

CLASS AND PARTY:
VOTING BEHAVIOR IN THE
LATE ANTEBELLUM SOUTH

Volume I

A Dissertation

by

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CLASS AND PARTY:
VOTING BEHAVIOR IN THE
LATE ANTEBELLUM SOUTH

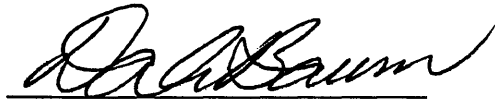
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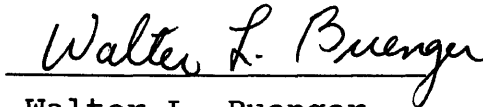
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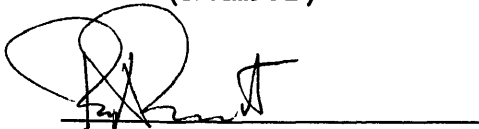
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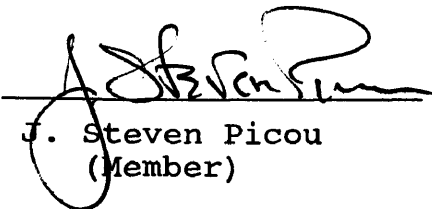
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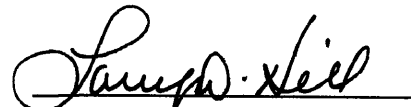
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ABSTRACT

Class and Party: Voting Behavior

in the Late Antebellum South. (May 1989)

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This study of southern presidential voting patterns from 1828 to 1860 and secession balloting in early 1861 provides the political historian with a new window to political behavior in the region. It accounts for varying levels of voter turnout from election to election, the subsequent movement of previous inactive voters and new voters into the active electorate, and uncovers important popular vote shifts in southern presidential balloting in spite of apparent core voter stability. The "party of nonvoters" and new voters contributed the bulk of support to the anti-Democratic forces in the South in 1836 and 1840, making the second party system a viable entity in the region. In addition, Democrat or opposition recruitment of peripheral and new voters often enabled the parties to obtain popular vote victories in southern presidential balloting prior to 1852.

Previous political affiliations also played significant roles in determining voter support from election to election. Once voters developed allegiances to Andrew Jackson or his

political opponents, their partisan affiliations rarely changed. Prior to the secession elections, partisan alignments were relatively more important than any ethnic, religious, or economic factor in determining core voter selections in presidential elections. Ultimately voter choices in the South were framed by their former political allegiances. But, in the secession balloting, when these allegiances sharply conflicted with the particular economic circumstances of slavery, some voting citizens pried themselves away from their political frameworks and cast ballots that reflected their perceived economic interests.

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The ultimate responsibility for the final product, of course, remains my own.

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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

Following the November balloting for President in 1860, most southern states held special elections which decided whether they would continue as a part of the American Union. These secession referenda and convention elections, held at different times and often with different ballot choices, have provided historians with a unique opportunity to study voting behavior outside the normal bounds of partisan political choices. Southern citizens confronted not merely choices between opposing parties and their candidates, but the alternative of open political rebellion. This study of antebellum southern voting behavior is a sophisticated quantitative analysis that uncovers the political, social, and economic forces that shaped southern voting selections during the so called "second party system" and the crisis of the American Union in the winter of 1861.¹

The style and format of this dissertation follow that of the Journal of Southern History.

¹For the purposes of this study the South is defined as containing the eleven states that eventually left the Union and entered into the Confederacy. Since South Carolina neither held popular presidential elections in the antebellum period nor a popular vote for delegates to a secession convention, the state is excluded from the analysis. The remaining ten states are divided into two regions. The lower South made up of states that voted initially, in the aftermath of the election of Lincoln, to secede from the Union: Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Texas. The upper South includes the states that voted to

Traditional historical accounts of antebellum electoral politics have portrayed election outcomes as uniquely determined by the reactions of informed citizens to specific issues and candidates in question.² For example, the formation of the Whig party in the South was perceived as the direct result of citizen disapproval of Andrew Jackson's actions while he occupied the White House. His opposition to the National Bank and his open support of the Force Bill led many notable southern Democrats to break with their party and form a new opposition. As a result, the Whig vote in 1836 came directly from disaffected Democrats and new voters who were also disillusioned by Jackson's actions.³ Citizens in the antebellum period, according to standard accounts, reacted directly to party stands on the U.S. Bank, internal improvements, currency policy, and the annexation of Texas. Elections were thus perceived as events marked by continuous

leave the Union only when compromise measures had been exhausted and after Federal troops "threatened the seceding states with force:" Arkansas, North Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia. Unfortunately no detailed votes for secession delegates remain extant for Arkansas and Florida so they are not included in discussions or statistical analyses of secession balloting.

²Walter Dean Burnham, Jerome M. Clubb, and William H. Flanigan, "Partisan Realignment: A Systemic Perspective," in Joel H. Silbey, Allan C. Bogue, and William H. Flanigan, eds., The History of American Electoral Behavior (Princeton, 1978), 49-50.

³William J. Cooper, Jr., The South and the Politics of Slavery, 1828-1856 (Baton Rouge and London, 1978), 95-96.

evaluations of voters of specific party policies.⁴

The concept of the volatile electorate has been rejected by the so-called "new political historians" who suggest, through the use of empirical evidence, that once citizen voters politically identified with a particular party, they were likely to continue supporting that party throughout their lifetime.⁵ Reasons for this strong commitment to party

⁴For examples of traditional accounts of antebellum politics see William J. Cooper, Jr., Liberty and Slavery: Southern Politics to 1860 (New York, 1983); idem, The South and the Politics of Slavery; and Robert F. Durden, The Self-Inflicted Wound: Southern Politics in the Nineteenth Century (Lexington, 1985). Among numerous state studies see Ulrich B. Phillips, Georgia and State Rights (Macon, Ga., 1984). For a discussion of political interpretations presented in current history textbooks see Thomas B. Alexander, "The Dimension of Voter Partisan Constancy in Presidential Elections from 1840 to 1860," in Stephen E. Maizlish and John J. Krishma, eds., Essays on American Antebellum Politics, 1840-1860 (Arlington, Tx., 1982), 70-120.

⁵Burnham et al., "Partisan Realignment," 49; and William N. Chambers and Philip C. Davis, "Party, Competition, and Mass Participation: The Case of Democratizing the Party System, 1824-1852," in Silbey et al., eds., The History of American Electoral Behavior, 195-96. For examples of the "new political history" see Walter Dean Burnham, Critical Elections and the Mainsprings of American Politics (New York, 1970); Ronald P. Formisano, The Birth of Mass Political Parties: Michigan, 1827-1861 (Princeton, 1971); Burton W. Folsom, II., "Party Formation and Development in Jacksonian America: The Old South," Journal of American Studies 7 (December 1973), 217-29; Michael F. Holt, The Political Crisis of the 1850s (New York, 1978); Paul Kleppner, et al., The Evolution of American Electoral Systems (Westport Ct., and London, 1981); Lester G. Lindly, "The American Political System: 1840-1890," Current History, 67 (July 1974), 9-13; Richard P. McCormick, The Presidential Game: The Origins of American Presidential Politics (New York and London, 1982); idem, The Second American Party System: Party Formation in the Jacksonian Era (Chapel Hill, 1966); William G. Shade, "American Political Development: 1789-1840," Current History, 67 (July 1974), 5-8, 40; Silbey, The Partisan Imperative: The Dynamics of American Politics Before the Civil War (New York

remain a topic of debate. Some theorists have argued that the ethnic and religious identifications of voters was the most important determinant of voting behavior in the antebellum period, while others have pointed to deep-seated ideological and class differences in the electorate.⁶

Recently, some political historians have used the idea of party loyalty to construct an entire framework for studying American politics from the early Republic period down to the so-called Ronald Reagan "Renaissance." The party system literature divides the history of American political behavior into periods of stability, when voters continue their previous political choices, and periods of realigning phases, when voters change their political preferences. Realignment is more than just a temporary change in voter choices; it

and London, 1985); idem, ed., Political Ideology and Voting Behavior in the Age of Jackson (Princeton, 1973); Silbey et al., eds., The History of American Electoral Behavior; Joel H. Silbey and Samuel T. McSeveney, eds., Voters, Parties, and Elections (Lexington, 1972); and James L. Sundquist, Dynamics of the Party System: Alignment and Realignment of Political Parties in the United States (Washington, 1983).

⁶For the ethnocultural viewpoint see, among many, Lee Benson, The Concept of Jacksonian Democracy: New York as a Test Case (Princeton, 1961); Formisano, The Birth of Mass Political Parties; Richard J. Jensen, Grass Roots Politics: Parties, Issues, and Voters, 1854-1983 (Westport Ct., and London, 1983); Kleppner et al., The Evolution of American; and Joel Silbey, "'Let the People See': Reflecting on Ethnoreligious Forces in American Politics," in Silbey, The Partisan Imperative, 71-72. For the ideological interpretation see Dale Baum, The Civil War Party System: The Case of Massachusetts, 1848-1876 (Chapel Hill, 1984), 8-10; and J. Morgan Kousser, The Shaping of Southern Politics: Suffrage Restriction and the Establishment of the One-Party South, 1880-1910 (New Haven, 1974).

marks a permanent electoral change favoring a particular party and usually gives the benefiting party sustained control of the policymaking institutions of the government.⁷ Accordingly, American electoral politics has been divided into five distinct eras. The first party system existed between 1789-1820. The second era evolved after the Jackson presidency and was characterized by the creation of a truly national and competitive partisan system, of the Whigs and the Democrats. The third era emerged from the political conflict of the 1850s over the issue of slavery and resulted in the success in 1860 of a purely sectional party, the Republican party. In the 1890s, agrarian discontent in the South and West and labor disputes in the North lead to the formation of a new party, the People's or Populist party, which forced the two established major parties to reassess their positions on major economic and social issues. Finally, the economic depression of the 1930s forced another shift in the party alignments resulting in the ascendance of the Democratic party under the leadership of Franklin D. Roosevelt.

Realignment often occurs under crisis conditions producing

⁷Burnham et al., "Partisan Realignment," 49-50. For further discussions of the development of the party system see Sundquist, Dynamics of the Party System. Gerald Pomper suggests a slightly different process of classifying elections. He gives four classifications: maintaining; deviating; converting; and realigning. For his approach see, Gerald Pomper, "Classification of Presidential Elections," in Silbey and McSeveney, eds., Voters, Parties, and Elections, 6-14.

a high level of political integration and articulation which, in turn, results in political organizations creating a response which meets the approval of the populace. Partisan realignment is often the product of accumulated tensions within the culture at large.⁸ Individual citizens are allegedly then willing to abandon previously held party affiliations and form new bonds that tie them to another party until another crisis provokes similar issue assessment and another response. Realignment produces changes accordingly in party platforms and organization and causes voters to take another look at the political process.⁹ For example, the question of the status of slavery in the territories and the willingness of the federal government to guarantee protection of the South's "peculiar institution" were issues that prompted many southerners to reassess their political affiliations during the presidential campaign of 1860. The subsequent election of Lincoln "forced" voters in the southern states to question the validity of the American political system and led them to support the dissolution of the Union. The secession crisis in the South provoked significant, realignment in the political structure in the states in rebellion. In order to evaluate the degree of that realignment in the secession elections, it is necessary to reconstruct patterns of stability and change in the

⁸Burnham et al., "Partisan Realignment," 73-74.

⁹Dale Baum, The Civil War Party System, 8-10.

antebellum party system.

Few historical studies have systematically analyzed the nature of southern politics during the antebellum period. Numerous studies have chronicled in detail the political evolution of the era, but they have relied heavily on statements of elites or newspaper editorials to trace partisan affiliation of the masses of voters.¹⁰ Although these studies are certainly intriguing and informative, they have failed to generate estimates of actual voting behavior of the electorate at large from one election to the next.

Ecological regression is a mathematical tool which allows the researcher to theoretically model the real political world and develop estimates which depict the contours of the political system in question.¹¹ One recent study that

¹⁰For example see Thomas Brown, Politics and Statesmanship: Essays on the American Whig Party (New York, 1985); Cooper, Liberty and Slavery; idem, The South and the Politics of Slavery; Carl N. Degler, The Other South: Southern Dissenters in the 19th Century (New York, 1974); Robert F. Durden, The Self-Inflicted Wound; and Daniel W. Howe, The Political Culture of the American Whigs (Chicago, 1979).

¹¹Walter Dean Burnham, "Quantitative History: Beyond the Correlation Coefficient," Historical Methods Newsletter, 4 (Winter 1971), 62-66; Herbert M. Blalock, Causal Inferences in Nonexperimental Research (Chapel Hill, 1964), 95-126; Leo A. Goodman, "Some Alternatives to Ecological Correlation," American Journal of Sociology, 64 (May 1959), 610-25; Gudmund R. Iverson, "Estimates of Cell Entries in Contingency Tables When Only Marginals Are Observed," (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Harvard University, 1969); Terrence E. Jones, "Ecological Inference and Electoral Analysis," Journal of Interdisciplinary History, 2 (Winter 1972), 249-62; idem, "Using Ecological Regressions," Journal of Interdisciplinary History, 4 (Spring 1974), 593-96; J. Morgan Kousser, "Ecological Regression and the Analysis of Past Politics",

employs ecological regression in analyzing antebellum politics and includes voting estimates for the entire nation concludes that in spite of the sectional difficulties from 1848 to 1860, Democrats and their principal opponents maintained an almost equal division of the popular vote in presidential elections during the two decades prior to the Civil War. Indeed, the author suggests that political leaders were dealing with largely "intractable" masses of voters, who were not likely to change their party affiliation. Victory for either party was more a consequence of chance than anything else.¹²

Although regression techniques represent a significant systematic improvement over traditional accounts, they may yield misleading information when possible groupings of the potential electorate are ignored.¹³ Studies of electoral behavior that calculate party support on the basis of total ballots cast ignore the possibility that significant numbers of citizens who did not vote in a particular election could

Journal of Interdisciplinary History, 4 (Autumn 1973), 237-62; Allen J. Lichtman, "Correlation Regression, and the Ecological Fallacy: A Critique," Journal of Interdisciplinary History, 4 (Winter 1974); and W. Phillips Shively, "'Ecological' Inference: The Use of Aggregate Data to Study Individuals," American Political Science Review, 63 (December 1969), 1183-96. For application of the technique see Kousser, The Shaping of Southern Politics; and Baum, The Civil War Party System.

¹²Alexander, "The Dimensions of Voter Partisan Constancy," 71, 73, 113.

¹³ibid., 84.

have been crucial in forming new party organizations or destroying old ones. Mere estimates of voter turnout in the antebellum period in the lower South suggest, for example, that previous nonvoters could have entered the active electorate and thus altered the outcome at the polls in the presidential elections of 1836 and 1856. Since, both in 1832 and 1852, southern turnout declined massively, it is possible that the mobilization of nonvoters in the subsequent years of 1836 and 1856 represented significant political realignment. Not one voter had to cross partisan lines for one party to substantially benefit from a dramatic rise in voter turnout and this underscores the necessity of computing party strength on the basis of the possible number of adult white males.

This study not only takes into account previous nonvoters but also presents an estimate of the increase in the voting population between elections as a measure of previously ineligible or "new voters."¹⁴ Voter qualifications had been

¹⁴Methods of computing electoral variables follow the procedures outlined in Baum, The Civil War Party System, 9-20. The significance of the "party of nonvoters" is discussed in Walter Dean Burnham, "The Changing Shape of the American Political Universe," American Political Science Review, 59 (March 1965), 22-23; idem, "Political Immunization and Political Confessionalism: The United States and Weimar Germany," Journal of Interdisciplinary History, 3 (Summer 1972), 13-14; idem, "Theory and Voting Research: Some Reflections on Converse's 'Change in the American Electorate'," American Political Science Review, 68 (September 1974), 1002; and William Claggett, "Turnout and Core Voters in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries: A Reconsideration," Social Science Quarterly, 62 (September, 1981), 443-49.

opened to all white male citizens in most of the antebellum South prior to Martin Van Buren's election to the presidency. Alabama, Georgia, Mississippi, and Tennessee had abandoned property qualifications for voting by 1834. In addition Arkansas, Florida, and Texas, upon entering the Union gave suffrage to all white males resident in their states.¹⁵ In addition, three states of the lower South, Alabama, Arkansas, and Texas, enacted suffrage laws permitting alien voting as long as they were residents of the state for a specified period.¹⁶ Thus, the total number of free adult white males represents a good estimate of the total possible number of voters in any given year.¹⁷

Three states in the South limited the ability of white males to vote in the antebellum period. Virginia required voters to own property until 1851. (thereafter the state

¹⁵For a brief discussion of the alien suffrage issue see Leon E. Aylsworth, "The Passing of Alien Suffrage," American Political Science Review, 25 (February 1931), 114-16.

¹⁶For a discussion of suffrage in the United States see Kirk H. Porter, A History of Suffrage in the United States (Chicago, 1918); and Chilton Williamson, American Suffrage: From Property to Democracy, 1760-1860 (Princeton, 1960). For voting qualifications in the state of Alabama see Lucille Griffith, Alabama: A Documentary History to 1900 (University, Al., 1972), 334.

¹⁷Thomas Alexander rejects the assumptions of an eligible electorate and uses only the actual number of ballots cast. He suggests that turnout rates and questions of nonvoter status are affected by factors which have yet to be systematically studied. See Alexander, "The Dimensions of Voter Partisan Constancy," 84, 87. For comments on the necessity of using the eligible electorate see Ray Myles Shortridge, "An Assessment of the Frontier's Influence on Voter Turnout," Agricultural History, 50 (July 1976), 445-59.

opened the vote to all white males) As many as forty-five percent of the free adult male residents of Virginia were not freeholders and were effectively disfranchised by the property qualification law.¹⁸ Significantly, Virginia was the only state in the South experiencing a substantial increase in turnout in the presidential election of 1852 over the previous presidential election in 1848 (see Table 1.1). The liberalization of suffrage laws in the state apparently encouraged large numbers of Virginians, who were previously unqualified to vote, to go to the polls and cast their ballots in an election that witnessed many southerners elsewhere feeling, for one reason or another, compelled to stay at home.

