happiness of a people and the permanence—of a government are not the stakes."
MISSISSIPPI, 1851:

November election for governor:

- Democratic State Rights Party
- Union Party
CHAPTER V

THE EXCITING STRIFE OF POLITICIANS: EPILOGUE

For Henry Stuart Foote campaigning did not end with victory at the polls. Neither did victory bring his immediate resignation from the United States Senate; it would be effective January 8, 1852, and no sooner. As the governor's term expired at the November election, Mississippi's legislature designated James Whitfield interim governor, and Whitfield promptly appointed Democrat John J. McRae to Davis' seat. Formerly speaker of the Mississippi House, McRae was an especially odious choice as far as the Whigs were concerned because he had only recently written a speech "showing up the miserable trickery and changings of Gen. Foote." Thus, perhaps Foote's anxiety that a Democratic successor would be named was justified. Or, perhaps, considering both Foote's narrow victory and his propensity for shifting with the prevailing political winds, he was compelled to return to Washington in order to affirm and promote the Unionist cause in Mississippi and, in turn, to ascertain other Unionists' reactions and directions.

Regardless, by November 14 Foote was in New Orleans on his way to the national capital, where he arrived November 26. The legislative session began December 1, and Foote lost no
time making known his presence. During his brief stay— he left the Senate before Christmas—Foote introduced two resolutions: one that a reception be given for Louis Kossuth, exiled Hungarian patriot and revolutionary; another that the compromise measures passed in the preceding session "be recognized as a definite adjustment and settlement of the distracting questions growing out of the system of domestic slavery . . . ." Unofficially Foote was making remarks about his opposition in the recent campaign that reverberated to the seclusion of "Brierfield" plantation to which Davis had retired.

Disheartened by defeat, as is shown in his letter to John M. Clayton on November 22, Davis had returned to the relatively peaceful life of a planter. But before many weeks passed, he was again involved with the campaign which had supposedly ended at the polls. Newspapers, of course, still carried articles about the state elections and particularly about the gubernatorial candidates. In keeping with his penchant for the scrupulous presentation of fact and desirous of his own vindication, Davis could not let either Foote's statements in Washington or sundry erroneous published articles go unanswered. An unauthorized campaign biography of Davis had been widely circulated in October, and, although Davis believed it had been written and published by a political friend, the inter-
pretation of Davis' stand on popular sovereignty was incorrect. Davis felt compelled to recount his support of Lewis Cass in the presidential election of 1848. In a letter to the editors of the Jackson Mississippian on December 27, 1851, Davis reiterated his interpretation of Cass's Nicholson letter. What Cass had meant and later admitted was that he believed the first occupants of a territory should decide the sanction or abolition of slavery there. Davis knew this to be the meaning and in 1848 publicly announced his disagreement with it. In Davis' view only when the territorial inhabitants had organized and framed a state constitution could a decision—fair to all the prospective state's citizens—be made on the question of slavery. This was the view of the Democratic party, and as a faithful Democrat Davis had campaigned for Cass believing that Cass's "opinion . . . as to the power of the inhabitants of the Territories would have no official connection with the office of President . . . " and allowing party loyalty to come before personal affection for Zachary Taylor. 7

Davis felt obliged, moreover, to answer Foote's "slanderous misrepresentations against a large party in the State and therefore against the character of the State . . . ." 8 And Davis suspected Foote of encouraging locally published misrepresentations of Davis' past actions. In a letter of February 16 Davis stated his views of the Wilmot Proviso as
well as generally defended his course in the Senate. More specifically, he recounted Foote's statements of intended resignation which had caused considerable consternation during the campaign and were now causing more. Further, Foote's return to the Senate in December really ignited the related issue of mileage payment which had been brought out periodically but not so emphatically in the campaign.

Since Foote had claimed, Davis noted, that no one knew better than Davis what importance Foote's presence had in the Senate in December, Davis proceeded to evaluate his former colleague's achievements. The resolution, which Foote later withdrew, to hold a reception for Kossuth, Davis "did not consider [to be] the accomplishment of an important object..." Davis judged Foote's "finality policy," the resolution to affirm the Compromise, as a potential agitation of the issue and as useless in clarifying the compromise measures. Therefore, Davis concluded, the "important object" may have been to collect payment for mileage and for his days in the Senate. Foote would receive from the United States government eight dollars per day in the Senate and eight dollars for every twenty miles traveled to and from Washington. In November various newspaper articles had appeared pointing to the discrepancies between mileage claimed by Davis for the preceding session and that claimed by Foote who lived
in Hinds County about fifty miles from Davis. For traveling 3,970 miles Davis was to receive $1,588; for his claim of 5,160 miles Foote got $2,064. Part of the difference was due to Foote's acceptance of "constructive mileage." After the second session of the Thirty-first Congress adjourned on March 3, 1851, a special session was called, lasting from March 5 to March 23; the legislators were given the option of putting in a claim for travel expenses that would have been incurred. Davis had refused the option, which made Foote's account look even worse and exasperated many Mississippian. Suspicious of Foote's business in Washington as well as of his finances, the Natchez Mississippi Free Trader blasted Foote for "those fat slices cut from Uncle Sam's bacon for constructive journeys, and constructive services [which] constitute the pap which Fillmore ladles out to the faithful servants of his administration, who do his rough work of deceiving and humbugging the people." 

In Mississippi the convention called at Quitman's urging the year before to consider the federal-state relationship convened on November 10, with eighty-one of the ninety-eight delegates being Unionists. The majority passed a set of resolutions that reviewed the compromise measures, affirmed Mississippi's disapproval of them, yet stated the Compromise would be considered "a permanent adjustment of this sectional
controversy, so long as it is faithfully observed and enforced in all its features." The resolutions further stated that the federal-state relationship was unshaken. And they denied the right of secession, equating it with civil revolution. A resort to some sort of resistance would be justified, however, on certain grounds, all of which concerned slavery and all of which were listed in the Union party platform of May 1851. The last of the resolutions proclaimed the limitations of the convention's legal powers and stated that a general referendum on its proceedings was unnecessary. The minority resolutions, drawn up by the three State-Rights members of the committee on resolutions, are more significant than their support among the delegates would indicate, since these resolutions presented the views of at least a large minority of the state. The minority resolutions affirmed the doctrine of rights reserved to the states, of the state's right to judge federal actions, and of the state's right to secede. The resolutions further stated that the September election had indeed signified Mississippi's acquiescence in the Compromise.

Less than two months after this convention adjourned, the state Democratic convention met in Jackson. Davis' return from the melancholy of defeat is evident in an address he delivered before the convention. At some length Davis recounted
the views he had expounded during the campaign from the time of the nominating convention the preceding June. The dominant theme of the speech, however, was a call for reunification of the Democratic party and an assurance that it would come about. Allowing his personal animosity to show, Davis termed Foote a demagogue who had "been thrown to the surface like dregs from the bottom of the pool, by such violent agitation, [with] mingled heterogeneous elements, and like them must sink to the bottom whenever quiet is restored." By reviewing Democratic principles, especially the doctrines of strict construction and state rights, Davis appealed to old-line Democrats who had joined the Unionist camp to return to their party. He reinforced his argument with a critical appraisal of Fillmore's administration. Concentrating his criticism on the President's lack of response to the Cuban expedition the previous September, Davis compared Fillmore's course with that of Taylor, who had satisfactorily handled a similar situation in June; and he went on to contrast the treatment of Cuban patriot Lopez with that accorded the exiled Kossuth. In sum, the speech was an assertion of confidence in the party and in himself.

The State-Rights movement, conceived in fear for the destruction of what the South considered her most essential institution, had failed in Mississippi in 1850-1851 because
it had failed in the South. The position of southern leaders like Davis was that if the South united to resist the Compromise by threat of sectional secession, the North would halt encroachments on southern constitutional rights. For Davis especially, the constitutionality of this strategy was crucial. He had declared that the right of secession and therefore of revolution was inalienable; by considering even these steps with regard to the United States Constitution, he never waived that document but adhered to it as the perpetual point of reference and to its preservation as the ultimate concern.

As enthusiasm largely declined in all other southern states except South Carolina, the choices of Mississippi in the elections of 1851 were reduced to acquiescence in the Compromise or separate action with South Carolina. Success of the latter course was improbable for several reasons. The Whig party in Mississippi was still strong. In view of the general prosperity being enjoyed, separate action seemed too dangerous a risk. Further, southern cultural development had not matured. In 1851 there was not the self-conscious identity of "southerner"; Mississippians still called themselves Americans. Although the Democrats increasingly disclaimed disunion, Whig accusations of advocacy brought about a Democratic defeat.

The Compromise struggle served to test the economic,
social, cultural, and, especially, the political posture of Mississippi and of the South. Mississippi Democrats turned confidently to Jefferson Davis for leadership in the face of partisan odds and in spite of his physical disabilities. His defeat did not destroy that confidence. A decade later the whole South possessed it.
NOTES

CHAPTER I  1-17

1 Congressional Globe, 29 Cong., 1 Sess., 1211 (August 8, 1846); Chaplain W. Morrison, Democratic Politics and Sec¬

2 Congressional Globe, 29 Cong., 1 Sess., 1217 (August 8, 1846).

3 Morrison, Democratic Politics, 18-19.

4 Cleo Hearon, "Mississippi and the Compromise of 1850," Mississippi Historical Society, Publications, XIV (1914), 17.

5 Ibid.

6 Morrison, Democratic Politics, 38-39; Hearon, "Missis¬
sippi," 24-25.


8 Davis to Charles J. Searles, September 19, 1847, Washington Daily Union, October 12, 1847.

9 Ibid.

10 Quoted in Morrison, Democratic Politics, 87.

11 Ibid., 88-89.

12 Quoted by Davis in Davis to [Ethelbert] Barksdale and [F. C.] Jones, December 27, 1851, Jackson Mississippian and State Gazette, January 9, 1852; see Part 2, Item 10.


Taylor to Davis, April 20, 1848, Society Collection (Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia).

Davis to Barksdale and Jones, December 27, 1851; see Part 2, Item 10.


Rainwater, Mississippi: Storm Center, 17; Craven, Growth of Southern Nationalism, 60.


Nevins, Ordeal of the Union, I, 248; Craven, Growth of Southern Nationalism, 63-64.

Craven, Growth of Southern Nationalism, 64.

Quoted in Hearon, "Mississippi," 65.

Ibid., 65-66.

Ibid., 65.


Craven, Coming of the Civil War, 251-61; Craven, Growth of Southern Nationalism, 72; Nevins, Ordeal of the Union, I, 264-66.

31 Craven, *Coming of the Civil War*, 258; Craven, *Growth of Southern Nationalism*, 82.

32 Davis to Searles, September 19, 1847; Hearon, "Mississippi," 139.


35 Nevins, *Ordeal of the Union*, I, 318.


CHAPTER II

1 Hearon, "Mississippi," 146; Woodville (Miss.) Republican, October 22, 1850.


3 Yazoo (Miss.) Democrat, November 6, 1850.

4 B. D. Nabors and others to Davis, [November 18, 1850], and Davis to Nabors and others, November 19, 1850, in Rowland, ed., *Jefferson Davis, Constitutionalist*, I, 597-600.

5 Davis to [James Blair and others], November 22, 1850, Jackson *Mississippian and State Gazette*, January 3, 1851.
6Ibid.

7Hearon, "Mississippi," 173-75.

8Ibid., 175n.

9Oxford (Miss.) Organizer, November 23, 1850.


11Oxford Organizer, November 23, 1850; Vicksburg Weekly Whig, November 27, 1850.

12Port Gibson Herald and Correspondent, December 6, 1850.


15Davis' resistance to the admission of California continued through his argument against accepting the credentials of California's senators; see Congressional Globe, 31 Cong., 1 Sess., 1791-92 (September 10, 1850); Rowland, ed., Jefferson Davis, Constitutionalist, I, 600, 603.


18Claiborne, Life and Correspondence, II, 56.


22 Ibid.; Broussard, "Governor John A. Quitman," 114; Claiborne, Life and Correspondence, II, 79.

23 Vicksburg Tri-Weekly Sentinel, March 11, 1851; Broussard, "Governor John A. Quitman," 114.

24 Congressional Globe, 31 Cong., 2 Sess., 597-98 (February 18, 1851).

25 Ibid., 599.

26 Davis was a member of the Committee on Military Affairs; ibid., 599.

27 Horatio J. Harris to Davis, April 17, 1851, Jefferson Davis Association (Rice University, Houston, Texas).

28 For examples of the correspondence, see Claiborne, Life and Correspondence, II, 36-40, 133-34, 135-36.


32 For Davis' announced speaking schedule May 10-June 13, see Natchez Mississippi Free Trader, May 14, 1851; for his announced schedule May 17-June 18, see Jackson Mississippian and State Gazette, May 16, 1851; Vicksburg Weekly Whig, May 14, 1851.
Jackson Mississippian and State Gazette, May 9, 1851.

For confirmation of appearances mentioned in text, see Jackson Mississippian and State Gazette, May 16, 23, 30, 1851.

Rowland, ed., Jefferson Davis, Constitutionalist, II, 70-82.

Vicksburg Tri-Weekly Sentinel, June 12, 1851.

Their names were linked, for example, by the Democratic Jackson Mississippian and State Gazette, January 10, 1851, and Vicksburg Tri-Weekly Sentinel, June 10, 1851; Vicksburg Weekly Whig, June 18, 1851.

See Appendix, Document 1, for the complete Union party platform; Port Gibson Herald and Correspondent, May 16, 1851.


For a discussion of Davis' health in 1851, see Part 2, Item 6, n. 3.

Reuben Davis, Recollections of Mississippi and Mississippians (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Co., 1891), 316.


R. Davis, Recollections, 317.

Washington Daily National Intelligencer, June 3, 1851.

See Appendix, Document 2, for the complete Democratic State-Rights party platform.

R. Davis, Recollections, 317.
CHAPTER III


4 Davis to James A. Pearce, August 22, 1852, in V. Davis, *Memoir*, I, 471-72; Winston, *High Stakes*, 91, 93; Davis to the People of Mississippi, September 25, 1851, Jackson Mississippi and State Gazette, October 3, 1851; see Part 2, Item 7.

5 Davis to David L. Yulee, July 18, 1851, David L. Yulee Papers (Philip Keys Yonge Memorial Library of Florida History, University of Florida, Gainesville); see Part 2, Item 1.

6 Scarcely a week after the nomination, for example, such an announcement appeared in the New Orleans *Daily Picayune*, June 24, 1851.

7 Hearon, "Mississippi," 203-204.


9 Ibid., I, 492; Henry S. Foote, *The Bench and Bar of the South and Southwest* (St. Louis: Soule, Thomas & Wentworth, 1876), 86.


13 Jackson Mississippian and State Gazette, July 4, 1851; the first eleven engagements (the number apparently kept) of the announced joint canvass were Yazoo City (July 7), Benton (July 8), Lexington (July 9), Bowling Green (July 10), Shongalo (July 11), Carrollton (July 12), Grenada (July 14), Coffeeville (July 15), Charleston (July 16), Sledgeville (July 17), and Panola (July 18), ibid.


15 Hearon, "Mississippi," 208.

16 J[ohn] A. Quitman to the People of Mississippi, July 19, 1851, Jackson Mississippian and State Gazette, August 1, 1851.


18 Vicksburg Tri-Weekly Sentinel, June 19, 1851; Woodville Republican, June 17, 1851.

19 Hearon, "Mississippi," 33; Nevins, Ordeal of the Union, I, 365.


21 Davis to B. D. Nabors and others, November 19, 1850.

22 Davis to the People of Vicksburg, [July 24, 1851], Vicksburg Weekly Whig, July 30, 1851; see Part 2, Item 3.

23 Port Gibson Herald and Correspondent, July 8, 1851.

24 Davis to the People of Raymond, [August 5, 1851], Jackson Mississippian and State Gazette, August 8, 1851; see Part 2, Item 4.

25 Davis to the People of Vicksburg, [July 24, 1851]; see Part 2, Item 3.

26 Davis to the People of Raymond, [August 5, 1851]; see Part 2, Item 4.

27 Woodville Republican, July 8, 1851.

28 Ibid., June 3, 1851.

30 Quoted in Natchez Mississippi Free Trader, November 5, 1851.

31 Winston, High Stakes, 92.

32 R. Davis, Recollections, 314.


34 Natchez Mississippi Free Trader, June 4, 1851; for a discussion of the relations between Davis and Quitman during the Mexican War, see Henry S. Foote, Casket of Reminiscences (Washington, D.C.: Chronicle Publishing Co., 1874), 350-51; early in the campaign of 1851 Foote reminded Quitman of his earlier difficulties with Davis. Ibid., 354.

35 J[ohn] A. Quitman to Eliza T. Quitman, February 20, 1847, Quitman Family Papers (Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill).

36 Davis to Yulee, July 18, 1851; see Part 2, Item 1.

37 Winston, High Stakes, 37.

38 Davis to Howell Hinds, September 30, 1856 (Unidentified newspaper clipping, n.d., Elizabeth O’Kelley Kerrigan Miscellany [Jefferson Davis Association, Rice University, Houston, Texas]).


40 For example, see their discussion over conferring the rank of lieutenant general on Winfield Scott in the Congressional Globe, 31 Cong., 2 Sess., Appendix, 152-54 (February 12, 1851).

41 Davis to Yulee, July 18, 1851; see Part 2, Item 1.

42 A Dr. Dozier is said to have been a classmate of Davis' at Transylvania University. William A. Evans, "Jefferson Davis, His Diseases and His Doctors," reprinted from The Mississippi Doctor, XX (June 1942), 4. The physician who attended Davis
was possibly Dr. William B. Dozier, originally of Morganfield, Kentucky, who is listed in the medical class of Transylvania in 1822, the year before Davis entered the university. *A Catalogue of the Officers and Students of Transylvania University* (Lexington, Ky.: T. Smith, 1822), 7.

43Evans, "Jefferson Davis, His Diseases," 4.

44*Natchez Mississippi Free Trader*, August 20, 1851; Vicksburg *Tri-Weekly Sentinel*, September 16, 1851.

45V. Davis *Memoir*, I, 469.

46Davis to Samuel A. Cartwright, September 23, 1851, Samuel A. Cartwright and Family Papers (Department of Archives and Manuscripts, Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge); see Part 2, Item 6.


48Quoted in J. William Jones, *The Davis Memorial Volume; or Our Dead President, Jefferson Davis, and the World's Tribute to His Memory* (Dallas, Tex.: A. P. Foster & Co., 1890), 35.

CHAPTER IV 59-73

1See map on preceding page.


3Davis to Yulee, July 18, 1851; see Part 2, Item 1.


5Hearon, "Mississippi," 212-13; Natchez *Mississippi Free Trader*, September 24, 1851.

6Hearon, "Mississippi," 209n.


9J[ohn] A. Quitman to the Democratic State Rights Party of Mississippi, September 6, 1851, in Natchez Mississippi Free Trader, September 10, 1851.

10Jackson Mississippian and State Gazette, September 19, 26, 1851.

11Davis to E[ward] C. Wilkinson, September 17, 1851, in Jackson Mississippian and State Gazette, September 26, 1851; see Part 2, Item 5.


13Wilkinson (Miss.) Whig, May 16, 1851, quoted in Woodville Republican, May 20, 1851.

14His resignation is reported, for example, in the Washington Semi-Weekly Union, October 31, 1851.

15Natchez Mississippi Free Trader, October 29, 1851.

16Vicksburg Weekly Whig, October 22, 1851.


18Davis to the People of Mississippi, September 25, 1851, in Jackson Mississippian and State Gazette, October 3, 1851; see Part 2, Item 7.

19Ibid.

20Ibid.

21Ibid.

22Somewhat ironically, Foote and his brother-in-law R. P. Catlett were the founders in 1832 of the Mississippian, which in 1851 was probably Foote's severest critic among the press. Rowland, ed., *Encyclopedia*, I, 716.

23Barksdale to Davis, September 19, 1851, in Rowland, ed., *Jefferson Davis, Constitutionalist*, II, 83-84.
24 V. Davis, Memoir, I, 469-70.

25 Natchez Mississippi Free Trader, October 8, 1851.

26 Washington Semi-Weekly Union, October 24, 1851.

27 This is substantially what Foote had said in December 1850 when he presented the legislature's resolution of censure to the president of the United States Senate; see Rowland, ed., Jefferson Davis, Constitutionalist, I, 600-601.

28 Vicksburg Weekly Whig, October 22, 1851.

29 New Orleans Daily Picayune, October 22, 1851; the same issue reports that John Quitman was also staying at the Verandah Hotel in New Orleans.

30 Jackson Mississippian and State Gazette, October 24, 31, 1851.

31 A meeting at Columbia, South Carolina, in July had proposed Davis or Quitman for president of a southern confederacy. Port Gibson Herald and Correspondent, July 25, 1851.