The Louisiana constitution of 1812 allowed only men who had purchased public lands to vote. This law had an especially devastating effect on the potential electorate in New Orleans where thousands of free male residents failed to qualify to vote. Louisiana opened suffrage to all white male citizens in 1852, but unlike Virginia the state experienced very little change in voter turnout through the secession election of 1861 (see Table 1.2).¹⁹ North Carolina remained the only state to retain both property and tax qualifications

¹⁸Porter, A History of Suffrage, 76, 105; and Williamson, American Suffrage, 225-30.

¹⁹Perry H. Howard, Political Tendencies in Louisiana (Baton Rouge, 1971), 21-30.

TABLE 1.1.

ESTIMATED VOTER TURNOUT IN INDIVIDUAL STATES OF THE UPPER SOUTH AND
 IN THE UPPER SOUTHERN STATES COMBINED.
 PRESIDENTIAL AND SECESSION ELECTIONS

Year	Ark.	Norc.	Tenn.	Virg.	Upper South
1828		54		26	37
1832		31	27	30	29
1836	22	51	53	34	44
1840	65	81	86	53	70
1844	63	77	87	53	69
1848	54	69	81	46	63
1852	47	63	70	62	57
1856	59	63	76	65	67
1860	85	67	77	68	71
1861		62	68	59	56

TABLE 1.2.

ESTIMATED VOTER TURNOUT IN INDIVIDUAL STATES OF THE LOWER SOUTH AND
 IN THE LOWER SOUTHERN STATES COMBINED.
 PRESIDENTIAL AND SECESSION ELECTIONS

Year	Ala.	Flo.	Geo.	Lou.	Mis.	Tex.	Lower South
1828	51			35	54		45
1832	31			21	28		27
1836	65		62	19	68		56
1840	86		85	38	84		75
1844	79		91	44	86		73
1848	69	63	87	46	85	46	72
1852	45	53	53	43	63	43	50
1856	70	70	80	47	77	69	69
1860	76	69	81	51	82	62	71
1861	55		65	39	53	60	55

for voting in the antebellum period. This state retained the property-holder prerequisites until 1856 and kept the tax-paying requirement until 1868.²⁰

For Louisiana, North Carolina, and Virginia the computation in this study of party strength on the basis of the total number of free white males systematically overrepresents the actual size of the eligible electorate in these states and thus exaggerates the percentage of nonvoters in any given election. In spite of this admitted error, computing party strength on the basis of the approximate number of males eligible to vote remains a necessity. In every antebellum election voters had at least three choices: to vote for their party; to vote for the opposition; or to refuse to vote for any candidate. The "party of nonvoters" must be considered an important group in the study of American politics, for it provides the historian of voting with a way of measuring the changes in turnout from election to election, changes which theoretically could have shaped the entire outcome.

²⁰Porter, A History of Suffrage, 85, 111.

CHAPTER II
ELECTORAL ALIGNMENT AND REALIGNMENT
IN THE LOWER SOUTH, 1828-1856

The strength of political party identification was an element of predictability in voting in lower South national elections during the so-called "second party system."¹ Once voters developed allegiances to either Andrew Jackson or to his political opponents, those partisan affiliations rarely changed, ties to the Democratic or opposition parties enduring in spite of changes in campaign personalities or candidates' positions on significant local and national issues.² Election outcomes during the second party system in the lower South hinged on two factors: (1) mobilization of previous partisans and, (2) voting preferences of new voters

¹The lower South includes the states that left the Union prior to the firing on Fort Sumter in April of 1861: Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, South Carolina, and Texas. See William G. Shade, "Political Pluralism and Party Development: The Creation of a Modern Party System: 1815-1852," in Paul Kleppner, et al., The Evolution of American Electoral Systems (Westport, Ct., and London, 1981), 78-89.

²Thomas B. Alexander, "The Dimensions of Voter Partisan Constancy in Presidential Elections from 1840 to 1860," in Stephen E. Maizlish and John J. Krishna, eds., Essays on American Antebellum Politics, 1840-1860 (Arlington, Tx., 1982), 71, 74, 76, 113, 120; Richard P. McCormick, The Second American Party System: Party Formation in the Jacksonian Era (Chapel Hill, 1966), 4-5; idem, The Presidential Game: The Origins of American Presidential Politics (New York and London, 1982), 12-13; and Joel H. Silbey, The Partisan Imperative: The Dynamics of American Politics Before the Civil War (New York and London, 1985), 57-58.

or previously inactive voters returning to the voting population. New voters, mainly immigrants and newcomers moving into the lower South, combined with young men coming of voting age, injected a volatile element in an otherwise largely stable partisan electorate up to 1861.³ Although issues and personalities had little impact on the presidential choices of the partisan faithful, they may have drawn new lower South residents and young men into the active electorate. Successful attraction of new voters may have given one party the margin of electoral victory or allowed it to increase its political strength in antebellum presidential elections.

Potential voters between 1828 and 1856 are classified here into five distinct categories:

--"Core" voters, or partisans, affiliated with the Democratic or opposition parties, who studiously voted for their party's presidential candidates in successive elections.⁴ These core

³William Claggett suggests three main voter groupings in his article, "Turnout and Core Voters in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries: A Reconsideration," Social Science Quarterly, 62 (September 1981), 443-49. He suggests that core voters are citizens who vote in successive presidential elections and are generally individuals who are committed to party. Peripheral voters cast ballots in only one of two successive presidential elections. Nonvoters remain on the sidelines during the balloting and refuse to enter the active electorate.

⁴Like many southerners, the editor of the Raleigh Register believed that every male should weigh the fundamental, cardinal principles separating the parties and then attach himself to that party and "battle manfully in her sacred cause. See the "Love of Party," The Raleigh Register, May 24, 1844.

voters provided the solid base of support that maintained the viability of candidates in the Democratic and opposition camps.

--Second "nonvoters," in contrast, chose to remain on the sidelines during successive presidential elections and are classed here accordingly as "nonvoters." Traditionally younger than core voters, or of lower social and economic status, they were more difficult to convince that their participation in the electoral process mattered.⁵

--Third, many voters, classified here as "peripheral," remained on the periphery of the electorate and exhibited no consistent pattern of partisan support in consecutive presidential elections, previously committed to a party but not balloting in successive presidential elections. Whether unable or unwilling to come to the polls, these former supporters of partisan candidates "straddled the fence" of the active electorate, perhaps "cross-pressured" merely reevaluating their political position, at least momentarily. In addition, nonvoters who cast a partisan ballot in a subsequent presidential election also entered the voting periphery. Therefore, some peripheral voters without party identification, but when mobilized they could provide a

⁵For a discussion of the characteristics of the nonvoter see Lee Sigelman, "The Nonvoting Voter in Voting Research," American Journal of Political Science, 26 (February 1982), 47-56; and Ray Myles Shortridge, "An Assessment of the Frontier's Influence on Voter Turnout," Agricultural History, 50 (July 1976), 445-59.

margin of victory for any polarity.

--Fourth, young men reaching voting age offered an opportunity for partisan recruitment, and provided electoral volatility as "new" voters entering the electorate for the first time.

--Finally, core voters left their party's fold and voted for the opposition are classified here as "bolters,"⁶ whose deep-seated commitment to parties felt by many antebellum voters made bolters a special class of political participants.⁷ Bound to party often by familial ties and tradition, bolters presumably switched partisan affiliation due to anxiety or mild conversion experiences.

In developing estimates of stability and change in the lower South electorate, their behavior was divided into categories of stability and instability (see Table 2.1). The stability figure, presented as a percentage of the total electorate, represents voters who repeated partisan choices made in the previous election. The stability of an election period is thus represented by the following categories: core voters repeating a party vote (whether the Democratic party

⁶In 1852 one Whig editor referred to Democrats who broke party ranks and made the decision to vote for Scott as "bolters." See "More Bolting--Pugh on the Column," *The New Orleans Bee*, October 9, 1852.

⁷A Mississippi Democrat noted that "political party ties of long standing are amongst the strongest which bind men together, and most difficult to be dissolved. See the "Letter From the Hon. Daniel Jenifer," *The Mississippian*, September 24, 1852.

TABLE 2.1

TRANSITION PROBABILITIES OF VOTING BEHAVIOR IN SELECTED
PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS IN THE ANTEBELLUM LOWER SOUTH
1828-1856
(By Percent of Electorate)

Election Pair	N	Repeating		New Voters (STA- NV. BILLY)	Dem. To Opp.		New Dem.	New Opp.	Dem. Drop	Opp. Drop	Opp. (INSTA- BILLY)	
		Dem.	Opp.		Dem.	Opp.						
Successive Presidential and the Secession Elections, 1828-1856												
1828-1832	74	24	3	42	19	88	0	3	0	0	5	13
1832-1836	80	16	0	36	11	63	3	0	12	21	0	38
1836-1840	143	23	22	15	10	70	0	0	13	17	0	30
1840-1844	198	26	30	21	4	81	0	3	11	3	3	20
1844-1848	202	26	25	20	2	73	2	0	9	9	4	26
1848-1852	280	22	17	19	11	69	0	3	6	2	9	31
1852-1856	296	27	16	31	0	74	0	0	14	12	0	26
Nonconsecutive Presidential and the Secession Election, 1828-1856												
1828-1836	81	16	2	24	19	61	6	0	12	16	0	38
1832-1840	79	14	1	10	19	44	0	0	21	35	0	56
1836-1844	137	17	18	10	15	60	0	0	24	15	2	41
1840-1848	196	18	24	15	7	64	0	3	15	12	6	36
1844-1852	199	17	12	15	16	60	0	2	12	7	11	41
1848-1856	278	26	22	23	2	73	1	6	9	5	4	28

SOURCES: The county election returns for presidential elections from 1828 to 1860 appearing here and elsewhere in this paper were taken from the machine readable data base compiled by the Interconsortium for Political Research, Ann Arbor, Michigan. The election returns presented had to be reorganized into symmetrical county units in order to overcome irregularities created by the changes in county formations in the antebellum period. Complete copies of these changes are kept in the data archives in the Department of History, Texas A&M University, College Station, Texas.

TABLE 2.1. (CONTINUED)

NOTE: The figures above represent the percentage of adult white males, a surrogate measure for legally eligible voters. Estimates of the potential voting population in each county for noncensus years were calculated by use of a growth rate formula that assumed a curvilinear pattern of increase in the number of adult white males between elections was used as a measure of previously ineligible or "new voters." Cf. Peyton McCrary, Clark Miller, and Dale Baum, "Class and Party in the Secession Crisis: Voting Behavior in the Deep South, 1856-1861," Journal of Interdisciplinary History, 8 (Winter 1978), 429-57, who failed to take into account of population increases from one election to the next between 1840 and 1860. The column labeled "Opp." (opposition) represents the National Republican Party from 1828-1832 and the Whig Party from 1836 to 1844. In calculating voter transition probabilities between pairs of elections between 1828-1844, logically but not statistically impossible estimates falling outside the 0-100% range were arbitrarily set at their respective minimum or maximum limits, and the values of the remaining estimates were then adjusted according to the restraints of the marginal values of the contingency tables. To adjust for the varying populations of counties, variables used in the regression equations were weighted by the number of adult white males. For procedures see Laura Irwin Langbein and Allan J. Lichtman, Ecological Inference, Sage University Paper series on Quantitative Applications in the Social Sciences, Series No. 07-010 (Beverly Hills, Ca., and London, 1978), 50-62; and Dale Baum, The Civil War Party System: The Case of Massachusetts, 1848-1876 (Chapel Hill and London, 1984), 19-21.

or a party opposing the Democrats); potential voters remaining out of the electorate by repeating not voting; and possible new voters staying out of the active electorate. Categories of behavior representing instability include: bolters switching party allegiances from one election to subsequent elections; previous nonvoters and new voters entering the electorate and made their party preference known; and previous partisans dropping out of the active electorate. The resulting table, using regression estimation of cell entries in contingency tables, reveals the extent to which white adult males were found in the categories described above for pairs of presidential elections between 1828 and 1856 (see Table 2.1).

Patterns of electoral change in presidential elections held in the lower South from Jackson's to Buchanan's first victories illustrate three significant trends (see Table 2.1). First, in any given election, the party that mobilized and retained the highest percentage of core voters, except in two important exceptions, laid claim in that election to the popular presidential vote in the lower South region. Building on Jackson's popularity, Democrats in the lower South mobilized more core voters than their opponents in nearly every presidential race from 1828 to 1856. The maintenance of core voter strength by the party of Jackson made it the majority party in most presidential elections

from 1828-1856 in the lower South.⁸ On the other hand, the Democrats' opponents delivered more core voters to the polls than their opposition only in 1844 and 1848. The anti-party spirit, lack of organizational abilities, and factionalism of the opponents of the Democracy in the lower South helps explain why many anti-Democratic party supporters failed to turn out or consistently back their candidates at higher levels than the Democrats.⁹

Previous nonvoters, peripheral voters, and new voters played key roles in two pre-Civil War presidential elections. In the 1840 presidential contest between Martin Van Buren and William Henry Harrison, estimates presented here suggest that both the Democrats and the Whigs held virtually all their 1836 supporters (see Table 2.1). Entry of peripheral and new voters into the Whig camp in 1840 gave Harrison a majority of the popular vote in the entire lower South. Similarly, in the 1844 race between James K. Polk and Henry Clay, the Whigs successfully mobilized slightly more partisans than their Democratic opponents [both in terms of previous 1836 and 1840

⁸For a discussion of the continuity of presidential politics in the antebellum lower South see, Alexander, "The Dimensions of Voter Partisan Constancy," 70-109.

⁹See Burton W. Folsom, II., "Party Formation and Development in Jacksonian America: the Old South," Journal of American Studies, 7 (December 1973), 217-29; Ronald P. Formisano, "Political Character, Antipartyism and the Second Party System," American Quarterly, 21 (Winter 1969), 683-85; and James L. Sundquist, Dynamics of the Party System: Alignment and Realignment of Political Parties in the United States (Washington, 1983), 55.

supporters]. Yet Polk, the Democratic nominee, gained the popular vote in the region because peripheral and new voters chose him three times more often than Clay. In the initial stages of development of the second party system, new residents in the lower South, young men voting for the first time, and politically inactive white males were key support elements, for Democrats and Whigs in presidential elections. Neither Harrison in 1840 nor Polk in 1844 could have carried the popular vote in the lower South without the backing of peripheral and new voters. Partisan appeals to candidate reputations, critical sectional and national issues, and levels of campaign enthusiasm apparently provided peripheral and new voters reasons to enter the active electorate and support a party's presidential nominee.

Finally, during the formation of the second party system in the lower South, and during the 1856 presidential election in particular, bolters played key roles in strengthening first the opposition party, then Democratic party coalitions (see Table 2.1). The estimates presented here suggest that in the 1836 presidential balloting, almost thirty percent of the former 1828 Jackson men defected and voted for Jackson's opponents. 1836 Democratic bolters accounted for one fourth of opposition ballots. Substantial Democratic defections in 1836 gave their opposition a strong base for party organization growth. The estimates further suggest that 1836 Democratic bolters permanently jumped or defected to the

opposition, voters who supported the opposition in 1836 all continued to do so in 1840 and 1844.

The dominant voting patterns present in the lower South antebellum presidential elections were evident during the formation of the Whig opposition in the cotton states. Core voters, bolters, peripheral, and new voters all bolstered the significant anti-Democratic opposition in the 1836 presidential election in the lower South.

The 1856 presidential election saw similar Democratic opposition defections, a fifth of men who voted in 1848 for Zachary Taylor changed partisan affiliation in 1856 and supported Buchanan (see Table 2.1). Southern Whigs had displayed intense dissatisfaction with their party's direction in 1852, nearly one of two former 1848 Taylor men either voting for Franklin Pierce or sitting out the balloting. Disappearance of the Whig party as a national entity shortly after the 1852 presidential election led former anti-Democratic supporters to permanent disaffection in 1856. Although Whig voters accounted for only fifteen percent of Buchanan's popular vote in the lower South, their defections significantly advanced Democratic hegemony in the region.

Surprised at the popular vote total of the anti-Democratic opposition to Martin van Buren in 1836, some southern editors suggested that the mainstay of the new opposition was "nullifiers" who bolted the Democratic party

in 1832 when Andrew Jackson threatened South Carolina with Federal troops. Since the National Republicans, the opponents of the Democracy prior to 1836, had not been a major force in the lower South in 1828 and 1832 (the National Republicans garnered only 5 votes outside of Louisiana in 1832), political commentators in 1836 concluded that the opposition developed out of the Democratic camp.¹⁰

According to voting estimates presented here, some Democrats who voted for Jackson in 1828 and 1832 subsequently bolted their party and voted for the Whigs in 1836 (see Tables 2.2 and 2.3). Approximately one of every five former Jackson Democrats, in terms of the 1828 electorate, defected to the Whig camp in 1836. These disaffections stemmed from several factors. As early as the presidential election of 1832, southern discontent mounted over nomination of a northern Vice-President on the Jackson ticket who might be "questionable" on the slavery issue. Southern Democratic leaders had to defend Van Buren openly in newspaper editorials.¹¹ During the election of 1836 southern Democrats found themselves even more on the defensive. Editors of the

¹⁰"The Opposition to Mr. Van Buren," The Federal Union, December 6, 1836.

¹¹For example see "Southern Observer," Mobile Commercial Register and Patriot, October 25, 1832; ibid., October 26, 1832; ibid., November 8, 1832; and The New Orleans Bee, October 30, 1832. To read a Whig attack on the beliefs of Martin Van Buren see "The Presidential Election," Raleigh Register, October 23, 1832; and "Humiliating," ibid., October 23 1832.

TABLE 2.2.

ESTIMATED RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN THE 1828 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION AND
 SUBSEQUENT VOTING IN THE 1836 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION IN THE LOWER SOUTH.

	1828-1836				Percent of Electorate
	Dem. 1828	NR. 1828	Non Voters	Entering Voters	
Democrat 1836	16	0	4	8	28
Whig 1836	6	2	5	11	24
Not Voting 1836	0	4	24	19	49
All Voters	22	6	33	38	100

Note: Actual N = 81.

TABLE 2.3.

ESTIMATED RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN THE 1832 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION AND
SUBSEQUENT VOTING IN THE 1836 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION IN THE LOWER SOUTH.

1832-1836

	Dem. 1832	NR. 1832	Non Voters	Entering Voters	Percent of Electorate
Democrat 1836	16	0	7	5	28
Whig 1836	3	0	13	8	24
Not Voting 1836	0	2	36	11	49
All Voters	19	2	55	24	100

Note: Actual N = 80.

Mississippian defended Van Buren from Whig accusations of abolitionist tendencies.¹² His negative image engendered by opposition in the South coupled and the sectional appeal of Hugh White appears to have caused roughly one-third of former 1828 Jackson men in the region to cast Whig ballots in 1836.¹³

Perhaps the most prominent Democratic defectors in 1836 were States' Rights men who had opposed Jackson's actions in the nullification controversy of 1832. For example, in Mississippi an important minority of Democratic politicians in the state, including John A. Quitman, president of the Mississippi State Rights Association, supported South Carolina in its struggle with Jackson and later led a unification of the States' Rights faction in the state with the newly formed Whig organization.¹⁴ Editors of the Mississippian also suggested that "aristocrats" who opposed the broadening of the franchise in the Mississippi Constitution of 1832 bolted from the Jackson camp and joined

¹²"Desperation," The Mississippian, September 9, 1836; ibid., October 7, 1836; "Address of the Committee of the Democratic Convention of Mississippi," ibid., October 14, 1836; "The Mississippi Aristocracy," ibid., October 21, 1836; "The Election," ibid., October 28, 1836.

¹³Folsom, "Party Formation," 217-19.

¹⁴Clark Leonard Miller, "Voter Participation and Political Realignment: Using Ecological Regression to Analyze Past Politics, Mississippi, 1833-1861," (unpublished Master's thesis, The University of Minnesota, 1977), 38-39.

the opposition.¹⁵ Voting estimates for Mississippi in 1836 suggest approximately sixteen percent of the former 1832 Jackson men cast ballots for White in 1836 (see Table 2.4). One newspaper editor suggested that in the South: "the nullifiers . . . will be united to the Federalists of the North, in a uniform opposition to the administration of Martin Van Buren."¹⁶ Another Democratic partisan complained that the 1836 opposition forces consisted of men "who a short time ago regarded your Federal Union as not worth preserving."¹⁷

The Democratic bolters in Mississippi remained within the opposition ranks at least through the 1840 presidential election (see Table 2.5). Few White supporters in the state returned to vote for Van Buren in 1840. The quantitative evidence presented here suggests that Democratic States' Rights men played a significant role in establishing a strong base of support for an opposition party to the Democrats in Mississippi and the lower South.¹⁸

¹⁵"The Mississippi Aristocracy," The Mississippian, October 21, 1836. For a discussion of the election of delegates to the Mississippi constitutional convention of 1832 see Edwin Arthur Miles, Jacksonian Democracy in Mississippi (Chapel Hill, 1960), 34-43.

¹⁶"The Opposition to Mr. Van Buren," The Federal Union, December 6, 1836.

¹⁷"The Next Election," The Mississippian, September 9, 1836. See also "Address of the Committee of the Democratic Convention of Mississippi," ibid., October 14, 1836.

¹⁸Miles, Jacksonian Democracy in Mississippi, 126-28, 169.

TABLE 2.4.

ESTIMATED RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN THE 1832 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION
AND SUBSEQUENT VOTING IN THE 1836 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION IN MISSISSIPPI.

1832-1836

	Dem. 1832	NR. 1832	Non Voters	Entering Voters	Percent of Electorate
Democrat 1836	16	0	3	15	35
Whig 1836	3	0	13	17	33
Not Voting 1836	0	0	33	0	33
All Voters	19	0	49	32	100

Note: Actual N = 23.

TABLE 2.5.

ESTIMATED RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN THE 1836 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION AND
SUBSEQUENT VOTING IN THE 1840 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION IN MISSISSIPPI.

	1836-1840				Percent of Electorate
	Dem. 1836	Whig 1836	Non Voters	Entering Voters	
Democrat 1840	22	1	4	12	39
Whig 1840	2	22	9	23	45
Not Voting 1840	0	0	9	7	16
All Voters	24	23	22	32	100

Note: Actual N = 25.

In spite of defections from their party in 1836, most southern Democrats supported Van Buren (see Tables 2.2 and 2.3). The estimates presented here suggest that, contrary to some contemporaries' assertions that the opposition fared well because of the "indifference and apathy" of Democratic partisans, Democratic core voters remained in the active electorate in 1836,¹⁹ roughly three of every four 1828 and nearly ninety percent of the 1832 Jackson men voted for Van Buren in 1836. In spite of Jackson's break with John C. Calhoun, the nullification controversy, and the nomination of New Yorker Van Buren for president, most Democratic voters stayed with their party in 1836, exhibiting remarkable stability in the face of a new opposition with an important southern element in 1836.²⁰ Van Buren also won significant support among peripheral voters, new residents and new voters in the region. Over forty percent (12/28) of his supporters in 1836 had not cast presidential ballots in 1832.²¹

Although the opposition in 1836 drew some strength from Democratic bolters, the emerging Whig party in the lower South gained most of its support from new residents to the region, young males entering the electorate, and peripheral

¹⁹"The Result of the Election," The Mississippian, December 9, 1836.

²⁰McCormick, The Presidential Game, 173-74; and Folsom, "Party Formation," 219-23.

²¹Miller, "Voter Participation and Political Realignment," 46.

voters (see Table 2.2 and 2.3). The estimates presented here suggest that in terms of the electorate in 1832, almost ninety percent (24/21=88%) of Whig ballots in the presidential election of 1836 came from peripheral and new voters. The Whig candidate in the lower South, Hugh L. White, senator from Tennessee, easily outdistanced Van Buren in the presidential race among new and previous nonvoters. One Democratic partisan admitted that the Whig strategy in 1836 of running several sectional candidates apparently encouraged peripheral and new voters in the lower South cast ballots for their regional "favorite son" candidate, White, instead of supporting Van Buren, the New York politician who engineered the election of Jackson in 1828.²² Whig opposition in the lower South and subsequently the second party system developed as those on the periphery of the political system entered the active electorate in 1836. The newly formed Whig party in the lower South little resembled the National Republican party that effectively ceased to be a viable political organ in the region in 1828. In accord with some previous historical scholarship, the quantitative evidence presented here suggests that anti-Democratic

²²"The Opposition to Mr. Van Buren," The Federal Union, December 6, 1836. For other Democratic comments on the strategy of the anti-Jackson opposition in Mississippi see "Address of the Committee of the Democratic Convention of Mississippi, The Mississippian, October 14, 1836. For discussions of the election see Cooper, Liberty and Slavery, 95-97; idem, The South and the Politics of Slavery, 70-90; and McCormick, The Presidential Game, 166-68.

opposition in the lower South developed from a coalition of National Republicans, disaffected Democrats, and from a substantial number of immigrants and young men.²³

The only state in the lower South where a significant opposition force endured during the Jackson years was Louisiana, where the National Republicans were partially evolved into the Whig party (see Tables 2.6-2.8). Merchants and sugar planters had been fond of John Q. Adams's fiscal conservatism and a tariff insuring ascendancy of their sugar crop in United States markets.²⁴ Roughly half of the 1828 Adams men and over eighty percent of 1832 Adams men cast ballots for the Whig opposition in 1836 (see Tables 2.6 and 2.7). Unlike the rest of the lower South, peripheral and new voters accounted for less than one-fourth of White's total vote in 1836. In Louisiana, where property and tax restrictions limited the franchise, few peripheral voters entered the political arena.²⁵ Nevertheless, Democratic victories in 1832 and 1836 were a direct result of previous 1828 Adams men not voting. Roughly one of two 1828 Jackson men moved out of the active electorate in 1836. One former Adams supporter noted before the election in 1836 that since

²³Cooper, The South and the Politics, 95-96.

²⁴The New Orleans Bee, October 13, 1827; ibid., August 14, 1828; ibid., August 16, 1828; ibid., October 22, 1828; ibid., November 3, 1828; ibid., September 6, 1832; and ibid., September 8, 1832.

²⁵See Perry H. Howard, Political Tendencies in Louisiana (Baton Rouge and London, 1971), 34-38, 51.

TABLE 2.6.

ESTIMATED RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN THE 1828 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION AND
SUBSEQUENT VOTING IN THE 1832 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION IN LOUISIANA.

1828-1836

	Dem. 1828	NR. 1828	Non Voters	Entering Voters	Percent of Electorate
Democrat 1836	9	1	0	0	10
Whig 1836	2	5	0	2	9
Not Voting 1836	1	5	43	33	81
All Voters	12	11	43	35	100

Note: Actual N = 29.

TABLE 2.7.

ESTIMATED RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN THE 1832 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION AND
SUBSEQUENT VOTING IN THE 1836 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION IN LOUISIANA.

1832-1836

	Dem. 1832	NR. 1832	Non Voters	Entering Voters	Percent of Electorate
Democrat 1836	8	0	2	0	10
Whig 1836	2	5	2	0	9
Not Voting 1836	0	1	56	24	81
All Voters	10	6	60	24	100

Note: Actual N = 29.

TABLE 2.8.

ESTIMATED RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN THE 1832 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION AND
SUBSEQUENT VOTING IN THE 1840 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION IN LOUISIANA.

1832-1840

	Dem. 1832	NR. 1832	Non Voters	Entering Voters	Percent of Electorate
Democrat 1840	6	0	8	1	15
Whig 1840	2	5	14	2	23
Not Voting 1840	0	0	23	38	62
All Voters	8	5	46	41	100

Note: Actual N = 27.

the present contest "is not a fair and candid war of principle but merely a matter of personal enmity," the only logical choice was to refuse to support either candidate.²⁶

With the exception of the notable move out of the voting electorate in 1832 and 1836 by 1828 Adams men, the estimates presented suggest that the partisan groupings of the Louisiana electorate remained relatively stable in the presidential elections from 1828 to 1836 (see Tables 2.6 and 2.7). Whig editorial depictions of Van Buren in 1836 as an abolitionist were ineffective and forced only limited Democratic defections to White.²⁷ In terms of Democrats who voted for Jackson in 1832, approximately four out of five returned ballots for Van Buren (see Table 2.7). Similarly, nearly all those who cast ballots for Adams in 1832 voted for White in 1836. In contrast to lower South sister states, Louisiana failed to experience revolutionary changes in the electorate until the presidential election of 1840 when the Whig candidate, General William Henry Harrison, a military hero and native of Virginia, captured seventy percent of his total support from peripheral and new voters (see Table 2.8).

For most of the lower South, the formation of the Whig

²⁶The New Orleans Bee, November 4, 1836.

²⁷For a discussion of Louisiana political development from 1828-1840 see Derek L. Hackett, "The Days of this Republic Will Be Numbered: Abolition, Slavery, and the Presidential Election of 1836," Louisiana Studies, 15 (Summer 1976): 134, 139, 160; idem, "Slavery, Ethnicity, and Sugar: An Analysis of Voting Behavior in Louisiana, 1828-1844," Louisiana Studies, 13 (Summer 1974), 73-118.

party, and the resultant two party system did not result from Democratic defections or the movement of National Republicans into the Whig stronghold. Contrary to the arguments of some political historians, the anti-Democratic opposition developed when massive numbers of nonvoters and new voters entered the electorate and opted for a new political party (see Table 2.2 and 2.3).²⁸ Why did they enter the electorate in 1836 and 1840? It appears that in the lower South sectional identification of presidential candidates was the main impetus to party formation. The Whig strategy in 1836 of running sectional candidates failed to draw large numbers of Democrats into the party, but did attract new voters who remained in the party stronghold for years to come. White's candidacy in the lower South in 1836 led many newcomers to the region, young men, and peripheral southern voters to support a fellow southerner rather than the Democratic candidate from New York. In addition, radical changes in party structure accompanying the formation of the second party system, including the convention plan of party organization and the employment of corps of professional political managers and activists by each party, motivated previously inactive voters.²⁹

²⁸See McCormick, The Presidential Game, 172-74; idem, The Second American Party System, 193-94, 243-44, 300; and Folsom, "Party Formation," 219, 222-24.

²⁹McCormick, The Second American Party System, 3-4, 14, 15, 329; Folsom, "Party Formation," 217-29; and Silbey, The Partisan Imperative.

After the Whig party entered the political fray, the estimates of voter stability and change in the lower South suggest a pronounced period of political continuity from 1840 to 1856 (see Table 2.1). In terms of party switching, few partisan voters altered their political opinions in national elections throughout the period. Traditional accounts of the political history of the region have tended to emphasize the movement of voters across party lines keyed by specific issues. For example, traditional accounts suggest that in the election of 1844, between James K. Polk and Henry Clay, the issue of Texas annexation drove Whigs to the Democratic party, giving them the election. In 1848, because Zachary Taylor was a southern slaveholder, core voting Democrats switched parties to vote for him. Electoral outcomes were dominated by candidate personality and reputation, campaign enthusiasm, and the overriding importance of national issues. Furthermore, the realignment in the national party system that historians have suggested occurred in the mid-1850s did not materialize in the Cotton states. The transitional probabilities of voting presented here suggest that, from 1852 to 1856, the partisan electorate--party loyalists--exhibited remarkable stability. Even in 1856, when the American party replaced the Whigs on the ballot in the lower South, no partisan switching from the alignments of the election of 1852 occurred. Citizens who allied with Democrats or Whigs during the formation of the Second Party

system rarely crossed partisan lines in national elections from 1840 to 1856.³⁰

Mobilization of party loyalists and attraction of new or previous nonvoters were keys to how well the parties did at the polls between 1840 and 1856. Merely looking at the percentage of party members who switched affiliations hides varying levels of voter turnout in antebellum presidential elections in the region. The estimates of partisan dropout and new voter entry adds new insight to an understanding of the elections under question. Democratic and opposition editors often aimed editorials and appeals at young males entering the electorate for the first time in a concerted attempt to bring them to the polls.³¹ During the 1856 presidential campaign one Whig editor told the young men of the South that the country demanded their help and only their new voices in the active electorate would preserve the Union.³² Partisans in the antebellum South searched for

³⁰See Cooper, The South and the Politics, 211-12; idem, Liberty and Slavery, 266-68. For an interpretation more in line with evidence presented here see Alexander, "Dimensions of Voter Partisan Constancy," 113. For a criticism of approaches that only look at national elections see Michael F. Holt, The Political Crisis of the 1850s (New York, 1978), 14. Holt suggests that Alexander and other similar studies of political realignment are inaccurate because they focus on presidential politics.

³¹"Young Whigs of Tennessee," The Republican Banner, November 1, 1844; and "Young Men," The Mississippian, October 9, 1860.

³²"To Young Men who vote for the first time to-day," The Republican Banner, November 4, 1856.

issues--candidate personality, religious affiliation, economic commitments--that might possibly encourage new and peripheral voters to vote.

Several elections of the period dramatically illustrate this point. Apparently, Polk's victory in the lower South could have been won only by gaining support from former Van Buren men and Whig bolters (see Table 2.9 and 2.10). Even retaining ninety percent of previous Democratic voters in 1840 and the support of ten percent of the 1840 Harrison men only gave Polk twenty-nine percent of the possible vote, still short of the Whig total (see Table 2.10). Democrats in the lower South obtained more of popular vote because they convinced more new voters to vote for Polk over Clay by a margin of almost four to one. Indeed, immigrants to the lower South and first-time voting young males accounted for roughly a third of the votes cast for the Democratic candidate. Evidently, editors of Democratic southern newspapers went beyond political rhetoric when their columns in the fall of 1844 stressed the importance of getting their voters to the polls and attracting new voters.³³

Discussions of slavery dominated cotton state journalism even in 1844, although both parties stressed their commitment to the peculiar institution and presented themselves as

³³"Love of Party," The Raleigh Register, May 24, 1844.

TABLE 2.9.

ESTIMATED RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN THE 1836 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION AND
SUBSEQUENT VOTING IN THE 1844 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION IN THE LOWER SOUTH.

	1836-1844				
	Dem. 1836	Whig 1836	Non Voters	Entering Voters	Percent of Electorate
Democrat 1844	17	0	10	14	40
Whig 1844	0	18	9	6	33
Not Voting 1844	2	0	10	15	27
All Voters	19	18	29	35	100

Note: Actual N = 137.

TABLE 2.10.

ESTIMATED RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN THE 1840 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION AND
SUBSEQUENT VOTING IN THE 1840 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION IN THE LOWER SOUTH.

1840-1844

	Dem. 1840	Whig 1840	Non Voters	Entering Voters	Percent of Electorate
Democrat 1844	26	3	0	11	40
Whig 1844	0	30	0	3	33
Not Voting 1844	3	0	21	4	27
All Voters	29	33	21	17	100

Note: Actual N = 198.

ardent defenders of southern rights,³⁴ in addition, editors appealed to sectional and state interests and attacked candidates' personal integrity.³⁵ In Louisiana, Whig editors appealed to foreign voters by suggesting that Mr. Polk's hatred of Catholics was well known.³⁶ In Mississippi, the Democratic press quoted a prominent Whig supporter's speech suggested that the Democratic party was primarily made up of "brutes, felons, rogues, fiends, and convicts." At the same time, Democrats pictured Whigs as wealthy magnates advocating a national bank and a higher tariff--policies that would steal wages of the poor white agricultural laborers of the South.³⁷

³⁴For examples of Democratic accusations against the Whig party see, "Polk and Slavery," The Mississippian, September 13, 1844; "The Abolition Vote," ibid., October 23, 1844; "The Glorious Result," The Federal Union, October 15, 1844; and "Abolition," ibid., October 22, 1844. For similar Whig accusations against James K. Polk see "Who are the Abolitionists," The New Orleans Bee, September 19, 1844; "James G. Birney," ibid., October 17, 1844; and "James K. Polk identified with Van Buren--The Standing Army Scheme," The Republican Banner, September 13, 1844.