32 Jackson Mississippian and State Gazette, October 24, 1851.

33 Woodville Republican, October 28, 1851.

34 Vicksburg Tri-Weekly Sentinel, November 1, 1851.

35 Davis to the People of Mississippi, September 25, 1851; see Part 2, Item 6.

36 Davis to Lewis Cruger, November 25, 1873 (Museum of the Confederacy, Richmond, Virginia).

37 Jackson Mississippian and State Gazette, October 31, 1851.

38 Natchez Mississippi Free Trader, September 10, 1851.

39 R. Davis, Recollections, 322.

40 Winston, High Stakes, 36-37, 94-95.

41 V. Davis, Memoir, I, 470.
After the November elections, the Unionists had sixty-three members in the Mississippi House of Representatives and eleven members in the Senate, while the Democrats had thirty-five in the House and twenty-one in the Senate. In the gubernatorial race, Davis received 28,359 votes, and Foote won 29,358. Hearon, "Mississippi," 215.

For a general view of Davis' gains, compare the maps following chapters III and IV.


CHAPTER V


Woodville Republican, December 9, 1851.

Vicksburg Tri-Weekly Sentinel, December 11, 1851.

New Orleans Daily Picayune, November 15, 1851; Washington Semi-Weekly Union, November 27, 1851.

Congressional Globe, 32 Cong., 1 Sess., 12, 140 (December 22, 1851); for Kossuth, see Part 2, Item 11, n. 18.

See Part 2, Item 9 for the letter to Clayton; Varina's feelings about the campaign results are revealed in a letter to her mother, March 4, 1852, when she says, "my heart never went with Jeff in politics or soldiering--so it does not feel sore on the subject of his defeat . . ."(Jefferson Davis Papers [University of Alabama Library Manuscripts Collection, Tuscaloosa]).

Davis to [Ethelbert] Barksdale and [F. C.] Jones, December
27, 1851; see Part 2, Item 10.

8 Davis to [Ethelbert] Barksdale and [F. C.] Jones, February 16, 1852, Jackson Mississippian and State Gazette, March 5, 1852; Davis had written a similar letter to Barksdale and Jones on February 2, 1852, Jackson Mississippian and State Gazette, February 6, 1852.

9 Davis to Barksdale and Jones, February 16, 1852.

10 Vicksburg Tri-Weekly Sentinel, December 11, 1851.


12 Natchez Mississippi Free Trader, November 19, 1851.

13 New Orleans Daily Picayune, November 23, 1851; for the Union party platform, see Appendix, Document 1.


15 Davis to the Democratic State Convention, January 8, 1852, Jackson Mississippian and State Gazette, January 16, 1852; see Part 2, Item 11.

16 Ibid.; for an account of the September filibustering expedition, see Part 2, Item 11, nn. 16, 17, 19.


18 Nevins, Ordeal of the Union, I, 376-77.
PART 2

SELECTED LETTERS AND SPEECHES

CONCERNING THE CAMPAIGN
EDITORIAL METHOD

The editorial method used throughout this theses corresponds generally to that of the first volume of The Papers of Jefferson Davis.

Eleven items were selected from the period beginning with the Mississippi Democratic State-Rights Convention in June 1851 and ending with the State Democratic Convention in January 1852. These dates include the months of Davis' involvement in the gubernatorial race: first, campaigning for John Quitman, then waging his own campaign, and finally, suffering defeat.

Of the eleven items, nine are letters or speeches of Jefferson Davis and two are letters written by his wife. The Varina Davis letters were included because they furnish vital first-hand information of Davis' activities, and also because they add the very human dimension of a wife's concern for her husband's health and for their future. Three of the nine Jefferson Davis items are speeches given by Davis (at Vicksburg, Raymond, and the Democratic State Convention, respectively) and summarized in newspapers. In each case it is immediately apparent to the reader that the items are not verbatim reports; hence, they have received no special titles. When the newspaper articles from which these items were taken included editorial comments, the comments have been omitted. If the
comments were interspersed in the summary, their deletion is indicated by ellipses; comments before and after the speech summaries have been silently omitted.

Each of the edited items has been given a TITLE showing author and recipient or audience, as the case may be. The items have been placed in chronological order, and the ITEM NUMBER assigned is enclosed in brackets in the lower right hand corner of each page. The PLACE AND DATE LINE is printed as it appears on the source from which the item was transcribed. If, however, this information was found after the signature line, it has been shifted (without notation) to precede the salutation for the reader's convenience. Brackets around the date or place signify that this information was supplied by the editor; the source is explained in a footnote.

References to events, places, or things no readily identified by the reader are also explained in FOOTNOTES. All references to persons have received footnote numbers whenever identifying information could be ascertained; in most cases, a brief biographical sketch has been given. In the case of such national figures as Jefferson, Madison, and others, only a very general identification as well as birth and death dates are offered. The footnotes follow each item.

A foremost concern in the editing has been to present as nearly as possible in print reproductions of the items. No
changes have been made in SPELLING; errors or archaic spellings stand as they appear in the original without notation. Typesetters' errors in the items transcribed from newspapers, however, have been footnoted. When the author INTERLINED WORDS, these words appear in angle brackets; for example, in Item 1, "<when I returned>" was interlined in the holograph. When the author has struck out words, the words are preceded and followed by a hyphen to symbolize the strike-out and are enclosed in angle brackets; again, in Item 1, "<-just->."

Occasionally parts are illegible because of the condition of the manuscript. The editor has supplied in square brackets the missing words or letters whenever deducible from internal evidence. In Item 6, there are a number of tears in the paper, but many words—"[pla]ce" for example—could be completed. When this is not possible, the editor has indicated by a description in square brackets of the difficulty in the manuscript; for example, "[torn]." If necessary, further descriptions of difficulties in the original are given in footnotes. PUNCTUATION remains as in the original, except when it is redundant. If a dash follows a period, question mark, or exclamation point and precedes a capital letter, the dash is silently dropped; in other instances, it is retained. All items are reproduced in full; no parts of letters or speech summaries have been deleted.
Immediately following each item is an unnumbered DESCRIPTIVE FOOTNOTE which lists first the source from which the transcription was made. The abbreviation ALS denotes an autograph letter signed. When a letter or speech summary was taken from a newspaper, the phrase "Text from" precedes the newspaper source. Included in the descriptive footnote is the location of the original item and where the item has appeared in print, if indeed it has. Checking for printed transcriptions has been confined in most cases to these standard sources, other than newspapers read for the period: Varina Howell Davis, Jefferson Davis, Ex-President of the Confederate States of America: A Memoir (2 vols., New York: Belford Co., 1890); Dunbar Rowland, ed., Jefferson Davis, Constitutionalist: His Letters, Papers and Speeches (10 vols., Jackson: Mississippi Department of Archives and History, 1923); Hudson Strode, Jefferson Davis: American Patriot, 1808-1861 (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1955); Hudson Strode, Jefferson Davis: Private Letters, 1823-1889 (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1966). The descriptive footnote also furnishes the inside address when one appears in the original.

Citations of sources in the item footnotes are given in full if they have not appeared in Part 1 or previously in Part 2; otherwise a brief form of citation is used.
JEFFERSON DAVIS TO DAVID L. YULEE

P. O. Palmyra, 1 Missi

18th July, 1851

My dear Yulee,

I have never forgotten your kind request that I should write to you, and long since would have fulfilled my promise if it had been in my power to have written (-just-) what it was desirable to you to hear and to me to communicate. I have visited a large part of the state and have been constantly surprised to find how little the course and temper of the Majority in the last Congress was understood. Foote is as industrious as a bee, and as reckless of truth as himself. The parties in our state were (when I returned) in great confusion, Some for immediate secession, some for retaliation, some for making another attempt to unite the South by a Southern Congress, some for sullen acquiescence, some for avowing contentment if quiet was secured by the compromise, some for joining issue on the compromise bill, and holding all who opposed it responsible for such evils as they might imagine could have resulted from a different state of things if no action had been taken by the federal government. Under such circumstances the least favorable for a forward movement we have entered the canvass for

[Item 1]
members to the state convention. I feel confident that the Southern rights men will have a majority but I fear not large enough for a decided policy or for moral effect on our northern aggressors. Indeed the ground generally taken is that we must maintain our position reaffirm the declarations heretofore made, and wait for cooperation by other planting states. Foote is a Candidate for governor, Quitman opposes him, he cannot get the full vote of our party but circumstances required his nomination unless he would decline. That his vanity would not permit, though it was known to be the wish of a large majority of the convention which nominated him to run a different person, if Q. could be gotten rid of without seeming to disapprove of him. We have no doubt however of Quitman's election. There is a Yankee influence here as in other new states, when that is crushed we will stand on firmer ground, and unless we do crush it federalism will soon swallow up state rights and wholly change the nature of our government. I think Missi. will do enough to justify me in returning to the Senate, for I need hardly say to you that if she endorses the "compromise" I will seek that post of honor which is found in a private station.

Present me very specially and most kindly to Mrs. Yulee, also to my young friend Charly. Hoping to meet you both
next winter accept my best wishes for your prosperity and happiness— as ever your friend JEFFN. DAVIS
Located about twenty miles down the Mississippi from Vicksburg, Palmyra is the name originally given to the river bend, now a 22,000-acre island, on which the Davis plantations, "Hurricane" and "Brierfield" (see Item 2, n. 1) were established. Palmyra was first settled about 1800 by a small group of New Englanders; Davis' brother Joseph acquired the tract in 1818 from the government (Dennis Murphree, "Hurricane and Brierfield: The Davis Plantations," Journal of Mississippi History, IX [April 1947], 98-107; Joseph E. Davis to Andrew Johnson, September 22, 1865, Jefferson Davis v. J. H. D. Bowmar et al. [Mississippi Department of Archives and History, Jackson], 441).

Born in the West Indies, David Levy Yulee (1810-1886) attended school in Virginia before becoming the overseer on one of his father's plantations. Yulee then studied law in St. Augustine where he was admitted to the bar in 1836. He helped draw up the Florida constitution, was a territorial delegate to Congress, and a United States senator from 1845 to 1851. Defeated for re-election in 1851, Yulee returned to the Senate in 1855 serving until Florida's secession. As a leader in the southern movement, Yulee helped write the Southern Address. His advocacy of secession is thought to have
brought about his defeat in 1851. A member of the Confederate Congress, Yulee was imprisoned for a while after the war at Fort Pulaski; he died in New York City. (Dumas Malone, ed., Dictionary of American Biography [11 vols. in 22 parts, cited here in 22 vols., as in original edition, New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1936], XX, 638; hereafter cited as DAB; BDAC, 1862).

Born February 28, 1804, in Fauquier County, Virginia, Henry Stuart Foote was graduated from Washington College, read law and was admitted to the bar in Richmond before moving to Tuscumbia, Alabama, where he married Elizabeth Winters. In the winter of 1830-1831, Foote moved to Mississippi where he lived briefly in Jackson, Natchez, Vicksburg, and Raymond, and established a plantation at Clinton. Sometimes editing newspapers as well as practicing law, Foote with his brother-in-law R. P. Catlett founded the Jackson Mississippian in 1832. He was United States surveyor-general for the region south of Tennessee before becoming the state representative from Hinds County in 1839. After varied partisan affiliations (see Chapter III for a discussion of his party allegiances), Foote was elected as a Democrat to the United States Senate in 1847. In 1851 he ran successfully as a Unionist for governor, resigning his Senate seat two days before his inauguration (see Chapter V especially for a discussion of his resignation). While governor, Foote en-
couraged educational and industrial development and began a significant movement for railroad building. The struggle continued between State-Rights and Unionist parties; disgusted by declining support, Foote resigned as governor a few days before his term expired and emigrated to California. He ran unsuccessfully for the Senate on the Reform party ticket there. Returning to Mississippi briefly in 1858, Foote soon moved on to Tennessee where he was a member of the Knoxville convention of 1859. Opposed to secession, Foote nevertheless became a member of the Confederate Congress where he proved a thorn in Davis' side. In January 1865 Foote left Richmond for Washington on a self-appointed mission as peace negotiator, which brought him brief imprisonments and forced departures for Europe and later Canada. Foote was back in the United States with his civil rights restored in 1876 when he supported the Republican ticket. In 1878 he became superintendent of the New Orleans mint. Foote died in Nashville on May 19, 1880. After his first wife's death Foote had married Rachel D. Smiley of Nashville. A prolific author, Foote's works include Texas and the Texans (1841), War of the Rebellion; or Scylla and Charybdis (1866), Casket of Reminiscences (1874), and Bench and Bar of the South and Southwest (1876). DAB, VI, 500-501; BDAC, 902; Rowland, ed., Encyclopedia, I, 716-20.

4For a concise but adequate listing of the compromise measures, see Hamilton, Prologue to Conflict, 201-208.
The state convention called by the special legislative session was scheduled to begin on November 10, 1851.

The son of a Lutheran minister from Prussia, John Anthony Quitman was born September 1, 1798, in Rhinebeck, New York. After some preparation for the ministry and several years of teaching at Mount Airy College near Philadelphia, Quitman went to Ohio where he studied law and was admitted to the bar in August 1821 (Claiborne, Life and Correspondence, I, 25-41, 65). That same year he moved to Natchez to practice law. In 1824 he married the cousin of his law partner's wife, Eliza Turner, and in 1826 acquired "Monmouth." Quitman served as a representative to the state House 1826-1827 and in 1828 was elected chancellor of Mississippi, an office he held until his resignation in 1834. He was a state senator 1835-1836 and president of that body for several months before becoming governor of Mississippi in 1835. Quitman's interest in military activity was of long standing: in 1824 he organized the Natchez Fencibles; in 1836 to aid Sam Houston in the struggle against Santa Anna's forces he gathered a group of volunteers which arrived at San Jacinto just after the battle was won; in the Mexican War Quitman served first as a brigadier general of volunteers and then as a major general of regulars. Although he lost a bid for the United States Senate to Henry S. Foote in 1847, Quitman was a presidential elector for the Democratic ticket in 1848, and in 1849 was elected governor by a
large majority (J. Wesley Cooper, *Natchez: A Treasure of Antebellum Homes* [Philadelphia: Edward Stern & Co., Inc., 1957], 36; *BDAC*, 1491; Rowland, ed., *Encyclopedia*, II, 488-90). An organizer of nullification sympathies in Mississippi as early as 1832 and a firm believer in the imperialistic and expansionistic idea of manifest destiny, Quitman's advocacy of radical state-rights doctrines and his involvement in filibustering expeditions to Cuba combined to bring about his withdrawal from the governor's race in 1851. His popularity was, however, re-established by 1855 when he was elected to the United States House of Representatives. While holding this office, he attended a banquet for President James Buchanan, where some of the food was apparently poisoned. The poison eventually caused his death on July 17, 1858, at "Monmouth" (*BDAC*, 1491; Rowland, ed., *Encyclopedia*, II, 491-92).

7 The Democratic State-Rights party.

8 The party convention had met on June 16-17, 1851, in Jackson (*Vicksburg Tri-Weekly Sentinel*, June 20, 1851).

9 Davis had been re-elected by the Mississippi legislature to serve a six-year term from March 4, 1851 (*J. Davis, Rise and Fall*, I, 18).

10 Mrs. David Yulee was a daughter of Charles A. Wickliffe of Kentucky; she died in 1884 (*DAB*, XX, 638).

11 "Charly" is probably a reference to Charles W. Yulee,
David Yulee's son (ibid.).
VARINA H. DAVIS TO MARGARET K. HOWELL

Brierfield

July 22nd. 1851.

My dear Mother,

on Friday I felt too unwell to answer your long hope for letter, having Just taken a dose of blue mass which kept me nauseated too much to write. Jeff answered Pa's letter but it did not get off on the boat. He took it himself up to Vicksburg yesterday to put into the post office. He is gone to a public dinner at Gallatin, and will stop at Cooper's Wells on his way out there, and return the end of this week. Bob comes down here, and stays at night, and goes home in the morning so you may readily imagine I have a dull time of it. Jeff begged hard for me to go out to the wells, and Brother Joe, and Sister Eliza urged me almost to the extent of rudeness, but I don't feel like going, and don't intend to do it, but shall go up to Holly Springs with him, where though my time will be dull, I shall be with him. We have both thought, and talked a good deal about my dear Father's sickness, and I have a thousand times wished you lived any where else in order that I might spend the rest of the summer with you. I very much afraid that is not a healthy place, though Jeff, and I have had some high disputes upon
the occasion. I do not fear a sickly location, and have argued with him until we both got mad several times, and he won't hear of my going down. I wish you could spend only a week here now it is so cool, and comfortable. I am very sorry to hear of my little Shoon's chills and hope she is better by this time, tell her I found her ring two days ago, and it seemed to remind her Brother of her most forcibly. Lize\(^1\) is at the wells with her grand Ma,\(^1\)\(^2\) and quite well.

Brother Joe had one of his spells when he was last down, and looked very badly when he went away. All the family have been sick since they went out, and I expect they are uncomfortable enough. At one time they had Martha\(^1\)\(^3\) and her two children, Sister Eliza and her two,\(^1\)\(^4\) Cousin Harriet\(^1\)\(^5\) and her one, Sister Amanda,\(^1\)\(^6\) and Betty,\(^1\)\(^7\) and Brother Joe in two small rooms as an entry. So much for their summers campaign, and all sick and cross as bears, I tell you the tale as t'was told to me, for as Pa's song goes rum tum tudle I warn't there. You don't know what delight your account of your improved health gave me. If I could get a bottle of those bitters I would make Jeff try them if I could. He is tractable I think he might possibly be enuced to take them for me if I had them at his nose. They will be doing a great deal for me if they do that which you think they will, restore
your health.

I can't imagine what is the reason your negroes don't sell for you, can't you hire one of those old well trained french negroes? who will do it for you? I should you could hire one for a very little. Are you making preserves? If so I will make Ben box up some fruit for you and direct it to you. Send Ben on the next boat for it.

Well my dear Mother, and Father (for at last I always write to both,) I have a trembling in my insides or in other words I am nervous, and must quit, with very much love to the children,¹⁸ and to yourselves from your devoted daughter V DAVIS

P. S. Jeff charged me to give his best love if I wrote before he got back.
The plantation home of Jefferson and Varina Davis, "Brierfield" was situated on Davis or Palmyra Bend, some 890 acres carved out of the property obtained by Joseph E. Davis in 1818 (Davis v. Bowmar, 441). The first house, described by Varina as "cat and clayed," was built by Davis and his servant James Pemberton (V. Davis, Memoir, I, 202-203). Land for it was cleared and this house built 1836-1840. Later a "gin house, [slave] quarters, dwelling house & other buildings" were added. The dwelling house or second, larger home was probably completed shortly before 1850 and cost approximately $10,000. It had eight main rooms and two kitchens. The second kitchen and one wing of the house were intended for the use of Davis' widowed sister Amanda Bradford (see n. 16), who by mutual agreement with Varina never occupied it (Davis v. Bowmar, 159, 161, 241, 354, 486). Engravings and photographs of "Brierfield" house show a one-story, white frame home with spacious symmetrical galleries flanked by columns and a wide central gable. The house was occupied by Union troops during the war and finally destroyed by fire about 1932 (Murphree,"Hurricane and Brierfield," 105-107).

Margaret Louisa Kempe was born January 6, 1806, a daughter of James Kempe who had immigrated to Virginia from Ireland and finally settled in Natchez (Howell Morgan, comp., Howell Geneal-
ogy [Typescript, Jefferson Hayes-Davis, Colorado Springs, 1970]; "Bits of Howell Genealogy" [Typescript, Jefferson Davis Shrine, Beauvoir, Mississippi]). Kempe gave "The Briars" to Margaret and her husband William Burr Howell (see n. 4) after their marriage in 1823 at which Joseph E. Davis (n. 7) was a groomsman (Harnett T. Kane, Natchez on the Mississippi [New York: William Morrow & Co., 1947], 237). The Howells had eleven children; their eldest daughter Varina married Jefferson Davis. Margaret Kempe Howell died November 24, 1867 (Morgan, comp., Howell Genealogy; Varina, Memoir, I, 48).

3Blue mass was a medicine made by combining mercury, glycerine, honey, "confection of rose," and various other ingredients into a consistency from which blue pills could be made (Isaac K. Funk, ed., A Standard Dictionary of the English Language [New York and London: Funk & Wagnalls Co., 1906], 211).

4William Burr Howell, third son of Governor Richard Howell of New Jersey and his wife the former Keziah Burr, was born February 22, 1797. William served in the War of 1812 and soon after moved to Mississippi where he married Margaret Kempe in 1823 (see n. 2) and produced eleven children. Howell died in 1863 (Morgan, comp., Howell Genealogy).

5Located about forty miles southeast of Vicksburg, Gallatin was the county seat of Copiah County from 1824 to 1872

6 Davis was scheduled to address the people at Cooper's Wells in Hinds County on Friday, July 18 (*Jackson Mississippian and State Gazette*, July 4, 11, 1851).

7 Joseph Emory Davis, Jefferson's eldest brother, was born December 10, 1784, in Wilkes County, Georgia. After his parents moved to Kentucky, he began reading law and remained in Kentucky when they moved on to Louisiana and Mississippi. About 1812 Joseph himself emigrated to Woodville, Mississippi, where he received his license and set up a law practice in nearby Pinckneyville. He served briefly in the War of 1812 (*Harry A. Davis, The Davis Family (Davies and David) in Wales and America* [Washington, D. C.: Harry Alexander Davis, 1927], 80). By an unidentified first wife, Joseph had three daughters (Elizabeth O'Kelley Kerrigan to Gene Riddle, April 7, 1969 *Jefferson Davis Association* [Rice University, Houston]).