³⁵"Locofoco Decency," The New Orleans Bee, September 18, 1844; "James K. Polk and the Catholics," ibid., September 20, 1844; "James K. Polk," ibid., September 21, 1844; and "The Result," ibid., November 18, 1844.

³⁶"Religious Liberty in Danger," The New Orleans Bee, October 16, 1844.

³⁷"The Hell Derived and Heaven Born," The Mississippian, Sept 20, 1844; "Why May We not Beat the Whigs," The Federal Union, September 17, 1844; "The October Elections," ibid., September 24, 1844; and "Clay Wanted to Tax Tea and Coffee," ibid., October 1, 1844. The Whigs certainly tried to defend themselves on economic issues and tried to produce evidence of how the tariff, the national bank, and a sound national currency benefitted all southerners regardless of class.

Which issues influenced the large group of new and previous inactive voters who entered the active electorate in 1844 and made Democratic victory possible? A review of lower South newspapers reveals partisan differences in respect to economic issues--hard and soft money, monopoly, and tariffs--which had divided the two parties since 1836. There was little indication that partisan stance on the tariff, the national bank, or currency policy suddenly generated a great outpouring of support from first-time voters. Slavery was certainly a volatile issue that could have drawn new voters into the voting population, but both parties in the South supported the institution.³⁸

The question of Texas annexation was a dominant issue that divided the Democratic and Whig parties in 1844, which some Cotton state Democrats suggested was proof of allegiance to the southern cause.³⁹ Voter estimates presented here suggest that the Texas debate convinced young males and new resident

"James K. Polk," The New Orleans Bee, September 21, 1844; "A Letter to the Editor from a Cotton Planter," ibid., September 30, 1844; "Tariff a Good Policy," ibid., October 1, 1844; and "To the Voters of New Orleans," ibid., November 4, 1844.

³⁸Robert F. Durden, The Self-Inflicted Wound: Southern Politics in the Nineteenth Century (Lexington, 1985), 40-42. Durden suggests that white southerners defended slavery primarily because it was in the class interests of the great slaveholders. It was certainly also true that nonslaveholding white southerners wanted to maintain the semi-caste system of slavery which prevented blacks from competing in their economic sphere.

³⁹"The Texas Question," The Mississippian, October 30, 1844.

voters in the lower South that the Democratic party supported the true interests of South (see Tables 2.9 and 2.10).⁴⁰ Clay, Kentucky senator and Whig candidate for president in 1844, mustered little support among voters entering the active electorate for the first time. One Democratic editor deemed Clay's positions on Texas, the tariff, and southern rights made him a "dead coon" in the lower South.⁴¹ Texas annexation thus appears to have provided Polk a popular vote mandate in the lower South.⁴²

Four years later, voter turnout again provided the key in the lower South in giving the Democratic candidate for president, Lewis Cass of Michigan, a narrow popular vote victory over Taylor, military hero of the Mexican-American War and Louisiana slaveholder (see Table 2.11). In 1848, both the Whig and Democratic parties in the Cotton states competed equally for new voters. Since Polk defeated Clay in the region in 1844 by approximately seven percentage points of the potential electorate, the Democrats should have easily carried the region again in 1848. But unlike 1844, Democrats

⁴⁰Cooper, Liberty and Slavery, 217.

⁴¹"The Glorious Result!" The Federal Union, October 15, 1844.

⁴²William J. Cooper notes that the issue of the annexation of Texas in 1844 caved in Whig unity in that year and gave the Democrats the victory, The South and the Politics of Slavery, 211-12. Some scholars suggest that the Texas issue mattered little. See Edward Pessen, Jacksonian America: Society, Personality, and Politics (Urbana, 1985), 260; and Alexander, "The Dimensions of Voter Partisan Constancy," 113.

TABLE 2.11.

ESTIMATED RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN THE 1844 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION AND
SUBSEQUENT VOTING IN THE 1848 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION IN THE LOWER SOUTH.

	1844-1848				Percent
	Dem. 1844	Whig 1844	Non Voters	Entering Voters	of Electorate
Democrat 1848	26	0	0	9	36
Whig 1848	2	25	1	8	36
Not Voting 1848	4	2	20	2	28
All Voters	33	27	22	18	100

Note: Actual N = 202.

were unable to mobilize their partisans behind Cass. Approximately twenty percent of 1844 Polk men either voted for Taylor in 1848 or sat out the balloting altogether. In an election year where the extension of slavery was dominant issue in the Cotton states, significant numbers of Democratic voters were unwilling to place the fate of slavery in the hands of a northerner. As one newspaper editor suggested, "Gen. Taylor either stands or falls with the South--while Gen. Cass is wholly identified personally and every way with the North, and affords or falls with it."⁴³

The estimates of two lower South states' voting clearly suggest that Democratic core voters who abstained from the 1848 balloting effectively cost Cass their electoral votes (see Tables 2.12 and 2.13). Almost forty percent of former Polk men in Louisiana failed to vote for Cass or Taylor in 1848. Had the Democrats maintained party discipline, Cass

⁴³"General Reflections," The Southern Recorder, September 26, 1848. Both parties consistently defended their candidates' records on slavery. The main difference lay in the fact that the Whigs felt compelled to defend Millard Fillmore, the Vice-Presidential nominee, while the Democrats were forced to defend the head of their ticket, Cass. For examples of the Democrat defense see, "Why is Millard Fillmore the Whig Candidate for Vice President?" The Mississippian, September 29, 1848; "Spirit of the Campaign," ibid., October 13, 1848; "Will Southern Men Vote for the Taylor-Fillmorized Ticket," ibid., October 13, 1848; and "The South Sold to the Abolitionists," ibid., November 24, 1848. For examples of the Whig arguments see, "Read, Read, Southern Men," The New Orleans Bee, September 15, 1848; "Important Development! Who Can Doubt any Longer?" ibid., September 22, 1848; "Cass is an Abolitionist," ibid., October 3, 1848; "Gen. Cass and Abolition Petitions," ibid., November 3, 1848; and "The Issue," The Southern Recorder, October 3, 1848.

TABLE 2.12.

ESTIMATED RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN THE 1844 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION AND
SUBSEQUENT VOTING IN THE 1848 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION IN LOUISIANA.

	1844-1848				
	Dem. 1844	Whig 1844	Non Voters	Entering Voters	Percent of Electorate
Democrat 1848	11	0	4	6	21
Whig 1848	1	18	3	3	25
Not Voting 1848	7	0	40	8	54
All Voters	19	18	46	17	100

Note: Actual N = 36.

TABLE 2.13.

ESTIMATED RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN THE 1844 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION AND
SUBSEQUENT VOTING IN THE 1848 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION IN GEORGIA.

	1844-1848			Entering Voters	Percent of Electorate
	Dem. 1844	Whig 1844	Non Voters		
Democrat 1848	38	0	0	4	42
Whig 1848	0	39	1	5	45
Not Voting 1848	4	1	7	2	13
All Voters	42	40	8	11	100

Note: Actual N = 60.

could have carried the state.⁴⁴ Similarly, in Georgia, ten percent of those who had supported Polk sat out balloting in a close election in 1848. One Democrat correctly perceived that the defeat of Cass had been "brought upon them, not by their opponents but by their friends."⁴⁵ The estimates suggest that Taylor's victory in Georgia was partially the result of former Polk men failing to support their party's nominee. Thus, for the cotton states, the most significant development in the 1848 presidential election occurred when the Democrats failed to get their core voters to the polls. Substantial numbers of former Polk men decided that moving to the fringe of the 1848 active electorate was preferable to voting for the opposition or a northern Democrat.

Some historical accounts of the 1848 election stress the dissatisfaction many cotton state voters felt towards Cass in 1848 and assert that successful Whig attacks on Cass's position on slavery forced a substantial number of Democratic

⁴⁴For a discussion of Louisiana politics in the election of 1848 see William Adams, "Louisiana and the Presidential Election of 1848," Louisiana History, 4 (Spring 1963), 131-44; and Howard, Political Tendencies in Louisiana, 57-58.

⁴⁵"The Late Elections," The Federal Union, November 24, 1848. Ulrich B. Phillips suggested that some of Georgia's voters feared Cass lacked commitment on the slavery issue and therefore caused some Democratic dissatisfaction with their nominee. See Ulrich B. Phillips, Georgia and State Rights (Macon, Ga., 1984), 150-51. The Democratic press in Milledgeville, Georgia also suggested that party members in the state had been unhappy with the nomination of Cass and refused to support him in November. See "Men Change, Principles Never," The Federal Union, September 19, 1848; and "Gen. Cass and the South," ibid., October 3, 1848.

core voters to bolt to Taylor's camp. The estimates presented here suggest few Polk supporters switched party identification in 1848 but more than ten percent of them abstained from voting (see Table 2.11). In addition the Whig party, in spite of their alleged "renewed dedication" to the politics of slavery, competed equally with the Democrats for new votes in the region. The most striking feature of the 1848 presidential election in the lower South was the movement out of the active electorate by former 1844 Democratic core voters.⁴⁶

In the pivotal 1852 presidential election voter turnout and the movement of new voters into the electorate became the determining factors for political victory (see Tables 2.13 and 2.14). Party lines were nearly frozen between the 1848 and 1852 presidential elections. The Whig nominee for president in 1852, General Winfield Scott, received virtually no support from former Cass Democrats, while Franklin Pierce, the Democratic candidate, attracted approximately ten percent of the former 1844 Clay men and 1848 Taylor men into his camp (see Tables 2.13 and 2.14). In spite of this apparent partisan stability, the national election in 1852 exhibited the highest levels of instability of any lower South presidential election since the formation of the second party

⁴⁶See Cooper, Liberty and Slavery, 266-7; idem, The South and the Politics of Slavery; and Durden, The Self-Inflicted Wound. For an alternative thesis to the one presented here see Alexander, "The Dimensions of Voter Partisan Constancy," 74-77.

TABLE 2.14.

ESTIMATED RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN THE 1844 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION AND
SUBSEQUENT VOTING IN THE 1852 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION IN THE LOWER SOUTH.

1848-1852

	Dem. 1848	Whig 1848	Non Voters	Entering Voters	Percent of Electorate
Democrat 1852	22	3	2	4	31
Whig	0	17	2	0	19
Not Voting 1832	9	11	19	11	51
All Voters	31	30	24	15	100

Note: Actual N = 280.

system (see Table 2.1). The unstable nature of the 1852 election in the lower South was the result of core voters who did not support either candidate and the substantial numbers of peripheral voters who entered the electorate in the Pierce camp.

Apathy characterized the 1852 election in the lower South. Over one-third of 1848 Taylor supporters and an equal number of former Cass men chose to remain at home rather than go to the polls in 1852 (see Table 2.14).⁴⁷ One newspaper editor noted with dismay that voters of both parties stood "away from the polls, and seem everywhere to have suffered the election to go by default."⁴⁸ In terms of the voter alignments in 1844, more Democrats dropped out of the electorate in 1852 than Whigs (see Table 2.15). The inability of the national parties to nominate candidates who could excite southern interest and effectively answer their fears about government policy toward the institution of slavery disillusioned both Democrats and Whigs.⁴⁹ Peripheral

⁴⁷Scholars have emphasized the tremendous defections among the Whigs in the South, but have largely ignored the substantial numbers of cotton state Democrats who also were unhappy with their party in 1852. See Cooper, Liberty and Slavery, 341; and Durden, The Self-Inflicted Wound, 65-66. Alexander completely ignores the issue of turnout and misses the substantial alterations that took place in the electorate in 1852. See Alexander, "The Dimensions of Voter Partisan Constancy," 74.

⁴⁸"Speculation," The New Orleans Bee, November 6, 1852.

⁴⁹The Democratic press in Mississippi complained about the apathy of their party members as the election approached, "Democrats of Mississippi," The Mississippian, October 1,

TABLE 2.15.

ESTIMATED RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN THE 1844 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION AND
SUBSEQUENT VOTING IN THE 1852 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION IN THE LOWER SOUTH.

1844-1852

	Dem. 1844	Whig 1844	Non Voters	Entering Voters	Percent of Electorate
Democrat 1852	17	2	2	10	31
Whig 1852	0	12	3	4	19
Not Voting 1852	11	9	15	16	51
All Voters	28	23	19	30	100

Note: Actual N = 199.

voters gave Pierce the margin of victory in the lower South. The estimates in terms of voting alignments in 1844 suggest that peripheral voters accounted for approximately forty percent of Pierce's total vote in 1852. In addition, Pierce dominated his opponent among new and previous nonvoters by an almost two to one margin.⁵⁰ Peripheral voters in the lower South found the Democratic ticket in 1852 a more sound choice to protect the region's interest than the Whig alternative.

A look at the contingency table estimates for Alabama and Georgia in the 1852 election further illustrates the tremendous dissatisfaction many voters in the lower South felt towards the presidential nominees. In Alabama and Georgia large numbers of Democrats and Whigs remained on the sidelines during the presidential elections, but core voters in the two states also stayed in the active electorate and voted for candidates other than the national party nominees. Voter choices for the election of 1852 in Alabama included, in addition to the partisan tickets of Scott and Pierce, a "Southern Rights" or secessionist ticket pledged to support William L. Yancey's "Alabama Platform". Yancey's platform called for southern opposition to federal interference with

1952. The Whig press in New Orleans noted the large numbers of both Democrats and Whigs who failed to support their candidates in 1852, see "The Cause of the Result," *The New Orleans Bee*, November 12, 1852.

⁵⁰See Cooper, *Liberty and Slavery*, 341.

slavery in the territories and to "squatter sovereignty."⁵¹ Alabamians who supported the Southern Rights ticket voiced their belief that neither national party represented truly the interests of the South.

In Alabama, slightly over half of the 1848 Taylor supporters left the party in 1852 at least temporarily. Four of every ten former Taylor supporters moved to the fringe of the 1852 active electorate and failed to cast a ballot. The remainder of the former 1848 Whig men either voted for Pierce or the Southern Rights ticket (see Table 2.16). Indeed, the entire secessionist ticket was surprisingly made up of former Taylor Whigs.⁵² A high level of dissatisfaction existed among Alabama Whigs with Scott. Many southern Whigs viewed his nomination as a victory for the northern wing of the party at the expense of southern interests. They also believed him to be increasingly suspect on the issue of slavery and questioned his willingness to support the Compromise of 1850.⁵³ It appears that this was the driving

⁵¹Henry Mayer, "'A Leaven of Disunion': The Growth of a Secessionist Faction in Alabama, 1847-1851," Alabama Review, 22 (April 1969), 83-116. Lewy Dorman, Party Politics in Alabama From 1850 Through 1860, (Wetumpka, Al., 1935), 11.

⁵²J. Mills Thornton, III., Politics and Power in a Slave Society: Alabama, 1800-1860 (Baton Rouge and London, 1978), 353-54. Thornton notes the tremendous Whig defections in 1852, but he estimates it conservatively at only twenty-five percent. The contingency table estimates reveal much higher rates of abstention and defection.

⁵³"Letter from the Hon. Daniel Jenifer," The Mississippian, September 24, 1852.

TABLE 2.16.

ESTIMATED RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN THE 1844 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION AND
SUBSEQUENT VOTING IN THE 1852 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION IN ALABAMA.

	1844-1852				Percent of Electorate
	Dem. 1844	Whig 1844	Non Voters	Entering Voters	
Democrat 1852	21	0	4	2	27
So. Rights 1852	0	2	0	0	2
Whig 1852	0	13	2	0	15
Not Voting 1852	17	11	11	16	55
All Voters	38	26	17	18	100

Note: Actual N = 49.

force behind the Whig disillusionment.

The Democrats also experienced an approximate forty percent drop from their support in 1848 in Alabama, although the estimates suggest that virtually no Democrats crossed party lines. Yet the Pierce ticket was as equally unappealing to Alabama voters as the Scott ticket. This dissatisfaction of Alabama voters appears to have been short-lived because the voting estimates for the nonconsecutive presidential elections between 1848 and 1856 suggest that all but fourteen percent of the Cass Democrats returned to their party's fold and voted for Buchanan in 1856 (see Table 2.17). Similarly, the subsequent disappearance of the Whig party as a national entity failed to disrupt the Democratic opposition in Alabama: the large majority of former Taylor Whigs cast ballots for the opponents of the Democracy in 1856 (see Table 2.18).

Georgians appeared to mirror the sentiments of the voters in Alabama. The 1852 presidential balloting in Georgia had been split into four tickets. In addition to the Pierce and Scott tickets were the Tugaloo (or Independent Democrat) ticket and the Daniel Webster (or Independent Whig) ticket.⁵⁴

⁵⁴In a newspaper article entitled "A Retrospect," appearing in The Federal Union, November 2, 1852, the Democratic supporters of the Pierce ticket express their anger towards the advocates of the Tugaloo ticket and accused them of being secessionists. The ticket was actually split along the same lines as the state Democratic party did in the gubernatorial elections the previous year. The mainline Democratic ticket was supported by the Southern Rights faction of the party. The Tugaloo ticket was made up of Union

TABLE 2.17.

ESTIMATED RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN THE 1848 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION AND
SUBSEQUENT VOTING IN THE 1852 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION IN ALABAMA.

	1848-1852				Percent
	Dem. 1848	Whig 1848	Non Voters	Entering Voters	of Electorate
Democrat 1852	21	1	5	0	27
So. Rights 1852	0	2	0	0	2
Whig 1852	0	15	0	0	15
Not Voting 1852	11	12	24	9	55
All Voters	32	31	29	9	100

Note: Actual N = 49.

TABLE 2.18.

ESTIMATED RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN THE 1848 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION AND
SUBSEQUENT VOTING IN THE 1856 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION IN ALABAMA.

	1848-1856				Percent
	Dem. 1848	Whig 1848	Non Voters	Entering Voters	of Electorate
Democrat 1856	25	4	4	10	43
American 1856	0	24	2	0	26
Not Voting 1856	4	0	19	7	30
All Voters	29	28	26	17	100

Note: Actual N = 49.