About 1818 he obtained from the government a large acreage on a bend in the Mississippi in Warren County from which he carved out his plantation "Hurricane." On October 5, 1827, Joseph married Eliza Van Benthuysen and from this date seems to have devoted most of his time to the building up of his
plantation (see n. 8). Joseph died September 18, 1870 (H. A. Davis, *The Davis Family*, 80; Marriage Records [Mississippi Department of Health, Jackson]).

8 Eliza Van Benthuysen Davis, Varina's sister-in-law, was born January 23, 1811 (Gravestone inscription ["Hurricane" and "Brierfield" plantations cemetery, near Vicksburg]). Eliza's family of Dutch origin had come from New York. She met Joseph E. Davis while he was staying at her widowed mother's boarding-house in New Orleans (Strode, *American Patriot*, 51). They were married October 5, 1827, and went to live at "Hurricane" (Marriage Records [Mississippi Department of Health, Jackson]). Eliza died at Fort Lauderdale Springs, Mississippi, on October 4, 1863 (Mary Elizabeth Mitchell Journal and Letters [Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina Library, Chapel Hill], 50-51).

9 Holly Springs was the principal town and county seat of Marshall County in northern Mississippi (Rowland, *Heart of the South*, II, 788). Davis was scheduled to speak there on August 27, but because of illness did not actually visit Holly Springs until early November (Jackson *Mississippian and State Gazette*, August 1, 8, October 24, 1851).

10 Varina's parents lived in Natchez (see n. 2), which Davis very likely considered a less healthful locale during the "sickly season" (generally June through October).
The daughter of Charles Jouett Mitchell and Mary Lucinda Davis Mitchell, Mary Elizabeth or "Lize" was born in March 1841. Because her mother died when she was very young, Lize was reared by her grandfather and her step-grandmother, Joseph and Eliza Davis (nn. 7 and 8). She married William Hamer of Alabama about 1870 (H. A. Davis, The Davis Family, 81).

Eliza Van Benthuysen; see n. 8.

Martha or "Mattie" Harris was a niece of Eliza V. Davis. The two children referred to are possibly Margaret and Jeffy Harris (Mitchell Journal, 30; Varina Howell Davis to Margaret K. Howell, November 26, 1847, Jefferson Davis Papers [University of Alabama Library Manuscripts Collection, Tuscaloosa]).

This is most probably a reference to Eliza V. Davis (n. 8) and her two step-grandchildren, Joseph and Lize Mitchell.

This may possibly be a reference to a Harriet Culbertson, an intimate of the Davises (Varina Howell Davis to Margaret K. Howell, November 26, 1847).

Jefferson Davis' sister Amanda was born in Christian County, Kentucky, in December 1799. After moving to Mississippi with her parents, Amanda married David Bradford, a lawyer of West Feliciana Parish, Louisiana, about 1820 (H. A. Davis, The Davis Family, 88). They had nine children (Alfred F. Ganier, comp., Davis Family Tree [Alfred F. Ganier, Nashville, Tennessee, 1968]). David was assassinated in 1844
after which Amanda and her children went to live at "Hurricane." Amanda was living in Vicksburg in 1870; she died in 1881 (Jefferson Davis to Varina Howell, March 15, 1844 [Hudson Strode, Tuscaloosa, Alabama, 1969]; H. A. Davis, The Davis Family, 88).

Betty or Bettie is doubtless a reference to Elizabeth Porter Bradford, twenty-year-old daughter of Davis' sister Amanda (see n. 16). Born in Louisiana, Betty as well as her mother and other brothers and sisters moved from Bayou Sara to "Hurricane," a short distance from "Brierfield," after her father's death in 1844. In 1855 Betty married Maunsel White, II, whom she had met while living with Jefferson and Varina Davis in Washington when Davis was secretary of war. The Whites had seven children. Betty died in 1917 (Mary Mitchell White, "Interludes" [Typescript, Mrs. Betty White Wills, Tulsa, Oklahoma, 1968], 146; H. A. Davis, The Davis Family, 89-90).

Varina's brothers and sisters living at home in 1851 were William Francis Howell, Becket Kempe Howell, Margaret Graham Howell, Jane Kempe Howell and Jefferson Davis Howell (Morgan, comp., Howell Genealogy).
JEFFERSON DAVIS TO THE PEOPLE OF VICKSBURG

[Vicksburg, Miss.]
[July 24, 1851]

The Colonel commenced by stating that he was passing through our city on his way home from the interior, and in wait for a boat, when he received the invitation to participate in the discussion. He had listened to the address of Mr. Johnson, and could reply to it in the manner of Oliver Goldsmith—that the speech might have been a very good one, but that he had heard it before at Warrenton. He next proceeded to explain to the audience, the positions assumed by him in his speech at Warrenton, and which he said had been misapprehended by Mr. J. He alluded to the compromise measures separately, but only stated his objections at length to but two of them—the Texas bill, and the bill abolishing the slave trade in the District of Columbia. The first he regarded as an aggression upon the rights of the South of the most dangerous character, not only because it was unconstitutional, but because it diminished the power of the South, by taking from it a large portion of the territory of a slave State, and making it free-soil territory forever. The slave trade bill he objected to, because it was an interference with slave property by Congress, and in violation of the
constitution by depriving a man of his property without compensation, and punishing a mere intent. The doctrine of secession received his attention also; and he relied upon the reserved rights of the States, and 'a power above the constitution,' that inalienable right which was asserted by the Signers of the Declaration of Independence, and of which the people of the States had not been deprived, in support of it. He did not think that revolution necessarily required bloodshed, and inquired, how much bloodshed was necessary to sanctify a revolution? He was opposed to the practical exercise of the right of secession by Mississippi alone, and knew of no one who favored it, except one man who said that he was already out of the Union. He merely wished to assert the right, and have it placed upon the record, if the South did not unite to demand her just inalienable rights.
Text from Vicksburg Weekly Whig, July 30, 1851.

1The column in the Vicksburg Weekly Whig (July 30, 1851) in which this summary of Davis' speech appears is dated Saturday, July 26; the first sentence of the report states, "Our citizens enjoyed on Thursday night a rare intellectual and political feast."

2Jefferson Davis became a military hero as colonel of the First Mississippi Rifles in the Mexican War (Winston, High Stakes, 46).

3Davis had just completed an announced tour through southwestern Mississippi (Woodville Republican, June 17, 1851).

4William H. Johnson, a Union candidate from Warren County for the November convention (Vicksburg Weekly Whig, July 30, 1851).

5Incorporated in 1820, Warrenton lies twelve miles below Vicksburg on the Mississippi River. Until 1836 it was the county seat of Warren County (Rowland, Heart of the South, II, 846-47).

6For a concise listing of the sections of this bill, see Hamilton, Prologue to Conflict, 201-203.

7Ibid., 208.
JEFFERSON DAVIS TO THE PEOPLE OF RAYMOND

[Raymond, Miss.]

[August 5, 1851]¹

He² went into a review of the sectional controversy on the slavery question from its origin to the present time, and proved that the avowed purpose of the abolitionists was not only to crush the institution of slavery wherever the Federal Government had jurisdiction, but to exterminate it throughout the United States. He showed that in every instance where there had been a contest in Congress, the South, from a desire to preserve the Union, had conceded her clear constitutional rights, and that each concession, instead of appeasing only served to make her opponents more unfortunate in their demands and more bold in their aggressions. In contradiction of the miserable pretext that we were at least to have "peace and quiet" now that we had again surrendered our rights, he showed that the passage of the so-called "peace measures"³ had wholly failed to produce a cessation of agitation and hostilities on the part of the Northern States and people against the institution of slavery, but that their denunciations were as bitter and insulting, and their war as uncompromising since as it had been before. That these measures were themselves but the indications and the result of that hostile public sentiment which pervaded

[Item 4]
the Northern States, and that whilst the Wilmot proviso was not in name extended to the Mexican Territories, it was in substance, or was intended to be by Northern members of Congress who would not have dared to give their assent to these bills upon any other terms.

Those who advise us to lie supinely on our backs, and wait until this agitation, never-ceasing, at the North, has developed itself in further aggressions, which they say will be intolerable, are foes, not only to the welfare of the South, but to the peace and perpetuity of the Union. The only way to preserve the Union is to make it fulfil the great ends for which it was created.
Text from Jackson *Mississippian and State Gazette*, August 8, 1851.

1 The account of Davis' speech at Raymond in the Jackson *Mississippian and State Gazette* (August 8, 1851) states that 1500 to 1800 people "assembled at Raymond on Tuesday last, to do honor to our distinguished and faithful Senator."

2 Jefferson Davis.

3 Davis is referring here to the measures of the Compromise of 1850; for a concise listing of these measures, see Hamilton, *Prologue to Conflict*, 201-208.

4 Proposed on August 8, 1846, as an amendment to Polk's Two Million Bill, David Wilmot's proviso stated, "That, as an express and fundamental condition to the acquisition of any territory from the Republic of Mexico by the United States, by virtue of any treaty which may be negotiated between them, and to the use by the Executive of the moneys herein appropriated, neither slavery nor involuntary servitude shall ever exist in any part of said territory, except for crime, whereof the party shall first be duly convicted" (*Congressional Globe*, 29 Cong., 1 Sess., 1217 [August 8, 1846]).
JEFFERSON DAVIS TO EDWARD C. WILKINSON

Brierfield, 1 September 17, 1851.

Sir: 2 I have the honor of acknowledging the receipt of your letter of the 16th instant, 3 informing me that the committee, 4 which was appointed by the Convention in June last to fill any vacancy which might occur in the State ticket then nominated, had met, and found that the vacancy occasioned by the withdrawal of Gen. Quitman 5 had been already filled by the people and the Democratic press of the whole State, having nominated myself for the vacant post, and that the committee gave to that nomination their concurrence. Your letter also informs me that the committee were aware that the state of my health would not permit me to engage in the canvass.

Under such circumstances, I have only to reply that my whole political life has been devoted to the Democratic cause, and the maintenance of those principles in which originated the party of strict construction, and faithful adherence to the Constitution. It is not in an hour when clouds have darkened our fortune that I can refuse any poor service it is still in my power to render. That cause, and those principles, seem more dear to me now than in the day

[Item 5]
of their triumph.

As soon as my health will enable me, I will prepare an address to the people, in answer to the nomination, my acceptance of which has been taken for granted. At present, I can only return my thanks to the committee, and, through them, to the Democracy of the State, for the confidence they have thus manifested in my willingness to meet any responsibility, or make any sacrifice for the principles I have always advocated, and which I still believe to be essential for the preservation of that constitutional liberty we inherited from our revolutionary sires. Very respectfully, your friend, JEFF'N DAVIS.
Text from Jackson Mississippian and State Gazette, September 26, 1851. Addressed: "E. C. Wilkinson, Chairman, &c."

Printed: Natchez Mississippi Free Trader, October 1, 1851; Rowland, ed., Jefferson Davis, Constitutionalist, II, 86.

1See Item 2, n. 1 for "Brierfield."

2A native of Virginia, Edward Cary Wilkinson was a resident of Yazoo City, Mississippi, as early as 1831. He was appointed a circuit judge of the second district of Mississippi in 1833. In 1838 Wilkinson was one of the three commissioners who sold Mississippi's Union Bank bonds to Nicholas Biddle. Later that year Wilkinson was indicted for murder in Louisville, Kentucky, as the result of a saloon fight. The famous Mississippi attorney Seargent S. Prentiss came from Washington to summarize the argument for the defense and obtained acquittals for Wilkinson and his two codefendants. Active in Democratic politics, Wilkinson was a delegate to the Nashville Convention of June 1850. Also in 1850 he was named a trustee of the University of Mississippi at Oxford (Rowland, Heart of the South, I, 637, 722; Foote, Bench and Bar, 31-32; Dallas C. Dickey, Seargent S. Prentiss: Whig Orator of the Old South [Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1946], 207-208; Dunbar Rowland, Courts, Judges, and Lawyers of Mississippi, 1798-1935 [Jackson: Mississippi Department of Archives and History, 1935], 257).
3 E. C. Wilkinson to the People of Mississippi, September 16, 1851 (Jackson *Mississippian and State Gazette*, September 19, 1851).

4 The nine members of the committee appointed at the June convention to fill vacancies which might occur in the Democratic ticket were Edward C. Wilkinson (n. 1), J. J. Pettus, Otho R. Singleton, S. R. Adams, J. McAfee, Reuben Davis, J. Force, William M. Estelle, and Lloyd Selby (*Vicksburg Tri-Weekly Sentinel*, June 20, 1851).

5 See Item 1, n. 6 for a biographical sketch of John A. Quitman.

6 See Item 7 for Davis' address to the people of Mississippi.
JEFFERSON DAVIS TO SAMUEL A. CARTWRIGHT

Brierfield.¹

Sept 23d. 1851.

My dear Sir,²

I sincerely thank you for your very kind letter, which if it was as you say a departure from professional "etiquette" was certainly an observance of those rules of charity, and good will which [torn] can better appreciate, and on which I certainly [pla]ce a much higher value. I have hesi[t]ated whether I should go down immediately, and on account of the painful effect produced by exposure to light have decided to wait a few days, perhaps a week longer before I avail myself of your advice which I am sincerely anxious to receive. Since I have been at home, and able to keep myself in a mild and uniform light the inflammation has greatly s[u]bsided, and the sight of that eye which was entirely blind has been partially restored.³ There is still great irritability in the nerve of the eye, and the cloud which had collected between the coatings of the cornea, and which entirely covered the pupil I am informed has receded so as now to appear like a clear drop of water which swells the cornea on one side (the outside,) and encroaches very

[Item 6]
little on the pupil, though it covers about a third of the iris. The eye has ceased to weep, and has rather an unnatural dryness, and heat, but without any engorgement of the blood-vessels.

I suffered so much from the glare, and varying light on the steamboat on which I came from Memphis that I have felt unwilling at present to encounter the like exposure. I am using only emollient washes, and take some quinine daily. My general health has so much improved that I suffer little except from extreme debility [torn]. To one accustomed like yourself to the unintelligible account which the unlearned patient [torn] of his case it will not seem surprising if I have given you very little idea of my present condition. Again thanking you for your friendly interest [torn] let me assure you of the very high esteem, and regard with which I am your friend JEFFERSON DAVIS.
ALS (Samuel A. Cartwright and Family Papers, Department of Archives and Manuscripts, Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge). Addressed: "Dr Samuel Cartwright."

1See Item 2, n. 1.

2Born on November 30, 1793, in Fairfax County, Virginia, Samuel Adolphus Cartwright interrupted his medical studies to serve in Tanson's Artillery in the War of 1812, during which he was wounded at the Battle of North Point. He resumed his education under the direction of Dr. Benjamin Rush. Between studying at both the University of Pennsylvania and in Baltimore, Maryland, Cartwright practiced for a while in Huntsville, Alabama. In 1822 he moved to Natchez, Mississippi, where he lived until 1848. Soon after settling in Natchez he received his license to practice medicine. In 1825 he married Mary Wren. A student of languages, Cartwright was proficient in Latin, Greek, Hebrew, and French. An energetic researcher, he published over eighty articles on cholera, syphilis, yellow fever, epilepsy, and his famous sugar-house cure for bronchial and pulmonary troubles in such journals as the American Medical Recorder, De Bow's Review, Transylvania Journal of Medicine, New Orleans Medical and Surgical Journal, and others. His fame brought him offers of professorships all over the United States, but Cartwright preferred to stay in the South. From the 1840s his writing was more and more confined to southern diseases
and therapy and especially the southern medical practice with regard to the Negro. Three years after moving to New Orleans in 1848, he published perhaps his most significant article, "The Diseases and Physical Peculiarities of the Negro Race" (New Orleans Medical and Surgical Journal, XC [September 1851], 187-94) which advanced the theory that the main cause of the sectional controversy was the North's ignorance of the physical and psychological differences between whites and Negroes. Hence Cartwright gained the sobriquet, "champion of state-rights medicine." In the early 1850s he was named to the position of professor of diseases of the Negro at what became Tulane University Medical School. Acquainted with most of the political leaders of Mississippi, Cartwright attended John A. Quitman during his mortal illness in 1858. Cartwright himself died while caring for Confederate soldiers of the Natchez area in 1863 (Mary L. Marshall, "Samuel A. Cartwright and States' Rights Medicine," New Orleans Medical and Surgical Journal, XCIII [August 1940], 74-78; John Duffy, ed., The Rudolph Matas History of Medicine in Louisiana [2 vols., Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1962], II, 96-97; Samuel A. Cartwright, "Slavery in the Light of Ethnology" in E. N. Elliott, ed., Cotton is King and Pro-Slavery Arguments [Augusta, Ga.: Pritchard, Abbott & Loomis, 1860], 691-728; Claiborne, Life and Correspondence, II, 287-91).
Within at most a few years after 1851, Davis could only discern light with his left eye, to which he refers here. In 1835 Davis and his first wife Sarah Knox Taylor had been taken ill with malaria, from which she died. After that year Davis suffered from recurrent attacks; this was most probably what brought on his eye problems during the summer of 1851. In the winter of 1858 a cold and laryngitis were followed by a similar, more severe inflammation of the left eye. The eye ailment which confined Davis during half the period of his candidacy in 1851 may be diagnosed in retrospect as herpes simplex of the cornea, dendritic keratitis, or a dendritic ulcer of the cornea. By about 1865 it is possible to conclude from available descriptions that Davis suffered from both a corneal ulcer and secondary glaucoma (V. Davis, Memoir, I, 469, 574-77; Evans, "Jefferson Davis, His Diseases," 2-4, 7; John J. Craven, Prison Life of Jefferson Davis [New York: Carleton, 1866], 68; Dr. Robert A. Neely, Interview, Bellville, Texas).

Leaving Dr. Dozier's home near Pontotoc when "he was well enough to reach by easy stages the nearest landing on the river" (V. Davis, Memoir, I, 469), Davis returned to "Brierfield" by first going north through Holly Springs, Mississippi, to Memphis, Tennessee, where he boarded a steamboat for a gentler ride down the river to his home (Natchez Mississippi Free Trader, September 24, 1851).
Although this appears to be an autograph letter signed, it is likely that Davis' wife Varina did the actual writing. She records in her Memoir (I, 469-70) that she served as his amanuensis when, at the request of party leaders, Davis issued a major address to Mississippians early in his campaign (see Item 7 for this address). On receipt of the address, the leaders rejoiced at Davis' apparent recovery for they believed the document to be in his hand. Written only two days before Davis dictated the campaign address to his wife, this letter to Cartwright is so far the earliest indication that her handwriting was becoming very similar to his. Years later it is well known that Varina developed a handwriting so nearly like her husband's that they themselves could often not tell the difference. The "X" beneath the signature in this letter, uncharacteristic of Davis' signatures, lends credence to the supposition that Varina wrote the letter.
JEFFERSON DAVIS TO THE PEOPLE OF MISSISSIPPI

Warren County, September 25, 1851.

Fellow Citizens:

Nominated as a candidate for Governor of the State of Mississippi, in the manner which has been already announced to you, the relations which have so long subsisted between us of Representative and constituency are changed, and my name is presented for your suffrage for an office of a different character from those with which you have heretofore trusted me. With feelings of profound gratitude I offer you my acknowledgments for the undeserved honors you have heretofore bestowed upon me, and avail myself of this, the only mode which my health enables me to adopt, to make a review of the course I have pursued as your Representative to the Federal Government, and to state the general policy by which I will be governed if you should elect me to be your Chief Executive.

Openly, and at all times avowing the principles of Democracy, as defined and established in 1798 and '99, and believing the best interests of the whole country, and the preservation of our Government in its original purity, depend on the observance of those principles, I entered public life to

[Item 7]
maintain and uphold them. But though elected as a Democrat, I considered myself a Representative of the people, and feel pride in the conviction that the severest scrutiny into my public conduct, cannot find an occasion on which the zeal of the partizan has made me forget the duty of a Representative.

In 1844, I advocated the election of Mr. Polk to the Chief Magistracy of the United States, and, as a member of Congress, entered the House of Representatives at the first session which followed his inauguration. It was my good fortune to see the success of those principles we had advocated, by the repeal of a Protective Tariff, and the establishment of ad valorem duties, by the overthrow of a partial, wasteful and corrupting scheme of Internal Improvements by the Federal Government; by the annexation of Texas—and generally by adherence to our cardinal principle, strict construction of the Constitution. When in the discharge of that duty of the Federal Government which requires it to repel the invasion of a State, we became involved in hostilities with Mexico, I voted to declare that war existed, and to provide the means necessary for its prosecution. When the sons of Mississippi who had volunteered, and been received into the military service of the United States, were organized as a Regiment, they elected me their Colonel, and on notification of the fact, I left my seat in Congress and joined them on their way to
Mexico. After our return to the United States, by expiration of the term of service, I again became your Representative in the Senate of the United States. 8

When the treaty of peace was submitted to the Senate for ratification, I found it objectionable in many of its features, and endeavored to amend it, with some success, but failed on that point which I considered most important—the modification of the boundary to be established between the two countries. I sought to obtain a mountain barrier which would include within the limits of the United States all the valley of the Rio Grande, country which, by its contiguity and climate, I felt would inure to our advantage, whilst it gave a boundary easily defended, and which separated countries so distinct from each other as to put far from us the probability of future collision; also to change the line from the Rio Grande to the Pacific, so as to secure the Railroad route to San Diego, and a valley on which a settlement might be formed, which would best serve to restrain the Indians within our Territory from incursions into Mexico. This amendment was sustained by but eleven votes. It was the settled policy to acquire Territory by the treaty of peace. This vote left no hope that such a change of boundary could be effected as I believed was desirable to the Southern States, and the question assumed to my mind this form—
shall the treaty be ratified, and the war terminated, or
shall the treaty be rejected, and hostilities be renewed?
Our army was in possession of the Capitol of Mexico, and was
rapidly assuming a self sustaining character. To continue
the war must finally lead to the total destruction of the
Mexican government, and in the phrase of the day, to the
swallowing up of the whole of Mexico by the United States.
There was a large party who desired this result, and Southern
men of the highest stations were of it. Between two evils,
I chose the least, and voted for the treaty. 9

Long before the treaty was ratified, in anticipation
of the acquisition of new Territory, the North manifested
its will, both in and out of Congress, for the exclusion of
the Southern slave-holders from all participation in any
Territory which should be thus acquired. They had not
shown the same desire to engross either all the personal
hazards, or pecuniary burthens of the war.