Abstention and disaffection among Georgia Whigs occurred at greater levels than Alabama (see Table 2.19 and 2.20). A paltry thirty-four percent of the 1848 Whigs subsequently cast ballots for Winfield Scott. Webster gained a full twelve percent of Taylor's supporters even though he died before the election took place. Even more disheartening to the Georgia Whigs was the extent to which their party members bolted and voted for Pierce in 1852 (see Table 2.20). The Whig party in Georgia found itself in total disarray in 1852, but it believed the core voter disaffection would only be a temporary phenomena.⁵⁵

The Democrats also had difficulty mobilizing their core constituency in 1852. The estimates suggest that few Democrats in Georgia switched party preferences, but roughly forty percent of the Cass men subsequently sat out the 1852 election. The Democratic press lamented this apathy, but felt that abstaining Democrats could easily be brought back into the party fold.⁵⁶

Democrats lead by Howell Cobb. Whig editors expressed their total dissatisfaction with the nomination of Winfield Scott in "General Scott and the Presidency," The Southern Recorder, October 19, 1852. They believed Scott was not a consistent advocate of Whig policies, especially their support of the compromise of 1850, and therefore they pledged their votes to Daniel Webster or to encourage Georgians not to vote at all. For a discussion of the party differences in Georgia see, Phillips, Georgia and State Rights, 168-69.

⁵⁵The Southern Recorder, October 12, 1852.

⁵⁶"The Vote of Georgia," The Federal Union, November 16, 1852.

TABLE 2.19.

ESTIMATED RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN THE 1844 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION AND
SUBSEQUENT VOTING IN THE 1852 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION IN GEORGIA.

	1844-1852				
	Dem. 1844	Whig 1844	Non Voters	Entering Voters	Percent of Electorate
Democrat 1852	19	4	2	5	30
Ind. Democrat 1852	5	0	0	0	5
Whig 1852	2	11	0	2	14
Ind. Whig 1852	0	5	0	0	5
Not Voting 1852	14	16	6	11	47
All Voters	38	36	8	18	100

Note: Actual N = 95.

TABLE 2.20.

ESTIMATED RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN THE 1848 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION AND
SUBSEQUENT VOTING IN THE 1852 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION IN GEORGIA.

	1848-1852			Entering Voters	Percent of Electorate
	Dem. 1848	Whig 1848	Non Voters		
Democrat 1852	20	7	0	3	30
Ind. Democrat 1852	5	0	0	0	5
Whig 1852	0	14	0	0	14
Ind. Whig 1852	0	5	0	0	5
Not Voting 1852	14	15	12	5	47
All Voters	39	41	12	8	100

Note: Actual N = 95.

Unlike Alabama, political parties in Georgia failed to experience a rejuvenation of support in 1856 (see Table 2.21). The voting estimates presented for Georgia presidential elections between 1848 and 1856 suggest that large numbers of core voting 1848 Democrats and Whigs permanently defected from their party's fold. Almost twenty percent of core voter strength of both parties in Georgia switched partisan preference or moved out of the active electorate from 1848 to 1856.⁵⁷ A minor realignment occurred in Georgia as fifteen percent of the Taylor supporters voted for Buchanan in 1856. The nomination of Scott in 1852 and the inability of the Whigs to develop a consensus on the slavery issue forced many of Georgia's Whigs out of the party permanently.

Lower South voters decided against supporting the partisan candidates in 1852 because the nominees and the party platforms failed to address adequately their concerns over the questions of the extension of slavery. The political press, whether Whig or Democrat, in the region in 1852 expressed concern with party stands on the issue of slavery.⁵⁸ The nomination of a northern Democrat and a Whig

⁵⁷This is in contrast to the picture presented by Phillips, Georgia and State Rights, 168.

⁵⁸"Pierce and His Claims on the South," The Mississippian, September 17, 1852; "Democrats of Mississippi," ibid., October 1, 1852; "Grand Democratic Rally! Three Thousand Freemen in Council!!" ibid., October 8, 1852; "The Two Platforms, A Warning to Southern Voters!" ibid., October 15, 1852; "The Contrast," The New Orleans Bee,

TABLE 2.21.

ESTIMATED RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN THE 1848 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION AND
SUBSEQUENT VOTING IN THE 1856 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION IN GEORGIA.

	1848-1856				Percent of Electorate
	Dem. 1848	Whig 1848	Non Voters	Entering Voters	
Democrat 1856	30	6	2	8	46
American 1856	3	28	0	3	34
Not Voting 1856	3	5	9	3	22
All Voters	36	39	11	14	100

Note: Actual N = 60.

of "questionable" standards produced apathetic responses in the lower South electorate.

A minor change in voter preference took place in the lower South between 1848 and 1856 (see Table 2.22). The voter estimates presented here suggest that almost one-third of the Taylor supporters failed to vote for Fillmore in 1856. Whig defections were high. One fifth of all former 1848 Whigs cast ballots for Buchanan. Anti-Democratic editors in Georgia lamented their 1856 November loss and noted that the "political fanaticism" of some of their northern brethren may have forced southern voters to opt for Buchanan.⁵⁹ In addition, the disappearance of the Whig party as a national entity by 1856 perhaps convinced some former southern Whigs that the Democratic party provided the only remaining

August 7, 1852; "The Canvass in the State," *ibid.*, September 9, 1852; "The Game Exposed," *ibid.*, September 13, 1852; "The Question Settled," *ibid.*, September 30, 1852; "Whig Convention--Gen. Scott," The Floridian and Journal, April 3, 1852; "The Testimony of Leading Whigs Against Gen. Scott--Keep it Before the People," *ibid.*, October 2, 1852; "Presidential Election in Florida," *ibid.*, November 6, 1852; "Parties," The Southern Recorder, October 26, 1852; "Presidential Election," *ibid.*, November 9, 1852; "The Whig Game--North and South," The Federal Union, September 28, 1852; "Important Facts that Every Democrat in Georgia Should Remember," *ibid.*, October 12, 1852; "Five Reasons Why General Scott Should Not be Elected President," *ibid.*, October 19, 1852; and "The Result in Georgia," *ibid.*, November 9, 1852.

⁵⁹"The Presidential Election," The Southern Recorder, November 11, 1856. The Democratic press also played this up when they suggested that the main issue in the election was whether we shall "be forced to break the ties that bind us to the North, and seek refuge under a government composed of half the present states of the Union." "Democrats Are You Ready?" The Federal Union, October 28, 1856.

TABLE 2.22.

ESTIMATED RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN THE 1848 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION AND
SUBSEQUENT VOTING IN THE 1856 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION IN THE LOWER SOUTH.

1848-1856

	Dem. 1848	Whig 1848	Non Voters	Entering Voters	Percent of Electorate
Democrat 1856	26	6	0	9	41
Amercian	1	22	1	4	28
Not Voting 1852	4	3	23	2	31
All Voters	31	30	24	15	100

Note: Actual N = 278.

protection for southern rights.⁶⁰

In summary, by 1840 there existed in the lower South states a vigorous, competitive two-party system (see Table 2.23). The competitiveness in the political arena was reflected in both high rates of voter participation and the relative closeness of the contests for the presidency. In contrast to one scholar's assertion that the second party system in the lower South developed in two distinct phases, the estimates of party competition presented here suggest that the second party system gradually penetrated the region in the presidential election of 1836 and continued to provide closely contested national elections until 1852.⁶¹ Turnout in 1852 dropped approximately twenty-two percent when compared to the previous election in 1848. Both parties in the lower South suffered substantial declines in partisan support. Although many Democrats and members of the opposition returned to the polling places in 1856, the Democratic opposition was never able to produce a competitive race for the presidency in the region again in the antebellum period. The second party system penetrated the lower South only briefly as the national debate over the institution of slavery handicapped the Democratic opposition in the region

⁶⁰See Cooper, Liberty and Slavery, 370-71; idem, The South and the Politics of Slavery, 245-46; and Durden, The Self-Inflicted Wound, 71. For an alternative view see Alexander, "Dimensions of Voter Partisan Constancy," 109.

⁶¹Shade, "Political Pluralism and Party Development," 78-89.

TABLE 2.23.

VOTER INTEREST AND PARTY COMPETITION. THE LOWER SOUTH
PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS: 1828-1860.

Year	% Democratic	% Opposition	% Turnout	Competition	N
1828	36	10	46	26	74
1832	25	3	27	32	80
1836	29	27	56	2	143
1840	36	40	75	-4	198
1844	40	33	73	7	202
1848	36	36	72	0	280
1852	31	19	50	13	296
1856	41	28	69	13	358
1860	47	25	71	22	391

SOURCES: The county election returns for presidential elections from 1828 to 1860 appearing here and elsewhere in this paper were taken from the machine readable data base compiled by the Interconsortium for Political Research, Ann Arbor, Michigan.

Note: The voter interest and party competition presents for each lower South presidential election between 1828 and 1860 the proportion of the possible electorate casting ballots for either the Democratic candidate or his opposition. The level of turnout provides a rough measure of voter interest by summing the number of adult males voting for both parties in a given election. The party competition measure is obtained by subtracting the percentage of opposition support in one presidential election from the Democratic total. The closer the competition number comes to zero, the more fierce the partisan competition.

in the 1850s.

The second party system in the lower South had its greatest penetration in Louisiana (see Table 2.24). In 1828 and 1832 Louisiana already possessed a competitive two-party system and the emergence of party competition in the rest of the cotton states appears primarily to have stirred voter interest in the state. The estimates presented here suggest that turnout in Louisiana doubled between 1836 and 1840. Unlike the rest of the lower South the presidential elections in the state remained competitive throughout the antebellum period. In sharp contrast to Louisiana, Texas, which emerged as a state during the crucial national debates over the extension of slavery, failed to develop a competitive two-party system before the Civil War (see Table 2.25). The Whigs, who had opposed the annexation of Texas in 1844 and 1845, had difficulties convincing Texans to join their cause and never posed a serious threat to Democratic hegemony.⁶²

National elections in the antebellum lower South exhibited a remarkable degree of party stability. After the formation of the Whig party in the mid-1830s partisan voters

⁶²Sam Houston noted that "There are but six men belonging to the Whig Party in Texas, one of whom was a horsethief--another a black-leg--a third a land grabber, and the other three were the mere tools and understrappers of the first three named, ready to do their bidding at all times for a glass of grog or an occasional suit of old clothes," Galveston Civilian and Gazette, August 17, 1848, quoted in Randolph Campbell, "The Whig Party of Texas in the Elections of 1848 and 1852," Southwestern Historical Quarterly, 73 (July 1969), 17.

TABLE 2.24.

VOTER INTEREST AND PARTY COMPETITION. LOUISIANA
 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS: 1828-1860.

Year	% Democratic	% Opposition	% Turnout	Competition	N
1828	18	16	35	2	29
1832	13	8	21	5	29
1836	10	9	19	1	27
1840	15	23	38	-8	32
1844	23	22	44	1	36
1848	25	21	46	4	37
1852	22	21	43	1	46
1856	24	23	47	1	51
1860	31	21	51	10	51

Note: For an explanation of the procedures used to develop the statistical measures in the table above see Table 2.23.

TABLE 2.25.

VOTER INTEREST AND PARTY COMPETITION. TEXAS
 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS: 1848-1860.

Year	% Democratic	% Opposition	% Turnout	Competition	N
1848	33	15	46	18	56
1852	33	11	43	20	58
1856	46	23	69	23	77
1860	47	15	62	22	77

Note: For an explanation of the procedures used to develop the statistical measures in the table above see Table 2.23.

rarely switched their voting preferences, but Whigs and Democrats dropped in and out of the electorate when the party refused to take cognizance of their views. In addition, a few Whig voters, in the aftermath of the Compromise of 1850 and the party's seeming unwillingness to appeal to the southern vote, left their party permanently. Perhaps most important, peripheral voters were motivated, on occasion, to move into the active electorate. Thus, a party's candidates or stands on particular issues influenced many voter choices and subsequently the outcome of the presidential elections.

CHAPTER III

STABILITY AND CHANGE: VOTING PATTERNS IN THE UPPER SOUTH

1828-1856

In comparison to the lower South, Democrats and their opposition in the upper South consistently mobilized more "core voters" in presidential elections from 1828 to 1856 (see Table 3.1).¹ Adult white men in Arkansas, North Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia primarily stood with the Democratic organization or voted against it. A party's ability to retain its "core voters" was a strong element of predictability in upper South presidential elections from 1828 to 1856. In addition, the high core voter mobilization rates in upper South presidential elections and relative close partisan competition, made the possible movement of previous nonvoters, new residents, and young males voting for the first time into the active electorate a key to partisan victory. Thus, the ability of Democrats or the opposition to maintain core voter support and attract substantial numbers of peripheral and new voters into their fold proved crucial in determining the outcome of presidential races in the antebellum Upper South. Similar to the Cotton states, varying

¹For the purposes of this study the upper South region includes the states that left the Union in 1861 only when compromise measures had been exhausted and after Federal troops "threatened the seceding states with force": Arkansas, North Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia.

TABLE 3.1

**TRANSITION PROBABILITIES OF VOTING BEHAVIOR IN SELECTED ELECTIONS IN THE ANTEBELLUM
UPPER SOUTH, 1828-1856
(By Percent of Electorate)**

Election Pair	N	Repeating		New		Dem. To		New		Dem. To		Opp. (INSTA- Drop BILITY)	
		Dem.	Opp.	Dem.	Opp.	Dem.	Opp.	Dem.	Opp.	Dem.	Opp.	Dem.	Opp.
Successive Presidential and the Secession Elections, 1828-1861													
1828-1832	150	14	4	40	0	58	0	0	21	3	12	6	42
1832-1836	200	22	0	50	1	73	1	0	0	21	0	5	27
1836-1840	225	21	21	30	0	72	0	0	11	17	0	0	28
1840-1844	245	27	30	24	2	83	0	2	6	4	2	2	16
1844-1848	248	28	30	28	6	92	1	0	2	1	2	2	8
1848-1852	250	27	25	16	18	86	0	0	5	4	1	4	14
1852-1856	277	31	26	22	8	76	0	0	8	4	0	1	13
Nonconsecutive Presidential and the Secession Election, 1828-1861													
1828-1836	151	18	7	46	6	77	6	0	6	5	2	3	22
1832-1840	200	23	1	23	3	50	0	0	9	36	0	3	48
1836-1844	224	19	19	31	0	69	0	0	15	17	0	0	32
1840-1848	247	22	25	21	9	77	1	2	6	5	4	4	22
1844-1852	248	25	23	18	12	78	1	0	8	6	2	6	23
1848-1856	247	25	23	15	14	77	0	0	13	6	0	4	23

SOURCES: The county election returns for presidential elections from 1828 to 1860 appearing here and elsewhere in this paper were taken from the machine readable data base compiled by the Interconsortium for Political Research, Ann Arbor, Michigan. The election returns presented had to be reorganized into symmetrical county units in order to overcome irregularities created by the changes in county formations in the antebellum period. Complete copies of these changes are kept in the data archives in the Department of History, Texas A&M University, College Station, Texas.

TABLE 3.1. (CONTINUED)

NOTE: The figures above represent the percentage of adult white males, a surrogate measure for legally eligible voters. Estimates of the potential voting population in each county for noncensus years were calculated by use of a growth rate formula that assumed a curvilinear pattern of increase in the number of adult white males between elections used as a measure of previously ineligible or "new voters." Cf. Peyton McCrary, Clark Miller, and Dale Baum, "Class and Party in the Secession Crisis: Voting Behavior in the Deep South, 1856-1861," Journal of Interdisciplinary History, 8 (Winter 1978), 429-57, who failed to take into account of population increases from one election to the next between 1840 and 1860. The column labeled "Opp." (opposition) represents the National Republican Party from 1828-1832 and the Whig Party from 1836 to 1844. In calculating voter transition probabilities between pairs of elections between 1828-1844, logically but not statistically impossible estimates falling outside the 0-100% range were arbitrarily set at their respective minimum or maximum limits, and the values for the remaining estimates were then adjusted according to the restraints of the marginal values of the contingency tables. To adjust for the varying populations of counties, variables used in the regression equations were weighted by the number of adult white males. For procedures see Laura Irwin Langbein and Allan J. Lichtman, Ecological Inference, Sage university Paper series on Quantitative Applications in the Social Sciences, Series No. 07-010 (Beverly Hills, Ca., and London, 1978), 50-62; and Dale Baum, The Civil War Party System: The Case of Massachusetts, 1848-1876 (Chapel Hill and London, 1984), 19-21.

levels of voter participation became a principal element in partisan victories in presidential elections.²

Patterns of electoral change in upper South presidential elections from 1828 to 1856 illustrate several voting trends (see Table 3.1). First, in contrast to the lower South, the party that mobilized the most core voters in a presidential election rarely carried the popular vote for the region. Mirroring developments in the lower South, Democrats consistently mobilized more core voters than their opposition in every presidential contest prior to 1856 with the single exception of 1848. (Amazingly, the estimates suggest that two times, 1840 and 1856, the Democrats in the upper South retained virtually all their core voters from the two previous presidential elections.) Nevertheless, the Democrats failed to carry the popular vote in presidential elections in

²For a discussions of the politics in the upper South during the second party system, see Thomas Edward Jeffrey, "The Second Party System in North Carolina, 1836-1860," (unpublished Ph.D dissertation, The Catholic University of America, 1976); Paul H. Bergeron, Antebellum Politics in Tennessee (Lexington, 1982); Thomas Brown, Politics and Statesmanship: Essays on the American Whig Party (New York, 1985); William J. Cooper, Jr., Liberty and Slavery: Southern Politics to 1860 (New York, 1983); *idem*, The South and the Politics of Slavery, 1828-1856 (Baton Rouge and London, 1978); Robert F. Durden, The Self-Inflicted Wound: Southern Politics in the Nineteenth Century (Lexington, 1985); and Marc W. Kruman, Parties and Politics in North Carolina, 1836-1865 (Baton Rouge and London, 1983). For a recent quantitative examination see Thomas B. Alexander, "The Dimensions of Voter Partisan Constancy in Presidential Elections from 1840 to 1860," in Stephen E. Maizlish and John J. Krishna, eds., Essays on American Antebellum Politics (Arlington, Tx., 1982), 113, who found abnormal stability in rates of repeat voting in the South between 1840 and 1860.

the region between 1836 and 1852.

In the upper South, the Democratic opposition consistently experienced problems getting their supporters to the polls at the same rate as their opponents. One Democratic editor perceptively suggested that since the Whigs were formed of "heterogenous and discordant materials" opposed to Andrew Jackson, they did not engender true devotion to their party and in reality "did not form a party."³ In spite of the "antiparty" spirit of the Democratic opposition, it successfully carried the popular presidential vote in the upper South from 1840 to 1848.

Second, high rates of core voter mobilization by both parties in presidential elections made the entrance of previous nonvoters and new voters into the active electorate extremely important in the electoral outcome of several presidential elections in the upper South. New and previously nonvoters in the 1832 presidential election substantially strengthened the Democratic ranks in the region when they supported Jackson at a rate seven times more than his opponent. In contrast, during the 1836 presidential contest between Van Buren and Hugh White, the estimates presented here suggest that new and previous nonvoters made White a strong competitor in the region (see Table 3.1). Although White narrowly lost the popular vote to Van Buren, his

³"The Opposition to Mr. Van Buren," The Federal Union, December 6, 1836.

regional candidacy apparently encouraged massive numbers of inactive and new voters to enter the active electorate. Similarly, in the 1840 presidential election William H. Harrison's ability to draw more new residents, young voters, and previously inactive voters to his camp brought him a substantial popular vote victory in the upper South over Van Buren. Furthermore, the peripheral and new voters entering Harrison's fold in 1840 gave the Whigs a larger base of partisan support for future elections than the Democrats and enabled the Democratic opposition in the upper South to win popular vote victories in 1844 and 1848. The Democrats were unable to overcome the larger Whig partisan base until the presidential election of 1852.

Third, Democratic "bolters" played an important role in the establishment of an anti-Democratic party in the upper South. Disillusioned with Jackson's alleged "abuse" of power in his confrontation with South Carolina and John C. Calhoun, roughly one in two former 1828 Jackson men stayed out of the balloting in the 1832 presidential election (see Table 3.1).⁴ Subsequently, many former 1828 Jackson men broke the ties of party and cast ballots for White and the inchoate Whig party in 1836. Previous 1828 Democrats accounted for almost one out of every three ballots cast for an opposition candidate in 1836. Analogous to the lower South, disaffected Democrats

⁴"The Presidential Election," The Raleigh Register, October 26, 1832.

provided a strong base of support for opposition party development.

Fourth, on two occasions, the movement out of the electorate by partisans significantly affected the composition of the Democratic opposition in upper South presidential elections. In 1832 and 1836 most National Republicans moved out of the active electorate altering the nature of the opposition party in the region. In 1836 the newly formed Whig party bore little resemblance to its National Republican predecessor. The new Democratic opposition contained bolters from the Democratic camp and large numbers of new residents, young voters, and previous nonvoters. Likewise, in 1852, both in terms of previous 1844 and 1848 Whig supporters, substantial numbers of the opponents of the Democracy moved out of the active electorate. The estimates suggest that former Whigs moved to the periphery of the electorate at three times the rate of the Democrats. Whig apathy in 1852 ultimately cost Winfield Scott the presidential election and opposition party control over the popular vote in the upper South.

A more detailed examination of several key presidential elections in the upper South illustrates the volatile nature of the antebellum election process. In spite of high core voter mobilization rates, the key to the formation of the second party system in the four states of the upper South was, according to the estimates of voting presented here, the

merging of new and previous and nonvoters with former Jackson supporters into the 1836 opposition voting population. A cursory examination of the voting estimates in the upper South from 1828-1832 reveals predictably, that massive numbers of Democrats and National Republicans refused to go to the polls in 1832 (see Table 3.2). Almost half of the Democrats who cast ballots for Jackson in 1828 did not return their support in 1832. Nor did they give their allegiance to Clay. Either convinced of Jackson's victory in the upper South or disillusioned with his "abuse" of presidential power, substantial numbers of 1828 Democrats sat out the 1832 balloting.⁵ Similarly, over half of those who voted for John Quincy Adams in 1828 sat out the balloting in 1832. The National Republican press attempted to rally the voters against Jackson's re-election by picturing him as a "tyrant" and blatant abuser of the Constitution, but they failed to engender any enthusiasm for Clay among potential new voters or former 1828 National Republican party supporters.⁶ Whig

⁵"Thoughts on the Presidency: The Consequences Which Would Follow the Election of a Military President," The Raleigh Register, November 2, 1827; and "Humiliating!" ibid., October 26, 1832.

⁶"To the Polls!" The Raleigh Register, October 23, 1832; and "The Presidential Election," ibid., October 26, 1832. Editors of the New Orleans Bee, previous supporters of John Q. Adams found it difficult to oppose Jackson as a result of the prosperous economic state of the country. They also suggested that they were certainly for anyone who was against John C. Calhoun and his band of "nullifiers." See "Jackson Meeting at St. Helena," The New Orleans Bee, September 8, 1832; and "Republican Meeting," ibid., October 9, 1832.

TABLE 3.2.

ESTIMATED RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN THE 1828 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION AND
SUBSEQUENT VOTING IN THE 1832 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION IN THE UPPER SOUTH.

	1828-1832				
	Dem. 1828	NR. 1828	Non Voters	Entering Voters	Percent of Electorate
Democrat 1832	14	0	18	3	35
Natl. Rep. 1832	0	4	3	0	7
Not Voting 1832	12	6	40	0	58
All Voters	26	10	61	3	100

Note: actual N = 150.

attacks on the Democratic party appeared more successful when the verbal assaults were aimed at Jackson's vice-presidential nominee, Van Buren. Indeed, fearing a possible change in the party's stance on slavery with Van Buren a step away from the presidency, North Carolina Democrats preferred Philip Barbour of Virginia as the vice-presidential candidate with Jackson.⁷ Both the Democrats and their opposition in the upper South suffered substantial declines in core voter support in 1832.

The estimates also suggest, quite surprisingly, that substantial numbers of previous nonvoters and a few new voters moved into the electorate and cast ballots for Jackson in 1832.⁸ In direct contrast to the lower South, sixty percent of Jackson's tally in 1832 came from voters who had not participated in the 1828 election (see Table 2.2 and 3.2). Apparently Jackson's southern heritage, the relative economic prosperity of the country, and the perception that he had done "more for the southern states than any man now living" encouraged former inactive and new voters to rally to the Democratic standard in 1832.⁹ Clay's 1832 candidacy created little excitement among core or other potential

⁷Jeffrey, "The Second Party System in North Carolina," 50.

⁸For a discussion of voter groups see, William Claggett, "Turnout and Core Voters in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries: A Reconsideration," Social Science Quarterly, 62 (September 1981), 443.

⁹"Southern Observer," Mobile Commercial Register and Patriot, October 25, 1828.

voters. In addition, the negative images of Jackson conjured up by the National Republicans after his 1832 confrontation with South Carolina in the nullification controversy and the rift that developed between Jackson and his southern vice-president, John C. Calhoun, produced little support among peripheral and possible new voters.¹⁰

The key election to the penetration of the Whig opposition in the upper South occurred in 1836. The newly formed Whig party in the region forced a complete reversal of partisan patterns established in Jackson's 1832 electoral triumph. The 1836 voting estimates suggest that, in terms of the 1828 electorate, White and the Whig party benefitted from Democratic bolting, the rejuvenation of National Republican support, and having competed equally with their opponents for previous nonvoters (see Table 3.3). Previous 1828 Jackson supporters, according to the estimates of voting, accounted for about one-third (and 1828 Adams supporters made up another third) of the 1836 anti-Democratic vote total. A significant number of voters on the Democratic side who did not vote in 1832, perhaps either disillusioned with Jackson's policies as president or opposed to the nomination of Van Buren as vice-president,¹¹ reentered the electorate and cast

¹⁰"The Presidential Election," The Raleigh Register, October 26, 1832; and "Humiliating!" ibid., October 26, 1832.

¹¹"Popularity--A Dialogue," The Raleigh Register, October 18, 1836; and "Politics of the Day," ibid., November 1, 1836.

TABLE 3.3

ESTIMATED RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN THE 1828 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION AND
SUBSEQUENT VOTING IN THE 1836 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION IN THE UPPER SOUTH.

	1828-1836				Percent
	Dem. 1828	NR. 1828	Non Voters	Entering Voters	of Electorate
Democrat 1836	18	0	6	0	22
Whig 1836	6	7	5	0	18
Not Voting 1836	2	3	46	6	60
All Voters	25	10	58	7	100

Note: actual N =151.

ballots for the Democratic opposition in 1836.¹² Furthermore, in contrast to the lower South where the bulk of the Democratic opposition came from previous nonvoters and new voters, only one-third of the upper South Whig strength in 1836 came from inactive voters of 1828. The Whigs in the upper South forged a new party from diverse groups in the electorate. But one historian suggested, and the estimates affirm, the "thinned but disciplined ranks of the Democrats," enabled them to achieve a narrow presidential popular vote victory in 1836 (see Table 3.4).¹³

Nevertheless, the inability of the Democrats to hold Jackson's 1828 supporters within the party significantly cut into the Democratic stronghold in the upper South.¹⁴ Apparently some former Jackson supporters agreed with one Whig editor who noted that since Van Buren came from "New York--a state whose institutions differ materially from those

¹²Jeffrey, "The Second Party System in North Carolina," 275. Jeffrey appears to be correct in his statement that a major element of the North Carolina Whig party came from the "Calhoun" or States' Rights faction of the Democratic party.

¹³Richard P. McCormick, The Presidential Game: The Origins of American Presidential Politics (New York and London, 1982), 173.

¹⁴Marc W. Kruman, Parties and Politics, 21-22. Kruman suggests that an understanding of state political institutions is also important for the election of 1836. He suggests that in the state gubernatorial election of 1836 North Carolina experienced a sixty-seven percent turnout with only a fifty-three percent turnout in the presidential election of 1836. The Whig newspapers could have been correct in asserting that their loss was due to Whig apathy. "North Carolina," The Raleigh Register, November 15, 1836; and ibid., November 22, 1836.

TABLE 3.4.

ESTIMATED RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN THE 1832 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION AND
SUBSEQUENT VOTING IN THE 1836 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION IN THE UPPER SOUTH.

	1832-1836				
	Dem. 1832	NR. 1832	Non Voters	Entering Voters	Percent of Electorate
Democrat 1836	22	0	0	0	22
Whig 1836	1	0	18	3	22
Not Voting 1836	0	5	50	1	56
All Voters	23	5	68	42	100

Note: actual N = 200

of our own--where domestic slavery is not permitted to exist" he did not deserve the support of southern Democrats.¹⁵ Historians have noted that in 1836 the Whigs benefitted from substantial numbers of Democratic "bolters," but some have suggested that the Democratic defections were only temporary.¹⁶ The estimates of voting behavior between 1836 and 1844 presented here suggest that 1836 Whig voters remained in the anti-Jackson camp (see Tables 3.5 and 3.6). Democrats who bolted to the opposition camp in 1836 apparently remained within the Whig camp at least through the presidential election of 1844. The newly formed upper South Whig party contained substantial numbers of previous Jacksonian Democrats, former 1828 Adams men, and some previous nonvoters. Democrats, faced with substantial core voter erosion in 1832, continued to rely on a "thinning" group of Jackson supporters while recruiting peripheral voters to strengthen the party.¹⁷ The emergence of a two party system in the upper South was marked by a significant realignment of partisans in addition to the influx of

¹⁵"Politics of the Day," The Raleigh Register, November 1, 1836.

¹⁶See Jeffrey, "The Second Party System," 275, 276. For other views see Kruman, Parties and Politics, 21, 22; Bergeron, Antebellum Politics, 9-11; and Watson, Jacksonian Politics, 198-212.

¹⁷"North Carolina," The Raleigh Register, November 22, 1836.

TABLE 3.5.

ESTIMATED RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN THE 1828 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION AND
SUBSEQUENT VOTING IN THE 1832 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION IN THE UPPER SOUTH.

1836-1840

	Dem. 1836	Whig 1836	Non Voters	Entering Voters	Percent of Electorate
Democrat 1840	21	0	7	4	32
Whig 1840	0	21	16	1	38
Not Voting 1840	0	0	30	0	30
All Voters	21	21	53	6	100

Note: actual N = 225.

TABLE 3.6.

ESTIMATED RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN THE 1836 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION AND
SUBSEQUENT VOTING IN THE 1844 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION IN THE UPPER SOUTH.

	1836-1844				Percent
	Dem. 1836	Whig 1836	Non Voters	Entering Voters	of Electorate
Democrat 1844	19	0	8	7	34
Whig 1844	0	19	9	8	35
Not Voting 1844	0	0	31	0	31
All Voters	19	19	48	15	100

Note: actual N = 224.

peripheral voters.¹⁸

Tennessee was the only state in the upper South where this pattern failed to appear (see Tables 3.7 and 3.8). The formation of the second party system in Tennessee much more closely resembles that uncovered in the Cotton states. In Jackson's home the National Republicans mustered in 1832 little opposition to the Democrats. Four years later the bulk of the vote for east Tennessean Hugh White came from new and previous nonvoters. Traditional accounts of party development in Tennessee emphasize the important role Democratic bolters played in forming an opposition party in the state.¹⁹ The estimates presented here suggest that fewer than ten percent of former 1832 Tennessee Jackson supporters defected to the 1836 White ticket, despite the fact that White ran against New Yorker, Van Buren. In White's home region in the 1836 election, although he still won eastern Tennessee handily,

¹⁸Joel Silbey, as well as others in the ethnocultural school, asserts that partisan realignments and affiliations are based on ethnic and religious differences in the populace. Joel H. Silbey, "'Let the People See': Reflections on Ethnoreligious Forces In American Politics," in Joel H. Silbey, ed., The Partisan Imperative: The Dynamics of American Politics Before the Civil War (New York and London, 1985), 71. It does not appear that party formation in the upper or lower South had anything to do with ethnocultural factors. Most of the South was represented by a high degree of cultural homogeneity. See Kruman, Parties and Politics, 15-16.

¹⁹Bergeron, Antebellum Politics in Tennessee, 5-8, 35, 57-63. Bergeron claims that the nomination of Martin Van Buren as vice-president in 1832 along with Jackson's opposition to the Bank forced men such as John Bell and Hugh White out of the Democratic party and with them substantial numbers of their supporters.

TABLE 3.7.

ESTIMATED RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN THE 1832 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION AND
SUBSEQUENT VOTING IN THE 1836 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION IN TENNESSEE.

1832-1836

	Dem. 1832	NR. 1832	Non Voters	Entering Voters	Percent of Electorate
Democrat 1836	22	0	0	0	22
Whig 1836	2	1	21	6	31
Not Voting 1836	0	0	46	1	47
All Voters	24	1	68	7	100

Note: actual N = 49.

TABLE 3.8.

ESTIMATED RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN THE 1836 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION AND
SUBSEQUENT VOTING IN THE 1840 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION IN TENNESSEE.

	1836-1840				
	Dem. 1836	Whig 1836	Non Voters	Entering Voters	Percent of Electorate
Democrat 1840	21	0	16	1	38
Whig 1840	0	29	18	2	48
Not Voting 1840	0	0	11	3	14
All Voters	21	29	44	7	100

Note: actual N = 52.

the Democratic strength actually increased twelve percent over 1832.²⁰

White carried Tennessee, because he brought substantial numbers of peripheral and new voters into his camp. Predictably, White's supporters in the state refused to attack Jackson personally, but criticized Van Buren and emphasized the southern heritage of their own candidate.²¹ While Whig appeals to Tennessee voters attracted very few former 1832 Democrats to White's camp, young men voting for the first time in Tennessee voted overwhelmingly for the White ticket. One out of every five votes cast for White in Tennessee came from new voters. Contemplating voting for the first time in the state, new voters in Tennessee found the candidacy of their native son much more appealing than Van Buren. Similarly, voters disillusioned with Jackson in 1832 and previous inactive voters also supported White. In contrast, Van Buren and the Democrats were unable to make any inroads among peripheral and new voters. The Democrats maintained 1832 core voters but failed to bring new groups into the party enabling the opposition to capture the presidential electors in the state.

A look at the estimates in Tennessee of the voting patterns between 1836 and 1840 suggest that both parties received virtually all the support of 1836 core voters in the

²⁰ibid., 10.

²¹McCormick, The Presidential Game, 171.

1840 presidential election (see Table 3.8).²² The creation of a viable two party system in Tennessee came directly as the result of Whig recruitment of new and peripheral voters into the 1836 and 1840 active electorate (see Tables 3.7 and 3.8). Although the Democrats retained the constituency strength they established during Jackson's administrations, they became the minority party in national elections in Tennessee during the early stages of the second party system. With White as its standard bearer in Tennessee in 1836, the Whigs established a partisan base that the Democrats had difficulty overcoming.²³

Arkansas, which entered the Union in 1836, also varied slightly from patterns established elsewhere. Estimates presented here suggest the formation of a political pattern that initially set Arkansas apart from all of its southern neighbors (see Table 3.9). Arkansas was the only state in the

²²Bergeron, Antebellum Politics, 31. He suggests, on the basis of Spearman's Rho, that a weak relationship between party affiliation existed between the 1836 and 1840 presidential elections. It is his contention that core voter strength in both the Whig and Democratic parties did not solidify until the election of William H. Harrison in 1840. He is correct in this statement but for the wrong reason. Core voters remained within party camps but the movement of peripheral voters into the 1840 active electorate brought instability into the election.

²³For a discussion of the importance of sectional presidential candidates see Burton W. Folsom, II., "Party Formation and Development in Jacksonian America: the Old South," Journal of American Studies, 7 (December 1973), 217, 218; and Richard P. McCormick, The Second American Party System: Party Formation in the Jacksonian Era (Chapel Hill, 1966).

TABLE 3.9.

ESTIMATED RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN THE 1836 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION AND
SUBSEQUENT VOTING IN THE 1840 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION IN ARKANSAS.