In 1848, various attempts were made to give governments
to California and New Mexico, in connection with the Territory
of Oregon. A special committee was raised in the Senate, by
which a bill was reported to give the highest grade of Terri-
torial government to Oregon, and the lowest grade of Terri-
torial government to California and New Mexico, with the
restriction on the two last, that no law should be passed
"respecting the prohibition or establishment of African slavery." It provided for a judicial decision of the question in controversy, the Constitutional right of the owners of slaves to take that species of property into the Territories.

I preferred a Judicial to a Congressional decision, both because I hoped it would be more just, and believed it would be more permanent. I did not doubt the Constitutional right, nor fear the decision of an impartial tribunal. If rendered in our favor, we might more confidently have looked forward to Legislative protection. This measure of Compromise was treated with a marked want of consideration in the House of Representatives, where Northern power held control. It was promptly laid on the table without examination or reference, and a bill was passed for a Territorial government of Oregon without any provision for California or New Mexico. To this the Senate attached an amendment by which the Missouri Compromise was "declared to be in full force, and binding for the future organization of the Territories of the United States, in the same sense, and with the same understanding, with which it was originally adopted." In this amendment, the House refused to concur by a vote of 83 to 121, and the Senate receded from its amendment by a vote of 29 to 25. I had striven with many other Southern Senators and members for each of these plans of Compromise, and with melancholy fore-
bodings witnessed their defeat. The Oregon bill, as it passed, was, in effect, the usurpation of power by the Federal Government to exclude slave property from a Territory of the United States. The assurance that the Missouri Compromise line would be extended to the Pacific at the next session of Congress, satisfied some Southern members, and, I have the best reason to believe, induced the President to perform the disagreeable task of approving the bill. I distrusted promises for to-morrow, of that which could have been as easily executed to-day, and, with all the ability I possessed, opposed the passage of the law.\[7\]

The sectional controversy on the right of the South to introduce her slaves into Territories, the common property of the States, continued, and the opposition increased in rancor as it increased in power. The eventful session of 1850 found those Territories which had been acquired from Mexico, still unprovided with government. For this, neither myself, nor those who acted with me, were in the least degree responsible. We especially desired to give laws to the country, and protection to those citizens of the United States who might migrate to it, but the anti-slavery majority in Congress preferred no Territorial government to one which did not contain a prohibition of slavery, obviously relying upon the effect which the threat to enact such prohibition
would have on the migration of slave-holders, and equally perhaps upon the knowledge that slave property, more than any other, requires the protection of law. At this session, as at the one which preceded it, the Committee on Territories introduced bills for Territorial governments, and for the admission of California as a State of the Union. They met with little favor from Southern Senators. The position was generally held by them that the power to admit new States did not confer the power to create a State, this being the objection which had been so ably presented by the Committee on the Judiciary, in their report of the preceding session, on the bill to admit California as a State.

On the 29th of January, 1850, Mr. Clay\textsuperscript{12} introduced a series of resolutions,\textsuperscript{13} declaring that California, with suitable boundaries, ought, upon her application, to be admitted as one of the States of this Union, and that as slavery did not exist by law in any of the territory acquired from Mexico, it was inexpedient for Congress to provide by law either for its introduction or exclusion, and that territorial governments ought to be established for all of said territory no\textsuperscript{14} included within the limits of California, without any restriction or condition on the subject of slavery. That the western boundary of the State of Texas ought to be fixed on the Rio del Norte up to the southern line of New Mexico, and thence
with that line eastwardly, excluding any portion of New Mexico. That it was inexpedient to abolish slavery in the District of Columbia, whilst that institution existed in the State of Maryland, without the consent of that State, without the consent of the people of the District, and without just compensation to the owners of slaves within the District. That it was expedient to prohibit, within the District, the trade in slaves brought into it from States or places beyond the limits of the District, either to be sold there as merchandise, or to be transported to other markets without the District of Columbia. That more effectual provision ought to be made for the restitution and delivery of persons bound to service or labor in any State, who may escape into any other State or territory in the Union. That Congress had no power to prohibit or obstruct the trade in slaves between the slaveholding States, the admission or exclusion depending exclusively upon their own particular laws. With more than ordinary unanimity, and with far more than ordinary severity, these resolutions were opposed by the Senators of the Southern States. They were attacked as soon as read, and most fiercely, by some who have since been the open advocates—the champions of that "compromise" scheme between which, and this series of resolutions, there is so striking a resemblance that their author has said there was no materi-
al difference.

It was evident that the power existed to bring California as a State into the Union, notwithstanding the gross defects and irregularities of the case, and we had little to expect for the protection of Southern interests in any territorial bill which would probably pass the two houses of Congress. In this condition of affairs, it was proposed to raise a special committee, to which should be referred the whole subject in controversy, in relation to slave property and the territories. I expected that a committee would be formed, equally representing the two great divisions of interest and of opinion. From such a committee, alone, could any beneficial result have been expected. The committee, as organised, was composed of six Senators of non-slave-holding States, and six of slaveholding States; of the latter, one, (Mr. Bell, of Tennessee,) had introduced resolutions which committed him to the admission of California as a State, and to the partition of Texas. The Chairman, who, had the members been equally divided, would have held the balance of power, was Mr. Clay, of Kentucky, whose resolutions sufficiently indicated what his course would be. In addition to the bills reported by the committee on territories, the committee on the judiciary had reported a bill to provide more effectually for the re-capture of fugitive slaves, and
Mr. Benton, of Missouri, had brought in a bill to reduce the limits of Texas below those claimed by her when, as an independent State, she was annexed to the Union. This last bill was strongly opposed at the time of its introduction, and arraigned, by my colleague, as one which would "Completely unsettle the question of slavery in all the vast domain which it proposes to purchase from the State of Texas."

The special committee of thirteen united the bills from the committee on territories, for a State of California, for governments for the territories of Utah and New Mexico, and for the establishment of the boundary of Texas, the latter "with inconsiderable variation," and reported them to the Senate as one proposition. The boundaries of California had not been reduced to suitable limits, as was proposed in Mr. Clay's resolutions, but still embraced the whole sea coast we had acquired on the Pacific, and retained their immense extent and unnatural form on the south and east. No objection as it existed against the bill when it came from the committee on territories had, to my mind, been removed; yet, strange to say, Southern Senators who had most promptly opposed those resolutions and that bill, were the advocates of this proposition from the "compromise" committee. I opposed them conjointly, as I had singly. My judgment assured me that there were radical defects in the case of California.
I could not believe they were cured by attaching to the bill territorial governments, in which the vaunted merit was, that they did not contain the Wilmot proviso, because it was unnecessary; because, according to the report of the committee, "there was never any occasion for it to accomplish the professed object with which it was originally offered"; the action of the people of California being cited to establish this position. It was a poor satisfaction to me to be told that Congress would abstain from legislation, and that such non-action would work the exclusion of the South. Still less were the defects to be cured by taking territory from under the jurisdiction of a slaveholding State to transfer it to the custody of Congress and the control of a population who had already manifested their hostility to the institution of slavery. The last proposition was to me as odious as any other could have been. I found in it an unwarranted interference with the territory of a State, and a stain upon our country's history, by denying the justice of that claim, in defence of which we had prosecuted the war against Mexico.

But if my opinions had been less fixed, the question was closed by popular action in the State of Mississippi, and the specific instructions I had received from her Legislature, in their resolution of March 5th, 1850, in these words: "Resolved, That the admission of California into the Union
as a sovereign State, with its present Constitution—the result of the aforesaid false and unjust policy on the part of the Government of the United States—would be an act of fraud and oppression on the rights of the people of the slaveholding States, and it is the sense of this Legislature that our Senators and Representatives should, to the extent of their ability, resist it by all honorable and constitutional means." To these instructions I gave a cordial and sincere obedience, laboring, not with eye service, and giving but formal and reluctant compliance.

Yet ingenious falsehood has attempted to represent this as an offence, because certain anti-slavery Senators also opposed this "compromise" scheme, concealing the fact that other anti-slavery Senators supported it. If the judgment of those who make such misrepresentations had not been blinded by malice, they must have perceived that this was to arraign the people and legislature of Mississippi, whose expressed will and instructions I obeyed. It is an instructive fact in the case, that when these combined propositions failed, and they again came up for consideration as separate measures, the opposition which had originally arrayed itself against them could never again be united. The Southern strength was lost by division; until, in the last struggle, the South offered but feeble resistance to measures which it had at
first, with great unanimity, most firmly and sternly opposed. My own course was not confined to mere opposition. I strove to amend the so-called "compromise" bill, by giving that security to the property of the slaveholder, who might migrate to the territories, to which I felt his property, like all other, was entitled. I asked that the legislature of the territory should have power to pass laws for the protection of every kind of property which might have been, or should be, "conformably to the Constitution and laws of the United States, held in, or introduced into, said territory." Upon this general and equitable proposition Southern Senators were divided, and on July 23rd, 1850, my colleague offered an amendment, "That the said State of California shall never hereafter claim as within her boundaries, nor attempt to exercise jurisdiction over, any portion of the territory at present claimed by her, except that which is embraced within the following boundaries:" the southern boundary proposed was the parallel of 35 degrees 30 minutes; "and that a new territory should be established to consist of the country thus cut off." To which I offered the following amendment: "And that laws and usages existing in said territory, at the date of its acquisition by the United States, which deny or obstruct the right of any citizen of the United States to remove to, and reside in said territory,
with any species of property legally held in any of the States of this Union, be, and are hereby declared to be, null and void."

Mr. Clay opposed this amendment, on the ground of "non-intervention," and asked for the "difference the direct action of Congressional legislation upon the subject of slavery, to introduce it, or to prohibit, and the exercise of this power by Congress to repeal existing laws within the territory, which existing laws have declared the abolition of slavery?" It was against the doctrine that the Mexican law excluded slave property from the territory, which was held, I believe, unanimously by the Northern Senators, and entertained by some from the South, that my amendment was introduced. I did not doubt our constitutional right to take slaves into the territory, but I claimed for my constituents that that right should be recognized and protected; that this foreign obstruction to the enjoyment of their constitutional rights by citizens of the United States, should be removed; that it was the duty of Congress to relieve the citizen of the necessity of establishing his constitutional right, by an appeal to the courts. I denied that it followed, because we called upon the Congress of the United States to protect our property, that we therefore acknowledged the right to deprive us of that property; the first being a duty, the second expressly forbidden by the
Constitution. My colleague opposed this amendment, as useless, and because he apprehended "that the adoption of the amendment would put the bill itself in danger of defeat," arguing that the Constitution fully secured our rights; though, on July 25th, 1848, when the circumstances were far more favorable than now, he held a different opinion—(see Congressional Globe, 1st Session, 30th Congress, page 998)—"He contended that slavery could not exist without legislative protection. If a man should take a hundred slaves into one of these foreign territories, and they should be disposed to rebel against him, what law is there to which he can appeal? And suppose a man comes to steal his slaves to carry them to the Pacific, and the owner threatens to appeal to the law: he will be answered, you can do nothing--there is no law in the case. There are many in his section of the country disposed to emigrate to California; but there was not one who would be such a dolt as to carry a slave there, because he could not hold him, in consequence of the hands of the local authorities being tied up, so that they could not interfere on the subject of slavery." The amendment was defeated—yeas 22, nays 33—not one Northern Senator voting for it. My colleague voting against it.

I strove in every form to reduce the limits of California; but the eagerness of the anti-slavery majority to bring in
another non-slaveholding State, and at once to exclude the South from that rich territory, rendered all such efforts unavailing. Arguments based upon the faith implied in the Missouri Compromise, reasons founded on physical geography, were unheeded by the majority, in their lust for sectional dominion.

Though the Southern Convention, which assembled at Nash¬ville in June, 1850, of which our fellow-citizen, W. L. Sharkey, was President, had declared, as an extreme concession, that they were willing to divide the territory by the line of 36-30, extending to the Pacific ocean, treating it as a question of property, to be divided between the sections of the Union, so that the rights of both be adequately secured in their respective shares—yet those Senators who have been called, in reproach, Southern Ultras, of whom I am one, voted for every proposition, by any line of division, to curtail the boundaries of California, and sustained it in so many forms, as to render it evident that no division could be ef¬fected. This was acknowledged by my colleague, who, speaking, August 6th, 1850, of the direct exercise of the power of this Government in restricting the boundaries of California, said he considered it "A very vain and useless thing to offer any such proposition. It has been voted down repeatedly. Such a direct proposition being hopeless of success, should we
not try and attain the object in view by the only means in our power?" The mode he proposed was to submit to California, after she had been admitted as a State, whether she would consent to divide her territory, which, I suppose, few of my constituents will consider would have been a benefit to the South, without some provision which would have protected the country from the prohibition against slave property contained in the Constitution of California.

By the defeat of the "compromise" scheme, I felt that several advantages were obtained. A new line for the division of Texas was adopted, which took less of her territory by some 30,000 square miles. Southern men were able to form a fugitive law more effectual than that which had been reported by the committee, and free from the very objectionable provision which required a master who re-captured his fugitive slave, upon application of the runaway, to enter into bond to try his right of property in the slave after his return to the State from which the slave had fled. It left each measure to stand upon its own merits, and more fairly submitted the action of Representatives to the decision of their constituents. The Fugitive Slave law which now stands upon the Statute book, and which has been claimed as the concession which should satisfy the South for whatever she had lost by the other measures, was not the bill of the "compromise"
committee, but was introduced by Mr. Mason, of Virginia, a so-called "Southern Ultra," and mainly advocated by that class of Southern Senators who opposed the "compromise." It did not pass like its predecessor of 1793, by Northern votes, but by the absenteeism of the North. The bill of '93 passed the Senate unanimously, and the House with but seven dissenting votes. The bill of 1850 received the support of but three Northern Senators, and 31 Northern Members. But had the North given such united support as their fathers gave, it surely could have been considered no concession to provide for the execution of a distinct obligation in the compact by which the States are united. The necessity for such a law is a melancholy proof of the extent to which some of the States disregard a distinct obligation imposed upon them by the Constitution. For it is only when they are regardless of that obligation, that it can be necessary to call in the power of the Federal Government to legislate upon it. Yet we are turned aside from this consideration by the still more melancholy fact that the law is delayed and obstructed, even violently resisted, by mobs, sometimes wrung and tortured from its meaning and its purpose, by judicial officers, to whom the property-holder looks for the maintenance of his right. In the Northern States there seems to be two great divisions upon the question of the restitution of fugitive
slaves—the one who would resist the execution of the law, the other who would acknowledge its binding force as a law of the land—but there seems to be no party which justifies it upon its merits, or who declare themselves in favor of it as an original measure. The cry of repeal is answered by the proposition to modify.

Taking Mr. Webster as an exponent of that class who would neither resist the law, nor repeal it, we are not left in doubt as to the character of the modification which they propose. The bill, introduced by him into the Senate, a short time before he left it, and to which he has referred in a recent speech, as indicating his view of the subject, required a jury trial at the place where the fugitive slave might be arrested. Such a modification would utterly destroy the efficacy of the law, and to my mind be more objectionable and offensive than its repeal.

I contributed whatever ability I possessed, to perfect and secure the passage of the fugitive slave law of 1850; seeking to make it as effectual as the power of Congress, and the spirit of the Constitution would permit. I opposed the attempt to engraft upon the bill a provision which would have made the treasury of the United States responsible for slaves, the delivery of whom should be prevented by a mob, because I considered the compact to require the delivery of the property,
and that there was no authority in the Constitution which would justify Congress in taxing the people to pay for property which should be lost by failure to execute that constitutional duty; and further, because I believed, instead of promoting the restitution of the property it would lead to the reverse result, and become a species of emancipation of slaves in the border States, by general taxation. I did not expect that the law would effect everything which would be desired. I could not, with the evidences around me expect that it would be faithfully observed. My zeal in its support, was rather due to the value I attached to the recognition of the principle it contained, and for which, (though of very little pecuniary advantage to us,) I am now in favor of insisting on the preservation of the law in all its essential features.

The only measure which the "Compromise" Committee originated, and judging from its character we may rejoice they did originate but one, was the bill in relation to the slave trade in the District of Columbia, which I consider a gross usurpation of power by the Federal Government, for which, not even the much abused plea of necessity can be offered in palliation.

In 1850 the Government retained, as the District of Columbia, only that territory which had been ceded by Mary-
land. By a law of Congress passed in 1801, the laws of Maryland, which existed prior to the cession, were put in force in that portion of the District which had been received from Maryland. The Maryland law of 1796 therefore prevented slaves from being introduced into the District for sale from any other place than the State of Maryland, and the trade thus restricted, so far from being an evil, the increase of which requires legislation, had from other causes, so far diminished, that Mr. Mason, the Chairman of the Committee on the District of Columbia, made the following statement to the Senate. During the discussion of this bill, he said, on the 4th of September 1851: "I am informed, upon enquiry, that the fact is, that within the last few years so few slaves were brought into this the District for sale, for the purpose of exportation, that the trade or business which some persons engage in, of purchasing slaves for purpose of selling them again, has dwindled down until it has almost ceased to have an existence." Had the power then existed to pass such a law as that to which I have referred, there was no exigency which called for its exercise.

It has, however, sometimes been stated that Congress but reenacted the law of Maryland, and enforced in the District the policy of that State. This is very far from true. The law of Maryland was in force, and the bill was to take
from citizens of Maryland the right they had previously enjoyed, to bring slaves into the County of Washington as into any of the counties of Maryland. The Maryland law of '96, like the Virginia law of '92, was to sustain the policy of those States against the further increase of slave population, and unlike the Congressional act of 1850, was not directed against commerce in slaves. They were passed before the constitutional prohibition against the further importation of Africans, went into effect and when the Northern States were adopting the policy of emancipation, and though general in their provisions, there is reason to believe were mainly intended to check the influx of slaves from the emancipating States, and to prevent the further importation of Africans. In support of this view, we find that in 1819 Virginia repealed her act of 1792, and permitted the introduction of slaves born within the United States, and the position was taken during the debate of the Senate, without being contradicted, that no prohibition now existed in the State of Maryland against the introduction of slaves from any other State of the Union. Not only, then, was the legislation of Congress dictated by a different motive from that of the States which made the cession, but was opposed to their present policy. The power of a sovereign State to pass such a law is no evidence that Congress may do the same
thing. The legislation of a State extends to all subjects which are not prohibited, the legislation of Congress is limited to the grants of the Constitution. To justify State legislation it is only necessary then to show that it has not been prohibited. To warrant Congressional legislation it must be shown that it has been permitted. Congress has "exclusive legislation in all cases whatever" over the District of Columbia, and over all places purchased by the consent of the legislature of a State for "forts, magazines, arsenals, dock yards, and other needful buildings."

Exclusive, is not unlimited or plenary, and the phrase was, I think, only intended to imply that the State or States which should cede territory for a seat of Government, or consent to the sale of sites for the purposes enumerated, should not thereafter exercise Legislative power over such District or places. The power of Congress to legislate was to be drawn from the grants of the Constitution, and be exercised subject to all its limitations, and prohibitions. And if I am correct in this, the conclusion must follow, that Congress has usurped authority not delegated to it, and disregarded the prohibitions by which it should have been restrained. If I am not correct, then it follows that Congress, having plenary power within the District of Columbia, may establish their order of nobility, or do any of the
other many things prohibited in the articles of compact between the States.

The first Section of the law I am considering, is as follows: "Be it enacted, &c., that from and after the first day of January, eighteen hundred and fifty-one, it shall not be lawful to bring into the District of Columbia any slave whatever, for the purpose of being sold, or for the purpose of being placed in depot to be subsequently transferred to any other State, or place, to be sold as merchandise. And if any slave shall be brought into said District, by its owner, or by the authority and consent of its owner, contrary to the provisions of this act, such slave shall thereupon become liberated and free." The motion to strike out the first Section of the bill above recited was lost, yeas, 18, nays, 30. I voted with seventeen other Senators from Southern States to strike it out: my colleague voted against striking it out. I considered it a gross usurpation of power, and an odious discrimination against slave property in the common territory, emphatically the neutral ground of the States. By the eighth section of the first article of the Constitution, Congress has power "to define and punish piracies and felonies committed on the high seas, and offences against the law of nations." These were the only crimes which Congress was authorized to define; but by the above
section it assumed to define a crime hitherto unknown to the United States, and provide for it a punishment. The crime was the act of bringing a slave into the District of Columbia with the intention to sell him there, or to keep him there for a time, to be transferred elsewhere, to be sold as merchandise. The punishment was to deprive the owner of his property by declaring the slave "liberated and free." By the fifth article, in amendment of the Constitution, it was provided "Nor shall private property be taken for public use without just compensation." But by this law a new crime was defined, not belonging to the cases enumerated in the Constitution; private property was to be taken, not for public use, and without just compensation: as a penalty for the offence of violating anti-slavery sentiment, by exercising that right of ownership over a slave in the District of Columbia, which is a necessary incident to the possession of that, as all other species of property which may be the subject of commerce.

I considered it a violation of the great principle of free trade within the States, which lay at the foundation of our Constitution, and more than any other cause, contributed to the formation of the present Union of the States. If the right to pass freely with any species of property from State to State across the territory of other States be, as has
been heretofore held, secured by the Constitution, how could Congress deny the enjoyment of that right in the District of Columbia? But if a citizen of Maryland should choose to bring his slave to the State of Mississippi, for sale here, this law would prevent him from stopping in the District of Columbia, and would punish such act by the emancipation of his slave. The word "depot" was not defined, and the fact was, there was no public place for the confinement of slaves, no slave market to which the word could apply.

I considered this law would be the triumph of abolitionism, which had for so many years flooded both Houses of Congress with petitions and memorials against the slave trade in the District of Columbia. I anticipated such a shout as went up from the abolition camp, when it was hailed as "a most important measure in the sight of justice," of which the newly elected Senator, Sumner, said "It practically affixes to the whole traffic, wherever it exists, not merely in Washington, within the immediate sphere of the Legislature, but every where throughout the slave States, whether Richmond or Charleston, or New Orleans, the brand of Congressional reprobation." It was to assume the power to emancipate a slave for one reason; and I held that to admit this would be to surrender the whole question to the discretion of Congress, which might for any other reason exercise the same power,
even to the extent of the total abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia. The chairman of the "compromise" committee admitted the power, whilst he denied the expediency of exercising it, and Mr. Chase of Ohio, informed us that the slave trade bill was the first, but not the last.

To these considerations, which were sufficient to have decided my course, were added expressions of popular will evincing the most decided opposition to such a measure. At a public meeting, held in Jackson, in May, 1849, Judge Sharkey, the presiding officer, made an address which received the most general commendation. In that address he referred to the resolutions of the Legislature of Virginia, in 1847, and those of 1849, protesting against any action of Congress on the slave trade and slavery in the District of Columbia, and said "We cannot but regard any legislation by Congress, either past or to come, which in any degree, either directly or remotely, may seem to give sanction to the authority of that body over the subject, as void for want of power, and in its tendency destructive of the principles of the Union which should be held inviolable in every feature." The Legislature of Mississippi passed a series of resolutions, approved March 6th, 1850, and, as violations of the constitutional and sovereign rights of the State, enumerated any law abolishing slavery in the District
of Columbia, "or the slave trade between said District and any of the States." The Legislature must always be presumed to reflect the popular will. In my own case, I never questioned their right to instruct me, as the Senator of the State, nor did I require instructions to be formally given; it was enough for me to know the will of my constituents; it then remained for me only to choose between serving them according to their will, or returning to them the trust with which they had honored me.

At the last session of Congress, attempts were made to begin a stupendous scheme of Colonization of Free Negroes on the coast of Africa, by building and maintaining steam vessels at the public expense for that purpose. I opposed it, because it was not one of the objects for which the taxing power had been conferred upon the general government, and for many other reasons which the limits of this address, and the fact that the proposition then failed, induce me to abstain from offering to you. There was also a scheme for internal improvement by the general government, which I resisted, as I had on other occasions, and for such reasons as influenced me then. It also failed. I much fear, however, that both these measures will succeed in the next Congress, when I have but little doubt it will also be attempted to modify the tariff of 1846, by increasing the
duties upon coal and iron. It has already been indicated in the press as an expectation of Pennsylvania founded upon the promises made by Southern members during the controversy on the so-called compromise of 1850. But without including such bitter, bitter fruit in the estimate, I ask, what did Mississippi gain by the "compromise?" By the admission of California, the balance of power in the Senate was destroyed, that which had so long been guarded by bringing slave-holding and non-slaveholding States into the Union by pairs; and the North here thus acquired the control of all the departments of government. Mr. Cooper, a Senator from Pennsylvania, an advocate of the "compromise," and signer of the "Union" party pledge, spoke of it as conferring on the North the power to prevent the further acquisition of slave territory, or the extension of slavery beyond its guaranteed limits. We must pay our proportion of tax to supply the treasury with ten millions of dollars to pay for the purchase of a portion of Texas, and hereafter to supply the means of supporting a territorial government for the territory thus purchased; nor are we permitted to claim the advantage to be derived from the laws of Texas having once attached to the soil. Congress refused to recognize the limits of Texas as defined when annexed; adopting as the language of the bill "to cede all her claims to the
territory" instead of the original phraseology "to cede all her territory," and refusing to insert the words "title and" before "claim," leaving the whole matter so undefined that no right could probably be supported by a reference to the previous local law. The whole transaction being marked by the never-to-be-forgotten fact, that whilst Congress held out the ten million inducement to Texas to sell her territory, the President threatened her with the army and navy, if she attempted to hold possession of it.

Was the power which had been asserted for Congress to exclude slavery from the territories abandoned? No. Its exercise was only abstained from. The Missouri compromise was effective in all the territory we previously had, and the Mexican law was relied on for the recent acquisition; yet when the proposition to prohibit slavery in the territory was directly presented, the vote stood, yeas, 20, nays, 25, but four Northern Senators voting against it, although they had entire confidence in the efficacy of the Mexican law, and the incompatibility of the climate to slavery. Mr. 24 Webster said, March 7th, 1850, "Sir, whenever there is a particular good to be done—wherever there is a foot of land to be stayed back from becoming slave territory, I am ready to assert the principle of the exclusion of slavery;" and he went on to say he had been pledged to that since 1837,
but was unwilling to do a thing unnecessary and offensive, and which would disgrace his own understanding. Are we not led to infer, are not compelled to believe, that the Wilmot proviso will be revived, whenever it shall be deemed necessary for the exclusion of slave property from any territory of the United States?

The fugitive slave law must have been of little value to the people of Mississippi if it had been faithfully executed, instead of being evaded, obstructed, sometimes resisted even to the hazard and loss of life of the master who followed his fugitive slave.

The slave trade bill was offensive and a dangerous usurpation of power on a subject which cannot be too jealously guarded.

I have thus, my fellow-citizens, at greater length than I desired, yet too briefly for a full exposition, reviewed the principal events, of my course as your Representative in the two Houses of Congress, and I submit it to you for your approval or disapproval with the consciousness that I have failed in much from a want of ability, and not doubting that I have committed many errors, yet with the consoling conviction that I have never failed in zeal, or knowingly departed from the policy of the State. I have stood in the midst of high excitement on questions of a sectional nature.
I have heard others announce what would produce, and what would justify a dissolution of the Union. I have done no such thing— that, I have always held as a question for the people of the State alone to consider and decide, and have said, on more than one occasion, that the honor of Mississippi, and my own honor, did not permit me to contemplate the destruction of the government of which I was a part, and to which I was accredited as a Representative of Mississippi.

I always held that the true position of the South was to stand upon the defensive, and battle for our rights from behind the barriers of the Constitution. My position being such as I have described it, I held that it was offensive in any one to insinuate against me a want of fealty to the Union, and therefore, in the Senate, where I was surrounded by those who had had an opportunity to observe my course, I said if any one charged me with being a disunionist, I would answer him in monosyllables. In like spirit, I replied indignantly to a Senator who said he did not believe that Mississippi was in favor of a dissolution of the Union, and asked him "who ever said Mississippi desired to dissolve the Union? In Mississippi it has been spoken of but as an alternative, a last recourse, and a remedy to which they would resort only when they were bound as freemen to surrender their inheritance, or adopt the last argument in order to
to maintain their Constitutional rights. You could not, throughout the length and breadth of the State, find a corporal's guard who desire to destroy the Union of the Constitution—the Union, as it was formed by, the Union as transmitted from, their Revolutionary sires." I always took the position that upon any question involving the relation of Mississippi to the Federal Government, I should wait for and abide by the decision of the people; that my first, my last allegiance was due the State, and my service should be hers whenever, and however she might please to command it. Consistently with this view, and the position heretofore referred to, I could not, and did not assume to decide what the State would, or should do. Since the recent election of Delegates to a State Convention, I have asked myself what have the people decided? Have they decided the issue which was presented by one party, but never accepted by the other—of Union or Disunion, in favor of the Union? Then I am with the majority, and know of no party in the State opposed to the decision. The people of Mississippi have given too many, and conclusive proofs, by acts which speak louder than words, of their attachment to the Union, and willingness to make all proper sacrifices for it. The "Democratic State Rights Convention" of June last, speaking of State secession, in their fifteenth resolution, said, "Whilst we assert the
right, we consider it the last remedy, the final alternative, and also declare that the exercise of it, by the State of Mississippi, under existing circumstances, would be inexpedient, and is a proposition which does not meet the approbation of this Convention." Did the election, then, decide that Mississippi should not secede from the Union? I know of no party, and trust there are few, very few individuals, who desired that she should adopt so suicidal a policy. Did the election decide that the people of Mississippi approved the action of Congress on the subject of slavery, and the territories of the United States? I hope not, I believe not. For the future, as well as the past, I should deeply lament such a decision. Have the people decided that, though not satisfied, not approving, yet they will bear the evil without seeking any remedy, and shape their future action by the course of future events? I bow to the popular judgment, and but fulfil the declaration I have heretofore made, and comply with the duty of a citizen, when I say I acquiesce in the decision of the people, the source of all power in the State, whatever that decision may be.

Reared in the State of Mississippi, she is endeared to me by the earliest and tenderest associations. As a Mississippian, I have passed more than a third of my life in the public service, military and civil. My property and my family
are here. Permanently identified by feeling and by interest with the fortunes of Mississippi, her fate must be mine. I could not and would not divide them. My past life must answer for my devotion to the Union. If my acts have not shown it, verbal declarations should not suffice. To secure the rights of the State, and to perpetuate the Union, I have believed it indispensable that the Constitution should be strictly construed and strictly observed; that the federal agent should be bound down "by the chains of the Constitution." Entertaining these views, it has been with equal pain and apprehension that I have seen a steady, and, of late, a rapidly increasing progress in the encroachments of the federal government upon the rights of the States. The tendency of the times is towards consolidation. The doctrine that the majority of Congress, with the approval of the President, can pass any law which their discretion may dictate, and that there is no other remedy than by an appeal to the Supreme Court, is to make the federal government "the exclusive or final judge of the extent of power delegated to itself." To this it would be only necessary to add the power to coerce the States, and consolidation would be complete—the government of our fathers would no longer exist, save as a memory and a name. It is in the nature of things that the South, being the minority, should resist such tendency, and this has been our history.
It is no longer, however, within the power of their repre-
sentatives in Congress to check it, and reliance must be
had upon the States, which Mr. Madison said formed our
security against projects of usurpation by the federal
government, and to which Mr. Jefferson looked for the preser-
vation of the Constitution, when he claimed for them the
right to judge as well of infractions as of the mode and
measure of redress. Your representatives can do but little
more than serve as faithful sentinels to warn you of ap-
proaching danger. The rest must be left where I have always
proposed to leave it, to the decision of the State.

The Convention of the State which will assemble in
November, and the subsequent action of the people upon its
proceedings, will fully determine the position of the State
on its Federal relations. As a candidate for Governor, I
have, therefore, only to present my views on the domestic
policy of Mississippi.

I am in favor of promoting Education in the State, and
for this purpose, of taking all the necessary means to ren-
der the land held for the benefit of Colleges and township
schools efficient for the purposes to which they are dedi-
cated; of encouraging, by all proper means, the establish-
ment of manufactories within the State, and the development
of those resources with which nature has so richly endowed
it; of making the grant of the swamp and overflowed lands available to prevent the inundation of the country between the Yazoo and Mississippi rivers; and for the improvement of the navigable streams within the State; promoting the construction of railroads wherever they can be made by the voluntary contributions of the people, with such aid as the State may afford, by the exercise of its legislative power, without resorting to taxation. By such improvements, much of the land in the State which is now of little value, because of its remoteness from market, would be brought into profitable cultivation, increasing, at the same time, the revenue and power of the State, whilst it added to the comfort and prosperity of the people.

For a just exposition of the popular will, and for full information as to the wants of every district, I should, if elected, look to your immediate representatives, the Legislature of the State, and as in every position I have held, for and from the people, would regard the power conferred as a trust held for them, and their will, as only of minor importance to the obligations of the Constitution, and my own conscience. JEFF'N DAVIS.
Bounded on the west by the Mississippi, on the north by the Yazoo, on the south and east by the Big Black River, Warren County was established by the territorial General Assembly of Mississippi in 1809. As the northernmost part of what was known as the "Natchez District," the area has been continuously inhabited by white men since 1718. In 1836 the county seat of Warren County was moved from Warrenton to Vicksburg. Below Vicksburg along the river frontage of the county were "Brierfield" and "Hurricane" plantations owned by Jefferson and his brother Joseph E. Davis, respectively (Rowland, *Heart of the South*, II, 844-45).

2 The announcement proclaiming Davis' nomination, dated September 16, 1851, from the committee appointed to fill vacancies in the ticket was widely published; see, for example, the *Jackson Mississippian and State Gazette*, September 19, 1851, or the *Vicksburg Weekly Whig*, September 24, 1851.

3 Davis had served from March 4, 1845, to June 1846 as a representative to the Twenty-ninth Congress and from August 1847 until his resignation on September 23, 1851, as a senator (*BDAC*, 784).
4Davis is doubtless referring here to the Kentucky Resolutions of November 16, 1798, and February 22, 1799, and the Virginia Resolutions of December 24, 1798 (Henry Steele Commager, Documents of American History [New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1949], 178-84). The Kentucky Resolutions, Davis believed, correctly described the general government as the result of the compact agreed to by each state, a "voluntary union of free sovereign States under a written compact confining the action of the General Government to the expressly enumerated power which had been delegated therein." Davis considered this concept the cornerstone of Jeffersonian Democracy (J. Davis, Rise and Fall, I, 385).

5James Knox Polk, born November 2, 1795, in Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, was a member of the Tennessee legislature, the United States Congress, and governor of Tennessee before being elected eleventh President of the United States in 1844. Polk died June 15, 1849, in Nashville (BDAC, 1467).

6Davis was a district elector in Mississippi in 1844; with Henry Stuart Foote he canvassed the state for the Polk and Dallas ticket (Winston, High Stakes, 36).

7Varina Davis recalls in her Memoir (I, 228) that Davis took his seat in the House December 8, 1845; the session had begun on December 1 (BDAC, 141).

8Davis resigned his seat in June 1846 (ibid., 142).
arrived back in Vicksburg from the Mexican War on June 15, 1847 (Lynda J. Lasswell, "The First Regiment of Mississippi Infantry in the Mexican War and Letters of Jefferson Davis Concerning the War" [Master's thesis, Rice University, 1969], 48). On December 6, 1847, he returned to Washington to fill the Senate seat vacated earlier that year by the death of Jesse Speight (BDAC, 146).

9 The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo was ratified by the Senate on March 10, 1848 (Nevins, Ordeal of the Union, I, 21).

10 Obviously a typesetter's mistake; the word should be "permanent."

11 The Oregon bill was passed on August 12, 1848 (Nevins, Ordeal of the Union, I, 25).

12 Born and educated in Virginia, Henry Clay spent most of his adult life representing Kentucky in the United States House and Senate. In 1811 he took his seat in the House where he remained except for brief interruptions until 1825, and during most of that time he sat in the speaker's chair. One interruption came in 1814 when he resigned to go to Ghent as a peace negotiator. Clay accepted a Cabinet post from John Quincy Adams, serving as secretary of state from 1825 to 1829. In 1831 he was again elected to the Senate where he stayed until his resignation in 1842. Returned to that chamber once more in 1849, Clay died in Washington on June 29, 1852. He was the unsuccess-
ful Whig candidate for President in 1824, 1832, and 1844 (BDAC, 703-704). In an attempt to put an end to sectional strife Clay introduced into the Senate in January 1850 a set of resolutions which evolved into the Compromise of 1850 (Nevins, Ordeal of the Union, I, 344).

13 For Clay's resolutions, see Congressional Globe, 31 Cong., 1 Sess., 246-47 (January 29, 1850).

14 Typesetter's error; the word should be "not."

15 E. g., Henry Stuart Foote; his protest against Clay's resolutions immediately followed their introduction (Congressional Globe, 31 Cong., 1 Sess., 247-48 [January 29, 1850]).

16 A native Tennessean, John Bell (February 15, 1797-September 10, 1869) was a member of the state Senate before being elected to a seat in the United States Congress which he held from 1827 to 1841, serving for a while in 1834 as speaker. He was secretary of war for about six months in 1841. In 1847 Bell was again in the state House of Representatives; that same year he was elected to the national Senate where he remained until 1859. Bell was the unsuccessful candidate for President on the Constitutional Union ticket in 1860 (BDAC, 539).

The Committee of Thirteen to which Davis refers was elected April 19, 1850, comprised of Lewis Cass (Mich.), Daniel S. Dickinson (N. Y.), Jesse D. Bright (Ind.), Daniel Webster (Mass.), Samuel S. Phelps (Vt.), James Cooper (Pa.), William R. King [7]
(Ala.), Solomon W. Downs (La.), James M. Mason (Va.), Willie P. Mangum (N. C.), John M. Berrien (Ga.), and John Bell (Congressional Globe, 31 Cong., 1 Sess., 780 [April 19, 1850]).

17 Thomas Hart Benton was born on March 14, 1782, near Hillsboro, North Carolina. He was admitted to the bar in Tennessee in 1806 and practiced law in Franklin until his election to the state Senate three years later. In the War of 1812 Benton served first as a colonel of volunteers and then as a lieutenant colonel of regulars. After the war he moved to St. Louis where he combined a law practice with newspaper editing. In 1821 Benton began a career in the United States Senate that lasted for the next thirty years. After an unsuccessful race for re-election, Benton won a seat in Congress (1853-1855), which proved to be his last public office. He died April 10, 1858 (BDAC, 546).

18 See Item 4, n. 4.

19 Henry Stuart Foote; see Congressional Globe, 31 Cong., 1 Sess., Appendix, 1415 (July 23, 1850).

20 Ibid., 1416. The southern boundary proposed was 36 degrees 30 minutes; "35 degrees" is doubtless a printer's error.

21 William Lewis Sharkey was born near Muscle Shoals, Tennessee, on July 12, 1798. After serving in the War of 1812, Sharkey read law at Lebanon, Tennessee, before emigrating to Natchez to study under Judge Edward Turner. Admitted to the
bar in 1822, he practiced at Warrenton and then at Vicksburg in partnership with John I. Guion. By 1828 he was a member of the state House of Representatives and four years later became a circuit judge. A few months later in 1832 he was elected to the Mississippi High Court of Errors and Appeals where he served as chief justice until his resignation in the fall of 1850 to resume private practice. A respected jurist, Sharkey helped compile *The Revised Code of the Statute Laws of Mississippi* adopted in 1857. He was offered and declined Cabinet posts in both the Taylor and Fillmore administrations; he also resigned an appointment as consul to Havana ca. 1850. Although known to be an old-line Whig, Sharkey was chosen president of the Nashville Convention of 1850. Opposed to secession, he took the oath of allegiance to the United States in 1863 and after the war helped shape Mississippi's reconstruction serving as provisional governor during the summer and fall of 1865. Sharkey was later elected to the national Senate but never served in that capacity because of the repudiation of President Johnson's reconstruction plan. Sharkey died March 30, 1873 (DAB, XVII, 21-22; Rowland, *Courts, Judges, and Lawyers*, 87-92).

22 *Congressional Globe*, 31 Cong., 1 Sess., Appendix, 1514 (August 6, 1850).

23 James Murray Mason was born in Fairfax County, Virginia,
on November 3, 1798. He began practicing law in Virginia at the age of twenty-two and within a few years was taking an active part in state politics. Mason served in the United House of Representatives from 1837 to 1839 and in the Senate from 1847 to 1861 when secession was declared. A member of the Confederate Provisional Congress at the outbreak of the war, Mason became a commissioner to Great Britain where he remained until the war was over. His initial voyage to England was interrupted by the Trent affair. After the war Mason lived in Canada for several years before returning to Virginia where he died April 28, 1871 (BDAC, 1272).