	1836-1840			Entering Voters	Percent of Electorate
	Dem. 1836	Whig 1836	Non Voters		
Democrat 1840	11	0	19	5	36
Whig 1840	0	7	11	10	28
Not Voting 1840	2	0	35	0	35
All Voters	13	7	64	15	100

Note: actual N = 20.

upper South where in the early stages of party development the Democrats drew more support from previously nonaligned voters than the newly formed Whig party. In 1840 the Democrats outgained the Whigs in competition for previous nonvoters, although the Democratic opposition in 1840 gained a decided advantage among new residents and young white males voting for the first time. The Arkansas Democratic party's success among peripheral and some new voters, in spite of the difficulties Democrats in other southern states experienced producing new support for Van Buren, gave them a much larger partisan base than their opposition.²⁴

This unique phenomena developed as an outgrowth of the political system in the state. Unlike the rest of the upper South, Arkansas gained statehood during the key stages of the formation of the second party system. The Democrats at the outset held a decided advantage over the Whigs since the most powerful families in the state, the Conways, Seviars, and Johnsons, were clearly in the Democratic camp.²⁵ The political machine they established effectively mobilized much of the Arkansas electorate and prevented the Whigs from

²⁴For a note on the demographic bases of the Whigs and Democrats in Arkansas see Gene W. Boyett, "Quantitative Differences Between the Arkansas Whig and Democratic Parties, 1836-1850," Arkansas Historical Quarterly, 34 (Autumn 1975): 214-26.

²⁵Brian G. Walton, "The Second Party System in Arkansas, 1836-1848," Arkansas Historical Quarterly, 28 (Summer 1969), 120-123; and James Michael Woods, Rebellion and Realignment: Arkansas's Road to Secession (Fayetteville, 1987), 88-89.

gaining more than thirty percent of the potential electorate in national elections in the antebellum period.²⁶

For the upper South as a whole the critical election of 1840 was keyed by a remarkable degree of stability in terms of the repetition of party voting. Affiliations which formed in 1836 solidified in the early 1840s (see Table 3.5). William Holden, editor of the pro-Democratic North Carolina Standard, claimed that 1840 Democratic losses resulted from the "supineness" of the friends of the Democracy.²⁷ The estimates presented here reveal that both Democrats and Whigs mobilized their core voters and brought them to the polls to cast ballots for their candidates in 1840. But in this election, holding the party line produced a draw in the popular vote totals in the upper South. Ultimately, Harrison emerged with a popular vote victory only because he more than doubled Van Buren's support among previous nonvoters in the upper South.²⁸ The maintenance of Democratic or opposition core voter strength proved to be insufficient to provide

²⁶Walton, "The Second Party System in Arkansas," 123, 138. Walton suggests that no Whig candidate received over forty-five percent of the vote in Arkansas. The discrepancy arises because Walton uses as his denominator total ballots cast, while this study uses the percentage of the possible electorate. In Arkansas all white males were eligible to vote, including some aliens. See Chilton Williamson, American Suffrage: From Property to Democracy, 1760-1860 (Princeton, 1960), 277.

²⁷"North Carolina," The North Carolina Standard, October 7, 1840.

²⁸For an alternate thesis see, Alexander, "The Dimensions of Voter Partisan Constancy."

either party with victory in the upper South in 1840. The Whig party's ability to appeal to nonaligned voters gave them the edge in the election of 1840. Peripheral voters perhaps favored the Whig party because of Harrison's military record and sectional appeal, Van Buren's alleged "abolitionist" tendencies, or the 1837 economic downturn blamed on the Democrats.²⁹ With the exception of Arkansas, upper South Whigs rode to popular victories in 1840 on the votes of previously inactive white males. Political parties in the upper South needed more than core voter support to gain national electoral victories and a larger voter base than the opposition. Peripheral voters provided upper South Whigs with an important numerical advantage during the developmental stages of the second party system.

After party lines were solidified in the upper South, presidential elections 1840 to 1860 were marked by a high degree of core voter stability. Some traditional accounts of antebellum southern politics emphasize the significance of core voter defections in presidential elections.³⁰ The

²⁹"Mr. Bell on the Sub-Treasury," The Republican Banner, September 7, 1840; "Van Buren Abolitionists," ibid., October 23, 1840; "Abolitionism," ibid., October 31, 1840; "Negro Voting," ibid., October 31, 1840; "Whig State Convention," The Raleigh Register, September 18, 1840; and "The Unanimous Declaration of the Whigs of North Carolina," ibid., October 9, 1840.

³⁰See Cooper, The South and the Politics of Slavery, 211; and idem, Liberty and Slavery, 217-19. For an alternative interpretation also see Alexander, "The Dimensions of Voter Partisan Constancy."

estimates presented here suggest that partisan defections to the opposition camp in upper South presidential elections from 1840 to 1856 never amounted to more than two percent of the electorate in any given year (see Table 3.1). Significantly, both Democrats and the opposition in the upper South effectively mobilized their supporters in national elections. In direct contrast to the Cotton states where large scale dissatisfaction with party nominees resulted in the movement of Democratic and Whig partisans out of the active electorate in both 1848 and 1852, core voters in the upper South continued to come to the polls in the two presidential elections. The estimates suggest that some Whigs dropped out of the balloting in 1852, but nothing approaching the dimensions of Whig apathy in the lower South.³¹ If anything, the 1850s were marked by the consistent opposition of Democrats and Whigs to each other. In spite of the disappearance of the Whig party as a national entity after 1852, former Whig loyalists refused to join the Democracy. Whether in the form of the Whig party from 1840 to 1852 or the American party in 1856, members of the opposition turned out and voted against the Democrats.³²

³¹Scholars have perhaps overemphasized the disillusionment of the Whigs in the upper South in the early 1850s. See Durden, The Self-Inflicted Wound, 65; Kruman, Parties and Politics, 178; and Jeffrey, "The Second Party System in North Carolina," 280.

³²John V. Mering, "Persistent Whiggery in the Confederate South: A Reconsideration," South Atlantic Quarterly, 69 (Winter 1970), 124-26. Mering attacks Thomas

The relatively close competition between Democrat and opposition core voters in the upper South amplified the importance of peripheral and new voters in several presidential elections in upper South states. In the presidential elections of 1840 and 1844 new and previous nonvoters in Arkansas, and especially in Tennessee, entered the political arena in substantial numbers and significantly altered the political outcome in the presidential races. This trend continued when the Democratic candidate for president in 1844, James K. Polk, easily outdistanced his Whig opponent, Henry Clay, among peripheral and new voters in both states. In Arkansas Polk outdistanced Clay by a margin of three to one among new and nonvoters. New Razorback residents and young men casting their first ballots accounted for over thirty percent of Polk's total vote in the state (see Table 3.10). Moreover, in Polk's home state of Tennessee three times as many previous nonvoters cast ballots for Polk rather than for Clay. Indeed, the combination of new and nonvoters casting ballots for Polk in Tennessee coupled with the drop out of some 1840 Harrison voters almost gave Polk a margin of victory in the state in 1844 (see Table 3.11).³³

Alexander's position that the Know-Nothing party and the Constitutional Union party were merely reformations of the Whig opposition to Democrats. Using county aggregate elections data Mering concludes that Whigs switched affiliations during the 1850s.

³³ For a discussion of the 1844 election in Arkansas see, Walton, "The Second Party System in Arkansas," 126-27. For a discussion of the election in Tennessee see Bergeron,

TABLE 3.10.

ESTIMATED RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN THE 1840 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION AND
SUBSEQUENT VOTING IN THE 1844 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION IN ARKANSAS.

	1840-1844				Percent
	Dem. 1840	Whig 1840	Non Voters	Entering Voters	of Electorate
Democrat 1844	25	0	3	12	40
Whig 1844	0	19	2	3	23
Not Voting 1844	3	2	23	9	37
All Voters	28	21	27	24	100

Note: actual N = 23.

TABLE 3.11.

ESTIMATED RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN THE 1840 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION AND
SUBSEQUENT VOTING IN THE 1844 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION IN TENNESSEE.

	1840-1844				Percent of Electorate
	Dem. 1840	Whig 1840	Non Voters	Entering Voters	
Democrat 1844	33	0	7	4	43
Whig 1844	0	38	2	3	43
Not Voting 1844	2	6	3	2	13
All Voters	35	44	13	9	100

Note: actual N = 56.

Similar to the lower South, Polk's appeal among new and nonvoters in the two states appears to be primarily the result of his advocacy of United States annexation of Texas. The proximity of Texas to Arkansas as well as the role played by prominent Tennesseans in the battle for Texas independence encouraged some citizens in both these states of the upper South to develop a special interest in Texas' future development.³⁴ (By 1850 virtually half of all settlers residing in northern Texas came either from Tennessee or Kentucky.)³⁵ One Whig editor, after the election of Polk, noted that at least Whigs in the upper South remained faithful to Clay.³⁶ Yet, Whig appeals for the support of new voters in Tennessee and Arkansas were relatively ineffective in stirring peripheral and new voter support for Clay.³⁷

Antebellum Politics in Tennessee, 99-100.

³⁴One Whig editor in Tennessee complained that no matter what the Democrats are asked in the state "they tell us of Texas!" The Republican Banner, October 14, 1844.

³⁵Terry G. Jordan, "The Imprint of the Upper and Lower South on Mid-Nineteenth-Century Texas," Annals of the Association of American Geographers, 57 (December 1967), 679.

³⁶"Clear the Track," The Raleigh Register, November 15, 1844.

³⁷See "The Sub-Treasury.--The Practice of Despotism--The Scheme of Polk and His Confederates for Impoverishing the Working Men," The Republican Banner, September 11, 1844; "James K. Polk Identified with Van Buren," ibid., September 13, 1844; "The Presidential Election," ibid., October 14, 1844; "Young Whigs of Tennessee," ibid., November 1, 1844; "The Result--Duties of the Whigs," ibid., November 18, 1844; and "100 Guns for North Carolina" The Raleigh Register, August 9, 1844.

Polk, in advocating the annexation of Texas, apparently encouraged citizens who lacked partisan affiliations in Tennessee and Arkansas to enter the active electorate on behalf of his candidacy.³⁸ The entrance of new residents and young voters in Arkansas and peripheral voters in Tennessee into the Democratic column in 1844, although it failed to be the decisive element in either state, significantly strengthened Polk's popular support.

In the 1848 presidential election in Arkansas and Tennessee peripheral voters again entered the electorate in significant numbers but this time they decisively supported the candidacy of the Whig nominee, General Zachary Taylor. One Whig partisan predicted that the masses would vote for the "Old Thunderer of Buena Vista."³⁹ The estimates presented here suggest that in Arkansas more than twice as many new and nonvoters cast ballots for Taylor rather than for the Democratic candidate from Michigan, Lewis Cass (see Table 3.12). In addition, roughly one in five 1844 Arkansas Democrats expressed their dissatisfaction with Cass and the party when they sat out the balloting in 1848.⁴⁰ Peripheral and new voters in Tennessee accounted for more than ten

³⁸"If Henry Clay Is Elected," The North Carolina Standard, October 30, 1844.

³⁹"The 'Standard' and the Late Election," The Raleigh Register, August 23, 1848.

⁴⁰For a discussion see, Walton, "The Second Party System in Arkansas," 131-32; and Woods, Rebellion and Realignment, 99-100.

TABLE 3.12.

ESTIMATED RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN THE 1844 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION AND
SUBSEQUENT VOTING IN THE 1848 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION IN ARKANSAS.

	1844-1848			Entering Voters	Percent of Electorate
	Dem. 1844	Whig 1844	Non Voters		
Democrat 1848	25	0	1	3	29
Whig 1848	0	15	1	8	24
Not Voting 1848	5	3	26	12	47
All Voters	30	18	28	24	100

Note: actual N = 22.

percent of Taylor's support in the state while Cass failed to make any inroads among politically nonaligned citizens (see Table 3.13). Most importantly for Tennessee Whigs in 1848, peripheral voters provided Taylor with the decisive edge in the state in a close political battle with Cass.⁴¹

Significant issues in the campaign of 1848 as well as the sectional identification of the candidates again appears to have encouraged previously nonaligned voters to enter the active electorate. The question of the status of slavery in the territories dominated the presidential campaign in 1848. Yet, as had been the case in 1840 and 1844, both the Whig and Democratic parties in the South defended their commitment to the institution of slavery. The election of 1848 differed from the previous presidential contest in that the Democrats nominated a northerner, Cass, as their standard bearer while the Whigs selected Taylor, a Louisiana slaveholder and military hero. Similar to the lower South, the nomination of Cass by the Democratic party proved distasteful to many southern Democrats, particularly in Arkansas where a substantial number of 1844 Polk men refused to vote in 1848

⁴¹For accounts of 1848 presidential politics in Arkansas see Walton, "The Second Party System in Arkansas" 133-38; Gene W. Boyett, "Quantitative Differences Between the Arkansas Whig and Democratic Parties, 1836-1850," Arkansas Historical Quarterly, 34 (Autumn 1975), 214-26; and James Michael Woods, Rebellion and Realignment. For Tennessee see Bergeron, Antebellum Politics in Tennessee, 13-16.

TABLE 3.13.

ESTIMATED RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN THE 1844 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION AND
SUBSEQUENT VOTING IN THE 1848 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION IN TENNESSEE.

	1844-1848				Percent of Electorate
	Dem. 1844	Whig 1844	Non Voters	Entering Voters	
Democrat 1848	38	0	0	0	38
Whig 1848	1	37	3	3	43
Not Voting 1848	1	3	9	6	19
All Voters	40	40	12	9	100

Note: actual N = 60.

(see Table 3.12).⁴² Apparently, even when Democrats maintained party discipline in Arkansas and Tennessee, they lacked the enthusiasm and commitment necessary to encourage peripheral and new voters to enter the electorate on their behalf. Taylor's southern heritage and his military record apparently appealed to peripheral voters in the both states as they significantly increased Whig support in Arkansas and pushed Taylor to victory in Tennessee. One Whig editor summed up the election best when he suggested that ". . .the very idea of defeating the gallant old soldier who had strode triumphantly over every battlefield in which he had been engaged for forty years, seemed preposterous."⁴³

Election estimates of voting behavior for North Carolina in the presidential contests of 1844 and 1848 suggest a strikingly different pattern in voter support than that which developed in Tennessee and Arkansas. In one of the most aristocratic states in the South, where tax and property requirements severely limited the suffrage, peripheral and

⁴²See "Men Change, Principles Never," The Federal Union, September 19, 1848; and "General Cass and the South," ibid., October 3, 1848.

⁴³"The Election," The Republican Banner, November 10, 1848. For other Whig comments see, "Who Can Doubt Any Longer?" ibid., September 27, 1848; "A Few Efforts and the Day is Ours," ibid., October 20, 1848; "The Duty of the Whigs," ibid., October 23, 1848; "The People Want a Pure Government--Will They Not Rally as one Man In Order to Secure It?" ibid., October 25, 1848; "Mark the Abolitionist!" The Raleigh Register, October 4, 1848; "General Taylor--The Peace Candidate," ibid., October 18, 1848; and "Mr. Fillmore," ibid., November 27, 1848.

possible new voters played only a minor role in the two presidential elections in the state (see Tables 3.14 and 3.15).⁴⁴ In 1844 both Polk and Clay competed almost equally for the small group of new and nonvoters while in 1848 Taylor gained the decided edge among peripheral voters, although they accounted for less than ten percent of his total support. The most significant political development in North Carolina during the two elections came from the substantial number of former Whigs who dropped out of the balloting. The estimates of voting behavior in 1844 suggest that over twenty percent of 1840 Harrison men refused to cast ballots for Clay (see Table 3.14). Similarly, voting estimates for 1848 in North Carolina suggest that more than 10 percent of the 1844 Clay men refused to vote for Taylor in a year when the Whig candidate drew substantial support from nonaligned voters in both the lower and upper South (see Tables 3.15, 2.1 and 3.1). In 1848 the editor of the Raleigh Register noted the decline in party support and castigated his fellow Whig partisans for their "lethargy, supineness, and negligence."⁴⁵

⁴⁴As late as 1855 North Carolina held property qualifications and tax-paying requirements for voting in the state. With the suffrage limited to such an extent the relatively stable electorate in the state made little room for peripheral voters. See Kirk H. Porter, A History of Suffrage in the United States (Chicago, 1918), 85, 106, 111. See also "Qualifications of Voters," The Wilmington Daily Journal, November 2, 1852. Editors noted that foreigners could vote if they had resided in the United States at least five years and had declared their intentions of becoming citizens.

⁴⁵"The Result," The Raleigh Register, August 16, 1848.

TABLE 3.14.

ESTIMATED RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN THE 1840 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION AND
SUBSEQUENT VOTING IN THE 1844 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION IN NORTH CAROLINA.

	1840-1844				Percent of Electorate
	Dem. 1840	Whig 1840	Non Voters	Entering Voters	
Democrat 1844	32	0	3	1	36
Whig 1844	0	35	2	3	40
Not Voting 1844	0	9	12	3	24
All Voters	32	43	18	7	100

Note: actual N = 62.

TABLE 3.15.

ESTIMATED RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN THE 1844 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION AND
 SUBSEQUENT VOTING IN THE 1848 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION IN NORTH CAROLINA.

	1844-1848				Percent of Electorate
	Dem. 1844	Whig 1844	Non Voters	Entering Voters	
Democrat 1848	31	0	0	0	31
Whig 1848	2	33	3	0	38
Not Voting 1848	1	4	19	7	31
All Voters	34	37	22	7	100

Note: actual N = 62.

Although the Whig party in North Carolina continued to carry the state for their party's presidential candidate, the disenchantment of some Whig partisans who sat out the balloting in 1844 and 1848 led to a decreasing partisan power base for North Carolina Whigs.⁴⁶

Perhaps the greatest political anomaly in the antebellum South occurred in the 1852 presidential balloting in the upper South, especially in Virginia. According to voting estimates presented here, states in the lower South exhibited marked decreases in partisan support during the presidential election of 1852 (see Table 2.1). The inability of the Whig and Democratic parties to deal effectively with the question of slavery in the territories forced many southern partisans to reject their party's candidates and remain out of the balloting. In the 1852 balloting in Virginia, quite the opposite took place (see Table 3.16). The estimates of voting presented here suggest that both Whig and Democratic parties virtually maintained perfect party discipline as all 1848 partisan supporters continued to cast ballots for their party's candidate in 1852. In addition, both the Democrats and Whigs experienced significant increases in support among peripheral and new voters in the electorate. The Democrats benefitted most from this new found support as Franklin

⁴⁶Jeffrey, "The Second Party System in North Carolina," 280-281. Note Kruman emphasizes political stability during the era and ignores the possibility of partisans dropping out of the electorate. See Kruman, Parties and Politics, 106.