Among Daniel Webster's really lesser accomplishments, he represented successively two states—New Hampshire and Massachusetts—in the United States Congress. First elected to the Senate from Massachusetts, Webster served from 1841 to 1843 as secretary of state, after which he returned to the Senate (1845-1850). Once again Webster resigned his Senate seat to become secretary of state in which capacity he served until his death on October 24, 1852 (BDAC, 1787). It was during his last term in the Senate that the compromise struggle raged; some historians credit Webster's Seventh of March speech with helping to bring about the Compromise of 1850 (Rainwater, Mississippi: Storm Center, 18).

Charles Sumner (January 6, 1811–March 11, 1874) had been
elected to the Senate in 1851, after an unsuccessful campaign for the House in 1848. Born and reared in Boston, a graduate of Harvard University and Law School, Sumner had practiced law there and been affiliated for a while with the Whig party before helping found the Free-Soil party in 1848. From the time of his election to the Senate, Sumner served continuously in that body until his death (BDAC, 1676).

Salmon Portland Chase was born January 13, 1808, in New Hampshire, moved to Ohio while still in school, but returned to New Hampshire for his university education at Dartmouth. After studying law in Washington, D. C., Chase began his practice in Cincinnati, where he became active in municipal and national politics. A Liberty party member in 1841, Chase joined the Free-Soil organization in 1848. He was elected United States senator (1849-1855), governor of Ohio (1855-1860), senator again briefly (1860-1861) before becoming Lincoln's treasury secretary (BDAC, 684). In December 1864 Lincoln appointed Chase Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, in which capacity Chase presided over the proceedings against Jefferson Davis and the impeachment of Andrew Johnson. Chase died May 7, 1873 (Richard B. Morris, ed., Encyclopedia of American History [New York: Harper & Brothers, 1961], 685-86).

James Cooper (May 8, 1810–March 28, 1863) was born in Frederick County, Maryland, and educated in Pennsylvania where
he began practicing law at Gettysburg. He served as a Whig in the United States House of Representatives (1839-1843), was elected to the state legislature (1844-1848) acting for one term as speaker, and was appointed state attorney general before his election to the United States Senate. A member of that body from 1849 to 1855, Cooper was a member of the Committee of Thirteen in 1850 (see n. 16). At the outbreak of the Civil War, Cooper obtained a commission as brigadier general of volunteers. He died while commander of Camp Chase, Ohio (BDAC, 736; DAB, IV, 400).

28 Millard Fillmore became President on the death of Zachary Taylor on July 9, 1850. In 1848 he was chosen Taylor's running mate largely to appease the Clay faction of the Whig ticket. Fillmore lost his own presidential bids as a Whig in 1852 and as a National American in 1856. The thirteenth President of the United States died March 8, 1874 (BDAC, 886; DAB, VI, 380).

29 See Appendix, Document 2 for the complete platform of the Democratic State Rights party of Mississippi.

30 James Madison, fourth President of the United States, was born March 16, 1751. A member of the first four United States Congresses and secretary of state for eight years, Madison climaxed his career with two terms as President. Afterwards he retired to "Montpelier" where he died June 28, 1836 (BDAC, 1252). Davis considered Madison one "of the most eminent of the authors
of the Constitution, and . . . pre-eminent contemporary ex-
pounders of its meaning . . . " (J. Davis, Rise and Fall, I, 164).

31 Third President of the United States, Thomas Jefferson
was a planter, scientist, author, architect, economist, diplo-
mat, and statesman. Born April 13, 1743, in Virginia, he
achieved eminence in colonial and state governments before
becoming a national and international political figure. At
the expiration of his presidential term, Jefferson retired
to "Monticello," where he died on July 4, 1826 (BDAC, 1118).

32 This convention met in Jackson on November 10, 1850
(Vicksburg Weekly Whig, November 19, 1851); for a discussion
of its transactions, see Chapter V.
My dear Parents,

no letter again this week. I think the abominable boat
must carry them away after bringing them up. After I wrote
last week on the downward trip of the boat I received the
oranges for which I felt very grateful, but don't put your¬
self to the trouble to send those delicacies to me for you
know I know what a trouble it is and my health is very good,
indeed I think I am fairly acclimated here, not having had
a spell of chill and fever this summer. The first pain I
have had for a long time I am now rejoicing in. Pulling the
dead dahlias off the bushes I took hold of one with a bee
in it which stung me, and my hand is so swelled I can scarcely
use it, and now is my busiest time giving out linseys, and
having them made against the next cold spell. Is it not folorn
work. Bettie spends her nights with me, and my days are too
busy to miss her. No letters from Jeff since he left Jackson,
and he promised so faithfully to telegraph me that I feel
anxious about him. Poor fellow he is Just finding out what
I predicted, and every body but his friends knew, that the
Southern Rights cause is the losing one now, whatever it may
be when further aggressions have been perpetrated. Pecuniari¬
ly defeat would be the very best thing which could happen to
us, for the outlay upon servants, silver, china, cut glass, table linen, bed linen, and carriage, and horses, would be immense for our fortune, to say nothing of the dinner parties given to the members, and the wives and so forth, I having at present the immense stock "in my cellars" (as Caroline would say,) of six bottles of port wine, and a gallon of vinegar and one of brandy. So far as its influence upon Jeff's popularity would go, I doubt my power to bear with insolence, and to conciliate fools, and busy bodies, and his to bear with tiresome friends, and I am afraid some time when the people are flying in on levee nights I might get tired standing; and sit down, and get to talking and forget the strangers. All those things I have balanced, and am as contented as possible to remain where I am. Now to more agreeable things. I am very busy making a fall garden or rather was. Sister Eliza says no one can make a fall garden here but I insisting that I would try, she immediately commenced a fall garden, and asked the loan of my gardener to help hers, leaving mine without a hand, which upon my refusing she got Brother Joe to ask me for him to trim his trees, thereby suspending my operations entirely, however I will try when he comes back to get it made yet. I will send him up to Cousin Florida's by the end of next week to get cuttings of roses, and hope next spring if you will come after them to be able to give you at least fifty
dollars worth which will set your garden off beautifully. I am sick, and tired of buying roses they die from the graft up, and leave you a common root for your long attention to it. I have some very handsome roses all of which I have planted cuttings from for you, and some look as if they might live, though there is no telling whether they will or not until Spring. I have a grand bed prepared for the orkney rose, and I am looking out for it with the hope that it may distance what Mr Hatch calls the "gold of ophiaa," meaning the gold of ophir, which is fawn color, and quite a new rose, mine with "Howell luck" died down to the graft, and put up a poor pink rose. I have a vegetable ivory nut growing, and some beautiful plants from Chili, Brazil, Turkey, some from John Perkins, some from my kind old friend Mr Seaton. So much verbena that I cannot get it all planted, scarlet, pink white lilack, royal purple, and crimson. Tell Maggie her little bed is covered with mignonette and purple, and Crimson verbena, and that her cloth of gold rose nearly covers the side of the arbor, and that she had better come back, and get some, and work in her garden. How do you get on with your cows. I am afraid I shall lose the half of our young calves with the acorns, and have lost one of the finest I ever saw. How is your little white bull. It is not very relevant to what I am writing but please make Ben go to the S. Burke for a box next week for you, and I
regret that what I send is not better. I hope the children*16 will be pleased. I feel almost babyish about seeing you all. You both particularly. Nothing but the necessity of remaining here prevents me from deserting, and going down, however I don't think Brother Joe would let me go now if I was ever so uprorious, for Mr Shook went to New Orleans about three weeks ago, and returned sick, and died with yellow fever day before yesterday, bleeding at the mouth and gums. Brother Joe seems dread-fully cast down by it, he was very kind to the poor fellow, had him brought to the house, and taken care of, and showed much more feeling than I thought he had for him.

You say Ma, in your letter that Aunt Frances*17 is coming down to New Orleans to live. I am very very sorry for it. Now it is no use to look shocked, and say I am "very wrong in cherishing such feelings" because as sure as you are*18

1 See Item 2, n. 1.

2 William B. and Margaret K. Howell; for biographical sketches, see Item 2, nn. 4 and 2, respectively.

3 Linseys were cloths made of linen and wool; the term also applies to fabric of unknown fiber content (Funk, ed., A Standard Dictionary, 1035).

4 "Bettie" is doubtless the same person Varina calls "Betty" in her letter of July 22, 1851; see Item 2, n. 20.

5 Davis left Jackson on October 21 (Jackson Mississippian and State Gazette, October 24, 1851).

6 Caroline Davis Robins Leonard was born in 1823, the youngest of Joseph E. Davis' three daughters. About 1842 she married Thomas E. Robins; two sons, both dying in infancy, were born to them. Caroline is thought to have been widowed by 1850. About 1856 she married Abram F. Leonard, newspaper editor and poet, of Norfolk, Virginia (H. A. Davis, The Davis Family, 81; J. Cyril O'Neill, comp., "Warren County Marriages, 1810-1860," Journal of Mississippi History, XXIX [August 1967], 146, XXX [May 1968], 152). Caroline was still living in 1901 (Caroline Leonard to Mrs. Harper, March 21, 1901, Lise Mitchell Papers [Howard Tilton Memorial Library, Tulane University, New Orleans]).
"Levee nights" was the term applied to general receptions of callers or visitors (Funk, ed., A Standard Dictionary, 1022).

See Item 2, n. 9 for a biographical sketch of Eliza Davis.

For a biographical sketch of Davis' eldest brother, see Item 2, n. 8.

Joseph E. Davis' daughter Florida Davis McCaleb Laughlin was actually Varina's niece by marriage. Born in 1817 or 1818 Florida married David McCaleb on October 21, 1830, and they went to live at "Diamond Place," the plantation about thirteen miles from "Hurricane," given to Florida by her father (H. A. Davis, The Davis Family, 80; Woodville Republican, November 13, 1830; Strode, ed., Private Letters, 8). After McCaleb's death Florida married Edmund C. Laughlin in 1848 (O'Neill, "Marriages," Journal of Mississippi History, XXIX, 214).

Ophir was the place from which Solomon brought gold and gems; it also refers to gold fields on the Malay Peninsula (Funk, ed., A Standard Dictionary, 2304). This may possibly refer to a rose that had been developed or imported from the Ophir Farm in White Plains, New York (Alice M. Earle, Sun Dials and Roses of Yesterday [New York: The MacMillan Co., 1922], 185).

This is most probably a reference to Judge John Perkins, Sr., one of the wealthiest cotton planters in the area and former owner of "The Briars," Varina's family home. John
Perkins was born the fourth of seven children in Somerset County, Maryland, on May 17, 1781. After an apprenticeship to a merchant and working for various merchants, Perkins visited Natchez, Mississippi, in the winter of 1802 and decided to stay. He was soon appointed court clerk and worked also as a road builder and superintendent of a brickyard. He began buying land around Natchez and across the river in Louisiana. By 1806 he was able to return to Maryland for his two sisters and some nineteen slaves. From 1807 to 1811 Perkins established himself at Vidalia, Louisiana, as a planter. His success was such that in 1812 he built a new home "Somerset," about seventy miles north of Natchez. About 1816 he was appointed judge of Concordia Parish, Louisiana, and in 1817 or 1818 he married the widowed Mary Rives Bynum who had four (perhaps five) children by her first husband Benjamin Bynum, and three more by John Perkins. Mary died on August 12, 1824. Between 1824 and 1828 Judge Perkins built "The Briars" to which he brought his second wife, Zilpha Calvitt Seaton, a widow of Port Gibson; she died in 1840. From 1830-1840 Perkins engaged in banking at Grand Gulf, Mississippi, while continuing to enlarge his cotton-planting interests. "Somerset Estate" grew to encompass five plantations totaling 17,500 acres. The acreage together with some 250 slaves were valued in 1857 at $600,000. In the 1850s Perkins also built "The Oaks" near
Columbus, Mississippi, where he spent the last nine years of his life. He died November 30, 1866. The plantations comprising "Somerset" were aligned in back of Ashwood Landing directly across the Mississippi from Davis Bend. From here it is likely that Varina received the plants (Robert D. Calhoun, "The John Perkins Family of Northeast Louisiana," Louisiana Historical Quarterly, XIX [January 1936], 71-78; Percy Lee Rainwater, "The Memorial of John Perkins," ibid., XX [October 1937], 970-79).

13 "Maggie" is no doubt a reference to Varina's sister Margaret Graham Howell, born April 30, 1842 (Morgan, comp., Howell Genealogy). Margaret and her brother Becket accompanied Jefferson Davis and his wife to Washington in late 1847 and again when Davis became secretary of war in 1853 (Strode, American Patriot, 196, 255). Margaret married Karl de Wechmar Stoess in 1870 and lived in Liverpool, England (Strode, ed., Private Letters, 341, 457, 507).

14 Mignonette or Roseda odorata is a North African plant cultivated for its sweet fragrance (Funk, ed., A Standard Dictionary, 1123).

15 The Steamboat Burke was most probably one of the class of vessels known as transients; operated by small businessmen, these boats ran without a fixed schedule carrying mail and passengers over relatively short distances (Louis C. Hunter,

16 See Item 2, n. 22.

17 Possibly Frances Priscilla Howell Carter, daughter of Charles Burr Howell, Varina's uncle. Frances was born May 9, 1819, married Albert Gallatin Carter on January 14, 1836, and died April 26, 1884 (Morgan, comp., Howell Genealogy).

18 The rest of the letter has not been found.
My dear Sir,

your letter of last month should have been more promptly answered but for a wish to send you the productions of Judge Sharkey as requested. He was the author of the address of the central meeting of this state which called the popular convention which proposed the Nashville convention. He was President of the popular convention and of the Nashville convention, was prominent among the actors and subsequent defenders of both until he found sufficient inducement elsewhere than in such assemblages to abandon the cause (the agitation) of which he had been among the first promoters and most extreme advocates. He wrote a severe criticism on the course of the Nat. Intelligencer in which he defended the Nashville convention, and published a letter condemning the compromise bills, to which before he had seen them he had given a partial approval. He was the author of the address criticized in the national Intelligencer (of the 14th March 1850,) as the first distinct avowal of the purpose to establish a southern confederacy. In that paper of
you will find his reply dated April 4th 1850

To the other inquiries as to his past political course I reply—He was once a Democrat, (Jackson man) repudiated Democracy and became a Nullifier, passed without denying the creed of Nullification into the Whig ranks. I do not know whether he voted for Genl. Taylor or not but suppose he did.

No man in our State did so much to start the movement for state action in defence of Southern rights, and the prominence thus acquired must have been the elevation which attracted the notice of the present administration. The policy and the morality of rewarding a man who abandons the cause into which he had enlisted many of his friends, because it proved less popular than was anticipated, or because it was not the high way to federal patronage I leave to those who will have to decide on the conduct of the President, whether as political friends or constitutional advisers. As soon as I get either of the pamphlets issued by the meeting or convention of Missi or the Nashville convention, and I had hoped before this to have received them all, I will mail them to your address. He has made no speech (I believe) which has been published.

We have had much excitement in our state during the past summer, and a false issue has proved a bond to unite
the minority, Whigs, with a portion of the Democrats and
give the state to the so called Union party--by this, Demo-
crats who were rejected by the party have been put into power,
and the Whigs gain the advantage to be derived from incompetent,
or unprincipled officers for whom they are not, as a party,
responsible. I know "a soul like thine would spurn

The spoil from such foul foray borne": and
therefore state the fact without circumlocution to you. It
will give me pleasure to hear from you, and to be remembered
as your friend. Separated from the exciting strife of poli-
ticians we may the more profitably look on the whirl of their
bubbles, and perhaps better than they see when and why their
bubbles will burst. As the spectator detects the errors of
the player in games where the happiness of a people and the
permanence (illegible) of a government are not the stakes.

Very truly your's  JEFFN: DAVIS

1 See Item 1, n. 1.

2 See Item 7, n. 1.

3 Born July 24, 1796, in Sussex County, Delaware, John Middleton Clayton, a lawyer by profession, held several state offices before beginning a long, almost uninterrupted career in the United States Senate: he was a state representative in 1824, Delaware secretary of state 1826-1828, chief justice of the state Supreme Court 1836-1839, and a United States senator from 1829 to 1836, 1845 to 1849, and 1853 until his death November 9, 1856. From March 1849 to July 1850 Clayton was secretary of state in Taylor's Cabinet; during this time he helped negotiate the Clayton-Bulwer Treaty (BDAC, 705).

A Whig most of his political life, Clayton was the only southern senator who voted for the Wilmot Proviso. In 1848 Clayton won the votes of Davis, Calhoun, and other southern rights senators with a compromise which attempted to work out some of the difficulties aggravated by the proviso (Nevins, Ordeal of the Union, I, 23).

4 See Item 7, n. 21 for a biographical sketch of Judge William L. Sharkey.

5 This bipartisan meeting took place in Jackson on May 7,
1849 (Nevins, Ordeal of the Union, I, 248).

6 The popular convention was held in Jackson in October 1849 (ibid., 248; Hearon, "Mississippi," 63).

7 The first session of the Nashville Convention met on June 3, 1850 (Hearon, "Mississippi," 123).

8 Born on March 15, 1767, Andrew Jackson was successively a saddler's apprentice in South Carolina, a lawyer and solicitor in North Carolina, United States representative and senator from Tennessee, Tennessee Supreme Court judge, a planter, a general in the Creek War and the War of 1812, governor of Florida and again senator from Tennessee before being elected eighth President of the United States. He died June 8, 1845 (BDAC, 1109-1110).

9 Nullification was the term applied to a political doctrine first expounded by Calhoun in the late 1820s and early 1830s. Briefly, it meant that if a state judged a federal law unconstitutional, that state could declare the law null and void within the state's borders until three-fourths of the states of the Union had made pronouncements on the law (Charles S. Sydnor, The Development of Southern Sectionalism, 1819-1848 [(Baton Rouge): Louisiana State University Press, 1948], 212-14).

10 Although born in Virginia, Zachary Taylor moved with his family to Kentucky the spring after his birth on November 24,
1784. Formally educated only by a tutor, Taylor spent his early years helping his father on the family plantation before beginning an army career that spanned four decades. Because most of these years were spent on frontier posts, Taylor's combat experience was largely with Indians. It was during the period spent at Fort Crawford that Taylor met Jefferson Davis, whom his daughter Sarah Knox married on June 17, 1835. After the Seminole War, Taylor was stationed on the southwest frontier until the outbreak of the war with Mexico. Taylor and Davis fought together in the Battle of Buena Vista (February 22-23, 1847), which brought the war to a close in the northern provinces, and both emerged as heroes. Although politically inactive and sometimes vague about his party affiliation, Taylor successfully ran for President as a Whig in 1848. He died while in office on July 7, 1850. Jefferson Davis, whom Taylor still considered a son-in-law, was at his side (DAB, XVIII, 349-54; Strode, American Patriot, 95, 228).

11 President Fillmore appointed Sharkey consul to Havana, whose task it would be to smooth out United States-Cuban relations ruffled by the filibustering expeditions; Sharkey served only a very short time. He also declined Fillmore's offer of the post of secretary of war (Rowland, ed., Encyclopedia, II, 651; Foote, Bench and Bar, 65).

12 The convention met on November 10, 1851 (Vicksburg Weekly
The second session of the Nashville Convention began on November 11, 1851 (Hearon, "Mississippi," 175).
JEFFERSON DAVIS TO ETHELBERT BARKSDALE AND F. C. JONES

Brierfield, 1 Miss., 27th Dec., 1851.

Gentlemen: 2 When on a journey to the northern counties of our State in the month of October last, 3 I saw, for the first time, a pamphlet entitled "A Sketch of the Life of Jeff. Davis," &c., &c. 4 There are in it some errors in relation to subjects so unimportant to others, that I will not speak of them further than thus to indicate their existence; but there is one of a different character of which I desire through your columns to make public correction. This had seemed to me proper, because the pamphlet has been thrown into general circulation, and bears upon its face conclusive evidence that it is the work of a personal and political friend. 5 The following passage occurs on the 25th page:

"In the presidential election of 1848, Col. Davis was placed in a delicate, and in some respects, rather a painful position. His father-in-law, Gen. Taylor, 6 had become a candidate of the whig party, while he, ever a democrat, faithful and true to his principles, felt constrained to support Gen. Cass, 7 the candidate of the party to which he belonged. The principal difficulty with Col. Davis, however, grew out of his distrust in the sincerity of Gen. Cass's avowal of principle. The Nicholson letter, 8 he felt satis-
fied, was intended to deceive the South, and that Gen. Cass was well apprised that southern democrats were placing a construction upon it, which, when it should favor his interests, he would disavow. The doctrine of "squatter sovereignty," which the whig party charged was contained in that letter, and at war with all our rights in the territories, he knew to be true, from a confidential conversation which he was not permitted to disclose. He acted, however, upon the principle of a choice of evils, and resolved to stand by his party principles."

Bearing to the people of Mississippi the confidential relation of a representative, possessed by the position with which they had honored me of peculiar opportunities to learn the character and opinions of Gen. Cass. I was under more than the ordinary obligation when addressing my fellow-citizens in advocacy of his election to the Presidency, to give my opinions cordially and fully, not merely to tell the truth, but to tell the whole truth. I acted upon this as a rule of conduct when I admitted that Gen. Cass held the doctrine in reference to the power of the Territorial inhabitants, which the Whigs urged against him as a disqualification for the Presidency, and which the Democrats denied to be his opinion. I kept sacred my obligation to my constituents though it cost me the gratification of my opponents, and the censure of my
friends. Time, the revealer of truth, I have the happiness to know, has since relieved me of the censure, and but for the considerations I have mentioned the hostile criticism which has fallen upon the paragraph quoted would have passed unnoticed. The error of the author's statement consists in attributing to me the opinion that Gen. Cass intended by his letter to Mr. Nicholson to deceive the South—by fraudulent assurances to obtain the votes of Southern Democrats, and when in power to disavow the opinions on which he had obtained their support. Had I believed him guilty, or capable of such a crime, I would neither have advocated his claims, nor have given him my own vote. The letter to Mr. Nicholson, according to my construction, contained the opinion familiarly known as the doctrine of Squatter Sovereignty.

Gen. Cass has not only admitted the correctness of that construction, but contended that it was the only one of which his language was susceptible, and said he could appeal to Southern Senators, who were in Washington when the letter was written, to prove that such was his meaning at the time.

I considered his meaning quite plain when he proposed, in the letter referred to, to limit the action of Congress in relation to Territories, to the creation of proper governments, "and to the necessary provision for their eventual admission into the Union, leaving, in the meantime, to the
people inhabiting them to regulate their own concerns in their own way." But I was doubly assured by a conversation with Judge McLean, 9 of the Supreme Court of the United States, as to the meaning of Gen. Cass. That, I presume, is the conversation to which the author of the pamphlet referred. Thus, I learned that Gen. Cass consulted Judge McLean in relation to the position taken in his Nicholson letter, and what was his own interpretation of that part of it which afterwards, during the Presidential canvass of 1848, received such opposite construction. The conversation was private, and I did not consider myself at liberty to refer to it when, in the canvass of 1848, my construction of Gen. Cass’s meaning excited no little feeling against me among my political friends in Mississippi, and when, therefore, I had the strongest temptation to produce authority to sustain my position.

Cass, on the 20th of February, 1850, by a speech in the United States Senate, gave publicity [illegible] 10 I then [illegible] 10 to which he had [illegible] 10 then, nor do I now believe that he had authorized any one to say to the Democracy of Mississippi that the true construction of his letter was that which they were placing upon it, which was that he did not recognize the territorial inhabitants as possessed of power to prohibit slavery, until they should form a Constitution, and be admitted as a State into the

[10]
Union. In other words, that it was to the people of a State, not to the inhabitants of a Territory, that the power belonged. If Gen. Cass, in 1848, had authorized a confidential friend to announce that as his interpretation, in 1850, he would not, in the Senate, have placed a different construction on his language, and quote it to justify him in saying that he could not conjecture how different opinions could exist as to its meaning, and that if any one had misunderstood him before, it was his own fault.

It was not distrust of the political integrity, nor belief of fraud, nor anticipation of treachery, but objection to the opinion of Gen. Cass in relation to the legislative power of territorial inhabitants, which constituted the "principal difficulty" with me.

It will be remembered that, in the Presidential canvass of 1848, the doctrine of "Squatter sovereignty" had no advocates in Mississippi. Whigs asserted it to be the creed of Gen. Cass, and denounced it as worse than the Wilmot proviso. Democrats strongly reprobated the doctrine, and denied that Gen. Cass entertained it. I differed from my political friends as to the fact, on which alone an issue was joined, and admitted that the Whigs were right in the assertion that the doctrine was clearly contained in the Nicholson letter. Yet, I supported Gen. Cass as a candidate for the Presidency,
and advocated his election before my fellow-citizens of Mississippi as fully as my physical condition would permit. I did so, not because of any toleration for the opinion to which I have adverted, as being then so universally condemned by the people of this State, but because I considered it unconnected with the functions of the President, and because I believed Gen. Cass reliable for defence against the danger than apprehended,—the danger from Congressional legislation for the interdiction of slavery in the Territories. I held that he was bound to veto the "Wilmot Proviso," or any law which Congress should pass to prohibit slavery in the Territories; that he was opposed to the abandonment or destruction of that great conservative feature in our Government, the Presidential veto; that he was pledged to the resolutions of the Democratic National Conventon, declarative of the cardinal principles of our party; that, if elected, he would be surrounded by Democratic counsellors, and would, in the main, administer he Government according to that political creed which I believed most conducive to public prosperity, peace and security, at home and abroad.

The failure of Congress to provide governments for the territory acquired from Mexico, was followed by events in California\(^\text{12}\) which gave the highest practical importance to the doctrine of "Squatter Sovereignty." Its character was
changed from speculative to real; and with the change came
the extraordinary political development that they who most
bitterly denounced it in theory had become its apologists
and defenders when put into practice. If, then, a Democrat
had foreseen, in 1848, all which has since transpired, what
would he have gained by leaving his party and opposing its
candidate?

My purpose, however, is not to justify my own course,
but merely to correct misapprehension in relation to it, and
to this end I refer to remarks made by me when the transaction
was more recent, and which had been published in the debates
of the Senate, before the pamphlet in question was written.

On the 20th of February, 1850, in the United States Senate,
I replied to Gen. Cass as follows:

The Senator from Michigan, in alluding to myself, has
spoken of me as having charged him with inconsistency. I
certainly intended to make no such charge against the honorable
Senator, even if kindness was not the prevailing characteristic
of his heart. I made no charge of inconsistency upon him;
but, on the other hand, regretted to find him consistent in
a position which I originally considered erroneous, and think
has been shown, by recent events, to be productive of evils
the magnitude of which, now dimly seen in the distance, we may
be soon called upon to measure. I always construed his "Nichol-
son letter," as he has explained it now; and because I never would defend him upon the view which I held to be equivalent to turning over the territory to the first occupants of it—those who in the race of emigration should first reach it—some of my political friends, who always construed it as only meaning that the inhabitants, when they formed a State government, were entitled to the sovereignty of other States of the Union, considered me as wanting in the maintenance of his claims as a candidate for the Presidency. I have incurred responsibility, because I never would put that construction upon it. I thought I understood the opinions of the Honorable Senator from Michigan before he wrote that letter; and I knew of the conference to which he has alluded, very soon after it occurred, but to which I have never heretofore referred. I understood the opinions of the Senator to be the same then as I understand them to be now. They have never met with my approval. I approved of so much of his position as denied that Congress had a power over the territories, beyond that derived from the necessity of discharging the duties of trustee of the public lands. I had confidence in the character of that Senator, and I have now. I held that his only connection with the subject would be, if elected to the presidency of which we then had some hope, that growing out of the action of the Federal Government; if Congress passed a bill to exclude
slavery from the Territories, that he would, in accordance with his opinion of the power of Congress over the Territories, veto such bill: therefore, I was willing to trust him with functions growing out of the federal authority. His doctrine, which acknowledges sovereignty in any community which may by accident or design be planted on territory belonging to the States, I always rejected.

The opinion of the Senator as to the power of the inhabitants of the Territories would have no official connection with the office of President, and in that connection was not of vital importance. I stated then, as I state now, that I believed it to be wrong; and the very position which we are now in shows that it is dangerous. Its result is now seen, when men, without authority and law, have gathered together—a conglomerated mass from every quarter of the Globe—and claim to snatch sovereignty from the hands of the United States, the owners of the property.

This was the natural growth, the necessary consequence of the doctrine of the Senator from Michigan—a doctrine now most firmly upheld by those who most fiercely denounced it, here and elsewhere, less than two years ago. I do not introduce the opinions of the honorable Senator from Michigan to comment upon them. I merely introduced them to show the result of their being acted upon.
I denied that any source could be found for the authority claimed for the territorial inhabitants to assume sovereignty over the country, except the inalienable right to declare their independence, and dissolve their connection with this Confederacy. The power he asserts must belong to the right of revolution, the right to take the territory of the United States, and appropriate it to themselves. Unless he meant that much, when he claim to derived the power from Almighty God, he means nothing within the scope of my comprehension.

But the Senator speaks of the fanaticism of the South, which requires the men of the North to justify slavery as an abstract question. I know of no such thing. I do know that the Southern politicians of the Democratic party as a body sustained that Senator's pretensions, when a candidate for the Presidency, though they well knew that on the abstract question of slavery, he was against them. It was not abstract opinions, but the introduction of them into the policy of the Government, which we deprecated. Give us our constitutional rights, and a free and fair exercise of our equality in the Union, and we would never regard abstract opinions. I tell the Senator, that so far as I know the opinions of the people of the South, he founded his argument upon a ground that does not exist. 14

On the 3d of June, 1850, in reply to Mr. Douglass15 of
Illinois, I said:

I have no right, Mr. President, to ask the Senator from Illinois to read my speeches. They are not worthy of it. I might ask him, however, to read the amendment which I have lying on my table before he again makes a speech upon it. If the Senator had considered my speeches worthy of perusal, or had listened attentively to their delivery, he would not have taken occasion to say that I had avowed myself lukewarm in my support of the Senator from Michigan as a candidate for the Presidency.

Mr. Douglass. I said that in respect to this question you had your doubts, and therefore were lukewarm in your support of him.

Mr. Davis. I had doubts, fears, and apprehensions which reached to a conviction that the Senator was wrong upon the question of the power of territorial inhabitants; yet, sir, I took him as a choice of evils. [Laughter] I say it in no terms of disrespect. The Senator from Michigan knows that I thought it was a wrong doctrine which he held upon this subject, but I sustained him for the other doctrines which were directly connected with the duties of a President; and I gave him an earnest support. My political opinions triumphing over personal feeling which were very near to me. The Senator from Illinois, if he will review my course, will never make that [10]
Having thus, I hope, satisfactorily corrected the error which led to this communication, I will only add that the public character and importance of the question which led me to make this statement will, I trust, [illegible] as a sufficient reason for its publication. Very respectfully, your friend, &c., JEFFERSON DAVIS.
Ethelbert Barksdale was born in Smyrna, Rutherford County, Tennessee, on January 4, 1824. At the age of twenty-one he was the editor of the Yazoo (Miss.) Democrat. Barksdale also edited the official state journal (1854-1861, 1876-1883), the Jackson Mississippian (from 1851), and the Jackson Clarion (after the war). An active Democrat, he was a delegate to the national conventions in 1860, 1868, 1870, 1872, and 1880 and chairman of the state executive committee 1877-1879. He was elected to the Forty-eighth and Forty-ninth Congresses. Barksdale died on February 17, 1893 (BDAC, 516; Rowland, ed., Encyclopedia, I, 213).

Davis' announced speaking schedule for the last few weeks before the election included Jackson, Columbus, Athens, Fulton, Jacinto, Ripley and Holly Springs, taking him through the counties along Mississippi's northeastern corner (Jackson Mississippian and State Gazette, October 24, 1851).

A Citizen of Mississippi, "A Sketch of the Life of Jefferson Davis, the Democratic Candidate for Governor" (Jackson: Mississippi Power Press, 1851). Not found.

The author of the biographical pamphlet has never been
Lewis Cass (October 9, 1782—June 17, 1866) emerged from the War of 1812 as a brigadier general. He subsequently held numerous high civil offices: territorial governor of Michigan (1813-1831), minister to France (1836-1842), secretary of war (1831-1836), and of state (1857-1860), United States senator (1845-1848, 1849-1857). Cass resigned his senate seat in 1848 to run for President on the Democratic ticket; it was during his candidacy that Cass wrote the Nicholson letter giving his view of popular sovereignty (BDAC, 672). Jefferson Davis pronounced Cass a "generally discreet and conservative statesman . . ." (J. Davis, Rise and Fall, I, 38).

Lewis Cass to Alfred O. P. Nicholson, December 24, 1847; for a brief discussion of this letter, see Chapter I.

Probably John McLean of Ohio (1785-1861). A newspaperman as well as jurist, McLean served as a member of the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Congresses, an associate judge of the Ohio Supreme Court (1816-1822), commissioner of the United States General Land Office (1822-1823), United States postmaster general (1823-1829), and then, until his death, as associate justice of the United States Supreme Court (BDAC, 1310).

This passage of which several sentences are illegible in the Mississippian, January 9, 1852, should read as follows:
"Cass, on the 20th of February, 1850, by a speech in the United States Senate, gave publicity to the fact of his having consulted Judge McLean. I then stated that 'I knew of the conference to which he had alluded, very soon after it occurred;' and since the publicity thus given to it, have spoken of it whenever I deemed it proper to do so.

"I did not feel that distrust of the political integrity of Gen. Cass which is attributed to me; on the other hand I argued that he would redeem his pledges. I did not then, nor do I now . . ." (Rowland, ed., Jefferson Davis, Constitutionalist, II, 113).

11See Item 4, n. 4.

12Gold was discovered in California in March 1848; a great surge of migration followed (Craven, Coming of the Civil War, 245-46).

13Community; printer's error.

14Congressional Globe, 31 Cong., 1 Sess., 401-402 (February 20, 1850).

15A native Vermonter, Stephen Arnold Douglas was a state Supreme Court judge before his election to the Twenty-ninth Congress. He returned to the next Congress as a Senator, a seat held until his death on June 3, 1861, having been an unsuccessful candidate for President on the Democratic ticket in 1860 (BDAC, 826). Although their views greatly diverged,
Davis greatly admired what he called "the plastic and constructive genius" of Stephen A. Douglas (J. Davis, Rise and Fall, I, 38).

16 Congressional Globe, 31 Cong., 1 Sess., 1116 (June 3, 1850).

17 "be accepted" (Rowland, ed., Jefferson Davis, Constitutionalist, II, 117).
Col. Davis commenced by expressing the gratification he felt at the manifestations around him of the re-union of all Democrats, for the support of those great principles, which now, as in days gone by, formed the distinctive characteristics of the Democratic Party. It was true that unhappy divisions had recently existed, but these could not be otherwise than temporary; the power of eternal truth was attracting the disintegrated particles, and must soon hold them in one harmonious mass, resolved, with concentrated power, to vindicate the principles and maintain the measures which had wrought so many blessings to our common good, peace and security. This family re-union, he said, was no occasion for the consideration of late family disputes. The purpose for which the party was assembled, rather led them back to days of happy association, and whilst it directed their vision to future events, should elevate their hearts to nobler reflections than the individual conflicts which had so sadly disturbed the confidence and destroyed the power of the Mississippi Democracy. It was a cardinal point in their party faith, that the Delegate should be limited in his acts by his letter
of authority, and faithfully reflect the will of his Constituency. The letter of authority was to appoint Delegates to the National Democratic Convention, which would assemble to nominate Candidates for the Presidency, and Vice-Presidency, of the United States. The will of the Democracy of Mississippi—as shown by the primary meetings in many counties—was to consider the question recently decided by the people among the things which were, and without reference to local considerations, as questions purely belonging to State sovereignty, to unite on their old platform of national politics, and, shoulder to shoulder, go into the approaching contest for the election of a President. He said the right of a State, under any contingency, to resume the grants made by her as a sovereign party to the federal compact, had been denied by men who claimed to be the peculiar friends of the Union. What Union?—it could not be the Union of States, if as some asserted, a State had no higher right than a county, a mere right by force to overthow their Government. If this denial was directed against the abstract right asserted by the Democratic Party, as belonging to each State, the right to withdraw from the Union without obstruction, whenever the People of the State should resolve that such was the only mode by which they could secure for themselves the objects for which governments were instituted among men: the re-affirmation of the position taken by the
Democratic Convention of June last, would not decide the issue. But if it was proposed to refer this question to the National Convention, then the proposition would be worse than nugatory. A reserved right of the State—and all rights are reserved which have not been granted—can only be surrendered by the people of the State; and for one, he would protest against the reference of such a question to any other tribunal than the sovereign people who made the grant—who formed the compact—and, in the last resort, must judge of its infraction. He urged upon the Convention, the impropriety of introducing into its action any other matter than that which properly belonged to the special object for which they were assembled, or which would be a departure from the line of conduct indicated by the invitation in accordance with which primary meetings had been held, and Delegates appointed. To recount a declaration—to abandon a principle—is another and a very different thing from abstaining to assert opinions unnecessarily, or improperly. This he illustrated by the case of the division of the State into new Congressional Districts, and asked what number of the Convention would desire to express in a resolution the opinion of the body in relation to that case?

He referred to his course during the past summer, as evidence of his readiness to assert and maintain principles whenever and wherever the occasion required it. He had gone volu-
tarily into a canvass, which considerations of ease, interest and health, prompted him to avoid. He had gone not to defend or explain his own course, for he only asked to be judged by the record; not as a candidate for office—there was none he desired in exchange for the high station with which the people had already honored him. He went to plead before the people the cause of Mississippi, which then, as now, he held to be the cause of the Constitution. If any supposed he remem-
bered the course he had pursued because of the personal sacri-
fices it had cost him, to them he would say, those sacrifices were to him a source of pride, and were dear to his heart as offerings freely made upon the altar of his country, made for principles from which our Union sprung, and which as an Union of Freemen, it could never survive. His regret at the result arose from the conviction that it would long and deeply injure the course of State rights— that it would serve to weaken the South— and would encourage further Northern aggression upon those constitutional rights which we inherited, and which it was the sacred duty of this generation to preserve, and, un-
impaired, to transmit to posterity.

He said, among the many misrepresentations which had been made of his political conduct and opinions, there were two which would serve as a sample, and to which he alluded, because they were connected with his present position as a member of this
Convention. The first was the statement that in a public speech at Macon, in Noxubee county, he had replied to the inquiry, whether or not he would support the nominees of the National Democratic Convention—no, he would not. This was as false as the assertion previously made that he had, in 1843, been the advocate of the Union bank bonds. He said that when he was asked whether or not he would support the nominees of the Baltimore Convention, he replied affirmatively; and was proceeding to state how and under what conditions he would support the nominees, when the question was modified so as to make it the nominees of the Union Party; he then answered that he had understood the question to apply to the Democratic Convention, but as now put, the nominees of the Union Convention, he answered, no: he would not touch them with a ten-foot pole.

The other misrepresentation to which he referred, was, that in a speech made before the Democratic Convention of June last, he had proposed to purge the Party of those who had taken ground against it in the pending controversy. He hoped all who knew him personally, felt that it was impossible for him to have been so presumptuous, so ridiculous, as to have assumed to himself the right to excommunicate others from the Democratic Church. If this were even attempted by mass meetings, or by conventions, it would be absolutely absurd. Every man's heart must decide to what party he belongs. He who entertained the
principles and supported the measures of Democracy, as every
citizen might who chose, was a Democrat, though all others
denied it; and he who rejected the doctrines and opposed the
measures was none, however loudly he should proclaim it, or
however high might be the sponsors and numerous the assemblages
vouching for his faith. He had long since for himself decided
against any attempt to declare who should, or should not be
entitled to enter the Democratic Church; and the charge that
he had expressed a wish to close the door against any one, he
therefore knew was untrue. His purpose had been and still was,
to sustain the cause in which he was a laborer, and with all
who espoused it, he was most happy to co-operate. At a late
period in the recent canvass, when gloom had settled upon the
prospects of Democracy, the party standard was placed in his
hands, unsuccessfully; but zealously, weakly, but devotedly,
he had borne it; and when he fell, its every fold was still
unfurled and flying over him. Let those who warred against it,
now go now when the contest is over, and find if they can among its
inscriptions, the sentiments which their leaders told them was
written upon it. Where would they find the purpose of seces-
sion, where the danger to the Union, where the civil war they
were invoked to prevent? To deny the right of the Federal
Government to use force against a State, is not civil war.
To contend for the constitutional rights of the South, is not
to assail the Union, or to weaken the bond which constitutes its
strength. To assert as a last alternative the right of a State
to secede, at the same time declaring that it was a right which
under existing circumstances, Mississippi should not exercise,
was not to manifest the purpose of secession. The reasoning
of those who contended for the opposite conclusion, when applied
to their own position, reduced them to the most awkward predic¬
ament.

They asserted that to declare the right of secession, in¬
dicated the intent to secede; but they asserted the right of
revolution. Then, according to their logic, they had the intent
to revolutionize, which, according to their definition, was to
wage civil war: to cover the land with all the horrors they so
delighted to depict as the consequences of the success of the
Democratic State Rights Ticket.

The platform of the Convention of last June, was State
Rights, because it was Democratic; it was Democratic, because
it was State Rights. The assertion of the rights of the States
by Jefferson and Madison, was the foundation-stone on which the
temple of Democracy was built—the structure could not stand if
the foundation should be destroyed.

He said, he had ascended to the platform of the June Con-
vention, with the confidence due to the soundness of its materials;
and though to him it had proved the scaffold for political execu-
tion, his confidence was not impaired, and at a future—no remote day—he believed some abler champion of the cause, would receive on that platform the laurel of the victor, instead of the fate of the martyr. In this, the largest State Convention which it had been his fortune to meet, he saw the dawning of that day when the web of deception should be broken; the veil of false assurances and cancelled motives should be lifted; when truth revealed, the right would be vindicated by the popular judgment of Mississippi. He had joined his party in a contest for principles which he believed were of vital importance, and in imminent danger; had he foreseen the result, his own course would not have been changed. If his principles were to be overthrown—if his friends were to fall in the conflict—he had no wish to be the sole survivor of such a wreck; he had never wished to remain as a solitary official monument, to mark the spot where the State Rights Democracy once had stood. The issues tendered by the Democracy, had not been met by the opposite party; their principles had not been beaten; their position had not been decided upon by the people; except in relation to the policy of acquiescence in the recent action of the Federal Government on the Territorial and Slavery questions. Incongruous materials combined for the spoils of office, Fraud and Falsehood and Free-Soil and Foote and Fillmore, have triumphed in Mississippi; but success thus acquired must be as temporary as its means were
corrupt. He had an abiding faith in the Democracy of Mississippi, because the cement which united them was principle; and expected to see them in the approaching contest, as in days gone by, with one spirit circling close and deep around their ancient standard.

The mere Demagogue—he who has been thrown to the surface like dregs from the bottom of the pool, by such violent agitation, has mingled heterogeneous elements, and like them must sink to the bottom whenever quiet is restored; he must desire to continue agitation: he from selfish considerations must oppose the restoration of harmony in the Democratic ranks, and be in all time an agitator still. 12

But every Democrat who loves the principles of his party, more than the spoils of office, must abandon a coalition which would sacrifice the public good for individual advancement, and heart and hand join in the effort to restore power to those by whose administration his principles will be advanced, and the common good promoted. To the Union Democrats, he addressed the argument, that if they wished to prevent the creation of a national bank, and the overthrow of the present financial policy of the Government, they must rely upon the Democracy; if they wished to avoid class legislation, by the destruction of the existing revenue system, and a return to protective duties, they must rely upon the Democracy; generally, if they wished to
maintain a strict construction of the Constitution, and thus to perpetuate the Union of the States, which their fathers had formed, they must rely upon the Democracy.

To the State Rights men, whatever their party alliances had heretofore been, he appealed for support to Democratic principles, because there they saw the doctrine of strict construction of the Constitution, which was the doctrine of State Rights, and to which alone he believed they could look for respect and protection to the rights of the South. There was not such unanimity among Southern men as would give moral power to a sectional minority; and the history of the Democratic party, from the first struggle between State Rights and the spirit of consolidation, pointed to it as the source from which our best, if not our only hope, must be drawn.

Of those who honestly desired to preserve the Union of the States, and had been induced to leave the Democratic party and enter into a new organization for that purpose, he asked, what was there in the ancient or recent history of Democracy, which indicated the necessity of such a course, or the wisdom of their new alliance. Who obstructed the prosecution of the war with Mexico, by embarrassing the administration of our government, when its armies were fighting battles upon a foreign soil? Who burned blue lights along the coast of New England, in the war of 1812? Who has nullified a recent law, passed to carry out a
provision of the constitutional compact? Was it their old friends or new allies?

He adverted to those misrepresentations made by sons of Mississippi, and which had spread broad-east the impression, that there was a disunion party within our borders; and said it was one of those perversions of truth, which least of all others, he felt able to forgive. He had, when her representative abroad, replied indignantly to such a supposition, and pointed to the brief, but brilliant history of Mississippi, as the substantial evidence which should have prevented any mind from originating or entertaining the calumny. As a Senator from Mississippi, he had considered the honor of his State, and his own honor involved in the supposition, that while she kept representatives to the Federal Government, and participated in its action, she was plotting the destruction of that government to which she was thus accredited, and formed a part. For himself, individually, he had never had any other answer to make to the charge of being a disunionist, than that it was false.

He said, that all Democrats, all State Rights men, should unite to wrest the administration from the imbecile hands into which it had fallen, and entrust it to those who, in times past, had given us peace and security at home, and safety and honor abroad. The censure which one should bestow on the blunders and offences of this administration, in the management of our domes-
tic affairs, might have been severe, if it were not swallowed up in the shame and mortification produced by its conduct of our foreign relations. And scarcely has the mind time to measure the magnitude of one offence, before it is followed by another of a character so different, that it was almost impossible to believe them the acts of the same individual. When Spanish insolence insulted our flag in the waters of Havana, the country had scarcely time to wonder at the tame spirit of the administration, before its surprise was demanded by the proffer of a national salute to the flag of Spain, as an atonement for the unwarrantable conduct of an excited mob. And how were the passions of that mob aroused? Young men of the United States, whose hearts were filled with such love of liberty, as they might have legitimately inherited from their sires of the revolution, saw a neighboring people oppressed by the harshest despotism, and heard that they appealed to the sons of America to aid in bursting the fetters which bound them. They went on such mission as brought La Fayette, Kosciusko, De Kalb, and a host of others, to the aid of our fathers in their revolutionary struggle; and the President marked their devotion by a proclamation which branded them as pirates, and deprived them of rights secured to American citizens, by treaty, and as enemies of mankind, not only surrendered them to Spanish cruelty, but to be slain by whomsoever might find them. A gallant band of these brave youths,
disappointed in the hopes and expectations which had induced them to land on the Island of Cuba, abandoned the expedition, and started for the United States. They were captured in open boats, upon the open sea; and without the trial to which they were entitled as pirates, to an ignominious death. That the intelligence of such an outrage should have excited their friends in New Orleans, to such a demonstration as was made, was but little, if at all, to be wondered at. And as it furnished the cause, so it supplied the only explanation which the Spanish government should have received. Lopez, a citizen of Cuba, sought to free his country from the despotism of Spain; and, whatever were his faults, he sealed his devotion to the cause of his country's liberty with his life's blood. Kossuth, a citizen of Hungary, made a like effort to free his country from the despotism of Austria; but, more fortunate than Lopez, avoided the grave by becoming an exile. He then compared the course of the President in reference to the two. Lopez, arraigned after he had sunk into a patriot's grave, a martyr to his country's liberty; Kossuth welcomed, and the guest of the President. The crime of Lopez, if it consisted in the attempt to raise men and money in the United States, differed in nothing from the purpose which Kossuth had avowed, whether the mind be directed to the voluntary contributions in each case, or a loan to be negotiated on the bonds of the government they desired to establish. If the followers
of Lopez were pirates, and those who advanced money for the expedition were worse than those who participated in it, what will be the character of such as advance money to the Hungarian project, and of those adventurous youths who may follow Kossuth back, to aid him in his patriotic purpose?—and what will be the position of the President, whose course will probably have so mainly contributed to lead each class to the line of conduct supposed.

Before the blood of the gallant Crittenden and his companions had been washed from the pavement of Havana, the murder of those Americans, whose last words proclaimed their country's pride in refusing to kneel or turn their backs, when about to be executed, seems to have been forgotten by the functionaries of our government, as an injury demanding redress; for the outrage is not even mentioned in making application to Spain for mercy to those who, in violation of treaty rights, were sentenced and sent as convicts to Africa.

He noticed also the case of Thrasher, and compared it with the case of McLeod, who invaded our territory, cut out an American steamer, set it on fire, and turned it adrift, to bear its sleeping inmates to destruction over the Falls of Niagara. He referred to the days of Gen. Jackson, when the exclamation, "I am a citizen of the United States," was as proud a boast as were the words in olden time, "I am a Roman citizen." He spoke of the
conduct of Gen. Taylor in relation to the American prisoners captured at Cardenas, when he demanded that they should be regularly tried according to treaty stipulations, and directed the American Consul at Havana, to state that the Spanish government would be held responsible for the blood of one American citizen; and contrasted it with the conduct of Mr. Fillmore, in relation to the unfortunate youths who had been executed on the plaza of Havana, without the pretence that they had received the trial to which they were clearly entitled. He said there was no power—he could imagine no influence, which could make him the apologists of such acts; but connected as they are with others which more than suggest the idea of sectional prejudice, as having given them their hue, he found as an American, a Southern man, and a Democrat, so much to reprobate, that he should feel himself degraded if he had been the eulogist of such an administration.

He invoked the Democrats to conciliation and harmonious cooperation. No man's disappointments should be to him an obstruction; no man's prospects should be counted more than dust in the balance; no personal feeling should be an obstacle to that re-union which is necessary to secure the country's good, by securing those measures which every Democrat believed would best promote it.

1 The state Democratic convention met in the Hall of the House of Representatives at Jackson (Washington Daily National Intelligencer, January 13, 1852; Natchez Mississippi Free Trader, January 14, 1852).

2 See Appendix Document 3 for the platform drawn up by the Democratic convention of June 1851.

3 Davis' pre-convention speaking tour scheduled Macon on May 22, 1851 (Jackson Mississippian and State Gazette, May 9, 1851; Natchez Mississippi Free Trader, May 14, 1851).

4 In 1843 Davis accepted the nomination for state representative less than a week before the election, which he lost; one of the major issues in the campaign had been the legality of the Union Bank bonds. Union banks were chartered and bonds sold in 1836 to ease the money crisis in Mississippi, which in that year had fifteen million dollars or more in cotton and insufficient cash to move it. Davis contended that the bonds were illegally issued and continued to call for repudiation, which finally came in 1853 (Vicksburg Daily Sentinel, November 2, 1843; Vicksburg Daily Whig, November 10, 1843; Winston, High Stakes, 27-31).

5 The national Democratic convention of 1852 met in Balti-
more on June 1 (Nevins, Ordeal of the Union, II, 18).

6 See Item 5.

7 See Item 7, n. 31.

8 See Item 7, n. 30.

9 The Free-Soil party was formed in the late summer of 1848, composed mainly of the Barnburner faction of the Democratic party and of dissident New England Whigs, who had supported the Wilmot Proviso and opposed the extension of slavery in the territories on moral grounds; keeping the new lands acquired by the United States free from slavery would also be to the advantage of northern economic interests (Hearon, "Mississippi," 30).

10 See Item 1, n. 3 for a biographical sketch of Foote.

11 See Item 7, n. 28 for a biographical sketch of Fillmore.

12 While a general observation of political processes, this is also an obvious reference to newly-elected Governor Foote.

13 Born in 1757, Marie Joseph Paul Yves Roch Gilbert du Motier, Marquis de Lafayette came from France at the age of twenty to fight in the American Revolution. As a major general in the Continental Army, Lafayette visited Louis XVI and persuaded him to send troops to America to end the war. Lafayette took an active part in French politics, too; he participated in the Revolution of 1789, advocated setting up a constitutional monarchy, later broke with the Jacobins, fled to Flanders,
returned in 1799 and again became active in national politics. He led the National Guard, which he had helped to organize in 1790, in the Revolution of 1830. Lafayette died in 1834 (Webster's Biographical Dictionary [Springfield, Mass.: G. & C. Merriam Co., 1956], 847-48).

Thaddeus Kosciusko (1746-1817) was born in Lithuania, studied engineering and artillery in France, and came to America in 1776 to join in the struggle for independence, from which he emerged a brigadier general. In Poland once again in 1789, Kosciusko led a rebellion and was briefly dictator of that country. Captured by the Russians, he was imprisoned for two years but afterwards continued his revolutionary endeavors in Poland (ibid., 835).

Johann Kalb, known as Baron de Kalb, was born in Germany in 1721 and served in the French army before coming to America in 1768. De Kalb was killed on August 16, 1780, while serving as a major general of the Continental Army (ibid., 801).

A filibustering expedition led by Narciso Lopez had left United States shores aboard the Pampero on August 5, 1851. Davis is referring here to a part of that expeditionary force consisting of fifty Americans commanded by William L. Crittenden (see n. 19). The fifty Americans were assigned to guard the filibusters' arms and supplies. Spanish forces cut them off Lopez's forces and their own force was split apart, causing
them to lose hope of success. They therefore tried to escape the island, but on the second day out were captured by the Spaniards, "taken to Hāvana, given a summary trial, condemned, and shot. After the execution the dead and dying were reported to have been left to the fury of an irate Havana mob which performed acts of violence upon them" (Urban, "New Orleans and the Cuban Question," 1147-1150).

17Born in Venezuela about 1798, Narciso Lopez served as an officer in the Spanish army and as governor of Madrid and Trinidad before trying to bring about a Cuban revolution in 1848. When this failed, he fled to New York City and eventually made his way on a fund- and troop-raising tour down the Mississippi to New Orleans, where he lived for about two years at the home of L. J. Sigur and actively recruited many Louisianians for an expeditionary force. He led two filibustering expeditions from his Louisiana base. The first was the Cardenas Expedition of May and June, 1850 (see Chapter II for a discussion of this venture); the second took place in August and September, 1851 (see n. 16). Both were disastrous. On August 25-26 the command under Lopez was defeated near San Cristobal, Cuba, and the men not killed were taken prisoners. For his part in the activities, Lopez was executed by the garrote about September 1, 1851, at Havana (Urban, "New Orleans and the Cuban Question," 1121-22, 1131, 1141, 1147, 1163).
Lajos or Louis Kossuth (1802-1894) had for many years been a leader of political opposition to the government of his native Hungary before leading a large-scale insurrection in 1848-1849. The national assembly declared Hungary's independence from Austria. Appointed governor, Kossuth possessed dictatorial powers. He was forced to resign and flee when the insurrection was crushed and spend 1851-1852 in the United States (Webster's Biographical Dictionary, 835).

William L. Crittenden, a nephew of Attorney General John J. Crittenden, was educated at West Point and served in the Mexican War, after which he took a position in the surveyor's department of the New Orleans Custom House. In the last Lopez expedition (see n. 16) Crittenden commanded a battalion of three companies (about 107 men). When his command was completely cut off from Lopez and separated further from one of the companies, Crittenden and some fifty survivors tried unsuccessfully to return to the United States shores aboard some four small boats. They were overtaken and captured, tried and executed. Crittenden alone was forced to kneel with his back to the firing squad (Robert G. Caldwell, The Lopez Expeditions to Cuba, 1848-1851 [Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1915], 92, 101, 103).

John S. Thrasher was an American living in Cuba in 1851. He was editor of El Faro Industrial, one of the principal
Havana newspapers, and the only American member of the Havana Club, a group of Cuban planters and industrialists who promoted the annexation of Cuba by the United States. After the failure of the last Lopez expedition in August 1851, Thrasher secretly raised $1,800 for aiding the imprisoned Americans. Suspected by the Cuban government, Thrasher's newspaper was suppressed, his correspondence seized, and Thrasher himself arrested, tried by a Cuban military court, found guilty, and sentenced to eight years' hard labor at Ceuta, Spain's penal colony in North Africa. Soon he was pardoned, to the relief of the Fillmore administration, as there had been great agitation among annexationists in the United States, many of whom were Thrasher's friends. Some had even contended that the case was sufficient justification for declaring war with Spain (ibid., 121-22; Basil Rauch, American Interest in Cuba: 1848-1855 [New York: Columbia University Press, 1948], 54, 172, 203, 247; Anderson C. Quisenberry, Lopez's Expeditions to Cuba, 1850 and 1851 [Louisville: John P. Morton & Co., 1906], 116).

21 Alexander McLeod admitted in 1840 that he had led a band of loyal Canadians on December 29, 1837, in rowing across the Niagara River to cut loose and set fire to the Caroline, an American steamer supplying some of the Canadian and American participants in a rebellion in Canada. The incident was further

22 See Item 9, n. 8 for a brief biographical sketch of Jackson.

23 See Item 9, n. 10 for a sketch of Taylor's life.

24 The Cardenas filibustering expedition, led by Narciso Lopez and Ambrosia J. Gonzalez, sailed from Louisiana for Cuba on May 7, 1850, aboard the Creole which landed on May 19 at Cardenas, Cuba (Urban, "New Orleans and the Cuban Question," 1124-26). For a discussion of this expedition and its repercussions in Mississippi, see Chapter II.
APPENDIX
UNION PARTY PLATFORM

May 5-6, 1851

Resolved, That while we acquiesce in the late enactments of the late session of Congress, and feel a strong attachment and veneration for the Union established by our forefathers, will we declare that violations of our rights may occur which would amount to intolerable oppression, and would justify a resort to measures of resistance; among which are the following:

1. The interference by Congressional legislation with the institution of slavery in the States.

2. Interference in the trade in slaves between the States.

3. The abolition by Congress of slavery in the District of Columbia.

4. The refusal by Congress to admit a new State into the Union on the ground of her tolerating slavery within her limits.

5. The passage of any law by Congress prohibiting slavery in any of the Territories.

6. The repeal of the Fugitive Slave Law, or the refusal by the federal Government to enforce the constitutional provision for the reclamation of Fugitive Slaves. But that we
are now and at all times opposed to any agitation, by conven-
tion or otherwise, of these questions, reserving the mode
and measure of redress until injury shall be inflicted.

Vicksburg Weekly Whig, May 21, 1851.
DEMOCRATIC STATE RIGHTS PARTY PLATFORM

June 16-17, 1851

1. **Resolved**, That the Convention representing the Democratic State Rights party of Mississippi re-affirm the following truths announced and policy indicated by the Convention called by the people of the State of Mississippi, in which the two political parties of the State were equally represented, and which assembled in the City of Jackson on the second Monday of October, 1849.

2. That we continue to entertain a devoted and cherished attachment to the Union, but we desire to have it as it was formed, and not as an engine of oppression.

3. That the institution of slavery in the Southern States is left, by the Constitution, exclusively under the control of the States in which it exists, as a part of their domestic policy, which they, and they only, have the right to regulate, abolish or perpetuate, as they may severally judge expedient; and that all attempts, on the part of Congress, or others, to interfere with this subject, either directly or indirectly are in violation of the constitution, dangerous to the rights and safety of the South, and ought to be promptly resisted.

4. That Congress has no power to pass any law abolishing slavery in the District of Columbia, or to prohibit the slave
trade between the several States, or to prohibit the introduction of slavery into the territories of the United States; and that the passage by Congress of any such law, would not only be a dangerous violation of the constitution, but would afford evidence of a fixed and deliberate desire on the part of that body, to interfere with the institution of slavery in the States.

5. That we would regard the passage, by Congress, of the "Wilmot Proviso," (which would, in effect, deprive the citizens of the slave-holding States of an equal participation in the territories acquired equally by their blood and treasure,) as an unjust and insulting discrimination——to which these States cannot, without political degradation, submit; and to which this convention, representing the feelings and opinions of the people of Mississippi, solemnly declare they will not submit.

6. That the passage of the Wilmot Proviso, or of any law abolishing slavery in the District of Columbia by the Congress of the United States, would of itself, be such a breach of the federal compact as, in that event, will make it the duty, as it is the right of the slave-holding States, to take care of their own safety, and to treat the non-slaveholding States as enemies to the slave-holding States and their domestic institutions.

7. That the legislature is hereby requested to pass such
laws as may, in their opinion, be best calculated to encourage the emigration of citizens of the slave-holding States, with slaves, to the new territories of the United States.

8. That, in view of the frequent and increasing evidences of the determination of the people of the non-slave-holding States, to disregard the guarantees of the constitution, and to agitate the subject of slavery, both in and out of Congress, avowedly for the purpose of effecting its obligation in the States; and also, in view of the facts set forth in the late "Address of the Southern Members of Congress," this convention proclaims the deliberate conviction, that the time has arrived when the Southern States should take counsel together for their common safety; that a convention of Southern States having been held in accordance with the above recommendations at Nash­ville, in June, 1850, we sanction and approve the resolutions of that body.

9. That we recommend to the legislature of this State, that at its next session, a law be enacted, making it the duty of the governor of the State, by proclamation, to call a general convention of the State, and to issue writs of election based upon the ratio of representation in the State legislature, upon the passage by Congress, of the "Wilmot Proviso," or any law abolishing slavery in the District of Columbia, or prohibiting the slave trade between the States, to take into consideration
the act of aggression, and the mode and measure of redress.

10. That by the action of the last Congress the measures miscalled a compromise, the positions of the 2nd and 3d and 4th resolutions above recited have been met; and the constitutional rights therein declared, have been violated.

11. That in accordance with the 9th resolution of the series above recited, a Convention of the State had been called, and that we rely confidently on said Convention justly to estimate the wrongs we have suffered and to indicate the mode and measure of redress.

12. That this convention declares that it regards the admission of California as a State into the Union, as the enactment of the Wilmot Proviso in another form, . . . .

13. That this convention disapprove of the late Congressional legislation, by some called the Compromise, and declare their strong and unequivocal condemnation of the three following acts, namely: the admission of California as a State; the division of California as a State; the division of the State of Texas; and the law usurping to Congress the power to abolish slavery in the District of Columbia under the fraudulent pretence of regulating the slave trade therein. These are regarded by us as an evidence of the determination of the North to trample upon the political rights of the Southern States, to destroy their equality in the Union, and place the Government for all time to come under the control of a fanatic and sectional
majority.

14. That we can find no adequate excuse to justify the majority in Congress for forcing these measures upon us, and we are wanting in language to express our condemnation of the Southern Senator or Representatives who voted for the admission of California, the division of Texas, and the anti-slavery act to the District of Columbia; while we as emphatically approve the course of those Representatives who opposed their adoption; and we now confidently appeal to the people of the State of Mississippi, for their verdict and judgment in the premises.

15. That the advocates of State Rights are the true friends of the South, and of the Union; and that no right can be more clear or more essential to the protection of the minority, than the right of a State peaceably to withdraw from the Union, without denial or obstruction from any quarter whatever, but whilst we assert the right, we consider it the last remedy, the final alternative; and also declare that the exercise of it by the State of Mississippi, under existing circumstances, would be inexpedient, and is a proposition which does not meet the approbation of this Convention.

16. That it is a source of heartfelt congratulation that the true friends of the Constitution and of the rights and honor of the South, or whatever party name, are now united in
a common cause and can act together with cordially and sincerity.

Vicksburg Tri-Weekly Sentinel, June 20, 1851.
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