TABLE 3.16.

ESTIMATED RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN THE 1848 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION AND
SUBSEQUENT VOTING IN THE 1852 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION IN VIRGINIA.

	1848-1852			Entering Voters	Percent of Electorate
	Dem. 1848	Whig 1848	Non Voters		
Democrat 1852	22	0	5	7	34
Whig 1852	0	21	6	0	27
Not Voting 1852	0	0	38	0	38
All Voters	22	21	50	7	100

Note: actual N = 104.

Pierce more than doubled his opponent's total among new and previous nonvoters. Indeed, in an otherwise close partisan battle, peripheral and new voters entering the Democratic columns in 1852 provided Pierce with a comfortable victory as they accounted for over one-third of his total vote in the state.

The behavior of Virginia voters in the 1852 presidential balloting appears to be a direct result of the change in suffrage laws occurring in the state in 1850. Prior to 1850 the suffrage in Virginia was restricted to freeholders, which eliminated as many as fifty percent of adult white male residents from voting.⁴⁷ A state constitutional convention in 1850 abandoned property qualifications for voting and thus opened suffrage to thousands of men residents. With substantial numbers of previously disfranchised white males now eligible to vote, the 1852 election took on greater significance in Virginia than it did in the rest of the South. In 1848, Cass defeated Taylor in Virginia by less than two thousand votes. Therefore, the party that obtained the greatest number of peripheral and new voters in 1852 gained a decided edge in the battle for political power in the state. The widening of the suffrage in Virginia forced the Whigs and Democrats to compete for new voters in 1852 forcing a hotly contested election. One editor claimed during the 1852

⁴⁷See Williamson, American Suffrage, 228-30, and Porter, A History of Suffrage in the United States, 105.

presidential election that in his experience as a newspaperman "over seven presidential elections, the press had never been so virulently abusive!"⁴⁸ Perhaps he failed to realize the significance of the election for partisan control of the state. The ability of Virginia Democrats in 1852 to appeal to new and previous nonvoters enabled them to gain a significant political advantage over the Whig party.⁴⁹

In the lower South where the Democratic party was certainly the most powerful political force in the 1850s, opposition candidates competed almost equally for the support of new and previous nonvoters (see Table 2.1). Economic issues which divided the parties from the inception of the second party system continued to be mentioned in editorials, but it is doubtful that these issues stirred voters to action in the 1850s.⁵⁰ Although the issue of slavery was volatile enough to impress peripheral voters into the active

⁴⁸"The Presidential Election!" The Richmond Despatch, November 1, 1852.

⁴⁹For a discussion of Virginia politics in the era see Henry T. Shanks, The Secession Movement in Virginia, 1847-1861 (Richmond, 1934).

⁵⁰For examples of partisan appeals see "An American Election," The Raleigh Register, November 10, 1852; "Foreignism and Slavery," ibid., May 14, 1856; "Our Late Defeat," ibid., August 27, 1856; The Republican Banner, October 26, 1852; "Be Active! Be Vigilant," The North Carolina Standard, October 13, 1852; "General Scott's and Mr. Seward's Hostility to Foreigners," Arkansas State Gazette, September 24, 1852; "Mr. Buchanan's Southern Record," ibid., October 4, 1856; "Cruelty of Romanism," Brownlow's Knoxville Whig, October 25, 1856; and "The Union Party," ibid., October 26, 1856.

electorate the parties openly expressed little difference in opinion on the subject.⁵¹ The Whig debacle in 1852 perhaps gave Democrats in the region the incentive necessary to intensify their efforts among portions of the usually inactive electorate.⁵² The estimates presented here suggest that upper South Democrats benefitted from both the slight decline in 1852 Whig turnout and the new support drawn from previous nonvoters (see Table 3.17). A North Carolina Democratic supporter noted accurately that before the 1852 presidential election Democrats "battled almost without hope of success, and certainly without success. The overwhelming numbers of their opponents rode over it and stifled it. But that time of doubt, almost of hopelessness has passed."⁵³

⁵¹Slavery often dominated newspaper editorials throughout the period. Yet each party pictured itself as the defender of southern rights and its opposition in the pay of abolitionists. Kruman, Parties and Politics, 106; and Cooper, Liberty and Slavery, 370. For examples see, "The Baltimore Nominations," Arkansas State Gazette, June 11, 1852; "The American Convention and Their Nominees," ibid., May 3, 1856; "The Nebraska Democrat at the North," ibid., October 18, 1856; "Buchanan and Fremont on Slavery," ibid., October 18, 1856; "Gen. Pierce and the Freesoilers," The Raleigh Register, June 16, 1852; "The Disunionists Candidate," ibid., September 15, 1852; "The Coalition Between 'Democrats' and Abolitionists," ibid., July 23, 1856; "Americans to the Polls!" ibid., November 5, 1856; and "The Folly of Lococracy," ibid., November 12, 1856.

⁵²Bergeron, Antebellum Politics in Tennessee, 141, 142. This is certainly what Bergeron suggests happened in Tennessee.

⁵³"Be Active! Be Vigilant!" The North Carolina Standard, October 13, 1852.

TABLE 3.17.

ESTIMATED RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN THE 1848 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION AND
SUBSEQUENT VOTING IN THE 1852 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION IN THE UPPER SOUTH.

1848-1852

	Dem. 1848	Whig 1848	Non Voters	Entering Voters	Percent of Electorate
Democrat 1852	27	0	5	0	33
Whig 1852	0	25	4	0	30
Not Voting 1852	1	4	16	18	37
All Voters	28	29	25	18	100

Note: actual N = 250.

Other Democrats expressed confidence that previously inactive voters and even some former Whigs had voted with the Democracy in 1852.⁵⁴

A closer examination of estimates for the crucial national elections between 1848 and 1856 reveals some significant differences in voter behavior in the separate states. The estimates for the national elections under question in the states of Arkansas and Virginia illustrate that these two states exemplify patterns already discussed for the upper South as a whole (see Tables 3.18-3.20). Party members who cast ballots for Taylor or Cass continued to vote for their party's candidate through the crucial elections of 1852 and 1856. One historian's claim that Virginia State Rights Whigs bolted their party in 1852 and joined the Democrats is refuted by the evidence presented here (see Table 3.20).⁵⁵ Neither party experienced voter apathy and disaffections and, consistent with patterns elsewhere in the region, the Democratic party won the lion's share of the previous nonvoters and new voters entering the electorate. This discovery is perhaps most surprising for Arkansas where several prominent Democrats switched allegiances on the state level after a quarrel with the Conway faction of the

⁵⁴"All Gammon," The Wilmington Daily Journal, September 29, 1852; and "To the Polls!"--One Day for Your Country!" ibid., November 2, 1852.

⁵⁵See Shanks, The Secession Movement in Virginia, 15-16.

TABLE 3.18.

ESTIMATED RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN THE 1848 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION AND
SUBSEQUENT VOTING IN THE 1856 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION IN ARKANSAS.

	1848-1852				Percent of Electorate
	Dem. 1848	Whig 1848	Non Voters	Entering Voters	
Democrat 1852	22	0	5	2	29
Whig 1852	0	18	0	0	18
Not Voting 1852	0	0	30	22	53
All Voters	22	18	35	24	100

Note: actual N = 24.

TABLE 3.19.

ESTIMATED RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN THE 1848 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION AND
SUBSEQUENT VOTING IN THE 1856 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION IN THE UPPER SOUTH.

	1848-1856				Percent of Electorate
	Dem. 1848	Whig 1848	Non Voters	Entering Voters	
Democrat 1856	17	0	2	22	40
American 1856	0	14	2	3	19
Not Voting 1856	0	0	23	18	41
All Voters	17	14	27	43	100

Note: actual N = 23.

TABLE 3.20.

ESTIMATED RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN THE 1848 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION AND
SUBSEQUENT VOTING IN THE 1856 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION IN VIRGINIA.

	1848-1856				Percent of Electorate
	Dem. 1848	Whig 1848	Non Voters	Entering Voters	
Democrat 1856	20	0	9	10	39
American 1856	0	20	3	3	26
Not Voting 1856	0	0	35	0	35
All Voters	20	20	47	13	100

Note: actual N = 104.

Democratic party.⁵⁶ The split was so decisive that the editor of the Arkansas State Gazette immediately changed the party allegiance of his newspaper.⁵⁷ Nevertheless, core voting Democrats remained solidly within the Democratic fold in Arkansas. Democrats in Arkansas and Virginia overwhelmingly increased their party strength from 1848 to 1856, recruiting substantially more new and nonvoters than the Democratic opposition (see Tables 3.18 and 3.19).

Estimates for the same electoral period in North Carolina and Tennessee reveal a substantially different picture. The patterns of voter partisan constancy in North Carolina and Tennessee reflected patterns present in Arkansas and Virginia (see Tables 3.18-3.20). Although some Democrats and Whigs switched affiliations in North Carolina from 1848-1852, their numbers were quite small when compared to the size of the electorate (see Table 3.21). The most striking difference between the North Carolina and Virginia estimates and those for Arkansas and Virginia is the substantial numbers of Democrats and Whigs who dropped out of the electorate between 1848 and 1856. North Carolina Whigs lost approximately ten percent of the tar heels who had voted for Taylor between the

⁵⁶Woods, Rebellion and Realignment, 132-33.

⁵⁷"The Convention and the Nominees," The Arkansas State Gazette, May 7, 1852; and "The Banner--the Democratic Nominee for Governor--Our Position," ibid., May 28, 1852. Initially the paper only changed its position on the state level although later in 1853 it took the American party as its standard. They appeared to want to join any movement which would attack the Conways and their state party system.

TABLE 3.21.

ESTIMATED RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN THE 1848 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION AND
SUBSEQUENT VOTING IN THE 1852 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION IN NORTH CAROLINA.

	1848-1852				Percent of Electorate
	Dem. 1848	Whig 1848	Non Voters	Entering Voters	
Democrat 1852	28	1	2	1	32
Whig 1852	1	30	2	0	31
Not Voting 1852	0	4	25	6	37
All Voters	29	35	29	7	100

Note: actual N = 62.

elections of 1848 and 1852. Leaders of the Whig party in Raleigh noted after the party's nomination of Winfield Scott that "in common with a large majority of the Whigs of this city, we felt disappointed, if not somewhat dissatisfied at the presidential nomination."⁵⁸ Whig apathy proved decisive when Pierce narrowly defeated Scott in the statewide balloting. One Democratic editor perceptively noted that "thousands" of Whig core voters sat out the balloting in 1852 because of Scott's "suspicion of Sewardism."⁵⁹ North Carolina Whig dissatisfaction with the nomination of Scott and his "questionable" commitment to the compromise of 1850, ultimately cost the party the 1852 election in North Carolina.

Further, when the 1848 balloting is compared with the vote for president in 1856 the data show that nearly forty percent of 1848 Taylor men refused to cast ballots for the American party candidate (see Table 3.22). Whigs in the state were clearly unhappy with the direction taken nationally by the non-sectional Democratic opposition. Kenneth Raynor, prominent North Carolina slaveholder and Whig politician, stated after the 1856 presidential election that "we have been defeated by the divisions and dissensions among our own

⁵⁸"Whig National Convention," The Raleigh Register, June 23, 1852.

⁵⁹"Causes and Result," The Wilmington Daily Journal, November 9, 1852.

TABLE 3.22.

ESTIMATED RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN THE 1848 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION AND
SUBSEQUENT VOTING IN THE 1856 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION IN NORTH CAROLINA.

	1848-1856				
	Dem. 1848	Whig 1848	Non Voters	Entering Voters	Percent of Electorate
Democrat 1856	23	0	11	2	36
American 1856	1	20	6	0	27
Not Voting 1856	3	13	9	12	37
All Voters	27	33	27	14	100

Note: actual N = 62.

friends."⁶⁰ Yet, political commentators in the 1850s and traditional historical accounts suggested that some Whigs moved directly into the 1856 Democratic camp in North Carolina.⁶¹ The estimates presented here suggest that virtually no former 1848 Taylor Whigs bolted to the Buchanan camp in 1856. North Carolina Whigs simply dropped out of the active electorate between 1848 and 1856. Democrats in the state profited from Whig disillusionment in the 1850s and the new support of previous nonvoters.⁶²

Tennessee mirrored developments in North Carolina. In the balloting for president in 1852, former Taylor and Cass supporters showed equal dissatisfaction with their respective party's nominee (see Table 3.23). The estimates reveal that nearly one out of every five former 1848 Democrat and Whig voters subsequently failed to cast ballots for their party's candidate in 1852. Both Pierce and Scott generated little excitement among the party faithful in Tennessee. Whig party newspapers avoided issues and concentrated on Scott's

⁶⁰"Letter from the Hon. Kenneth Raynor to the American Party of Raleigh," The Raleigh Register, November 19, 1856.

⁶¹"All Gammon," The Wilmington Daily Journal, September 29, 1852; "Our Prospects as They Are," ibid., October 20, 1856; and "The Democratic Jubilee," ibid., November 14, 1856. For traditional accounts see Jeffrey, "The Second Party System in North Carolina," 371; and Kruman, Parties and Politics, 178.

⁶²The Wilmington Daily Journal, November 10, 1856.

TABLE 3.23.

ESTIMATED RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN THE 1848 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION AND
SUBSEQUENT VOTING IN THE 1852 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION IN TENNESSEE.

	1848-1852				Percent of Electorate
	Dem. 1848	Whig 1848	Non Voters	Entering Voters	
Democrat 1852	29	0	4	2	35
Whig 1852	0	32	2	2	36
Not Voting 1852	6	7	12	5	30
All Voters	35	39	17	8	100

Note: actual N = 60.

military record, but their efforts met with dismal results.⁶³ In addition to the loss of Whig partisan strength in 1852, the Tennessee Democratic party increased its support base when it drew more previous nonvoters into the party than the opposition. The Tennessee Whig organization in 1852 maintained a slim edge in the popular vote and delivered the state for Scott.⁶⁴

The election of 1856 marked a watershed in national political elections in Tennessee when for the first time since the 1832 presidential election a Democratic candidate wrested the state's electoral vote from the anti-Jackson forces. Tennessee Democrats in 1856 appealed to former Whig supporters to vote for Buchanan to maintain southern rights. One Democrat noted that he did not expect former Whigs to remain within the Democratic party: "We do not ask you to enlist for the war, but a single campaign."⁶⁵ After Buchanan's election some Democratic leaders knew their appeals were successful and they claimed victoriously that they were helped by "conservative men of the Old-Line Party" who "fought side by side with the veterans of the

⁶³The Republican Banner, October 12, 1852; ibid., October 26, 1852.

⁶⁴Bergeron, Antebellum Politics in Tennessee, 134. He suggests that the Democrat's key to success in the state was in choosing candidates who were unknown quantities.

⁶⁵"A Word to Old-Line Whigs," The Memphis Daily Appeal, October 30, 1856; "A Leading Georgia Know-Nothing for Buchanan, ibid.;" and "A Waif," ibid., November 4, 1856.

Democracy."⁶⁶ Yet the estimates of voting suggest that some former Whigs and a few Democrats dropped out of the balloting but literally no partisan switching took place in Tennessee between Taylor and Buchanan's elections (see Table 3.24). Tennessee Whigs reflected the general southern Whig dissatisfaction with the nomination of Scott and the ultimate direction of the national party and a number of supporters did not see any reason to vote for the American party in 1856.⁶⁷ The American party also had little success bringing new voters into their camp in spite of direct appeals to young males voting for the first time.⁶⁸ In contrast, Tennessee Democrats suffered fewer dropouts than they had in the election of 1852. The Democrat's high rates of core voter mobilization and the recruitment of previous nonvoters into the party gave Buchanan the victory in the state in 1856.⁶⁹ In Tennessee and North Carolina, the emergence of new voters and the disillusion of old party members brought substantial change to the political systems in these two previous Whig

⁶⁶"A Victory for the National Party," The Memphis Daily Appeal, November 6, 1856.

⁶⁷"The Late Election," Brownlow's Knoxville Whig, November 8, 1856. The editor notes that some Whig voters were convinced to stay at home and others to vote for Buchanan because Fillmore really had no chance to win the election.

⁶⁸"To Young Men Who Vote For the First Time To-day," The Republican Banner, November 4, 1856.

⁶⁹Bergeron, Antebellum Politics in Tennessee, 142-45. Since Bergeron ignores the possibility of in the electorate of nonvoters he continues to emphasize the strong adherence of party members to their previous voting patterns.

TABLE 3.24.

ESTIMATED RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN THE 1848 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION AND
SUBSEQUENT VOTING IN THE 1856 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION IN TENNESSEE.

	1848-1856			Entering Voters	Percent of Electorate
	Dem. 1848	Whig 1848	Non Voters		
Democrat 1856	31	0	9	0	40
American 1856	0	32	4	0	36
Not Voting 1856	2	5	3	14	24
All Voters	33	37	16	14	100

Note: actual N = 58.

strongholds.⁷⁰

In summary, the second party system, according to the estimates of voting presented here, emerged in the upper South as both a function of Democratic dissatisfaction with Van Buren and the Whig appeals to voters who, for one reason or another, had never been a part of the active electorate. Democratic bolters, some former National Republicans, previous nonvoters, new residents, and young males filled the Whig ranks in 1836 and 1840. They provided the primary impetus to the creation of a viable Democratic opposition in the upper South. In terms of party competition the second party system had a more significant influence on politics in the upper South than it had in the Cotton states (see Table 3.25). The political system established by 1840 fortified a pattern of stable party competition which lasted until Buchanan's election. Whigs lost their numerical advantage in the region when opposition partisans dropped out of the electorate during the unpopular candidacy of Scott. Arkansas, as a result of the states unique party evolution, developed partisan patterns similar to the lower South where the Democratic opposition experienced difficulties competing with the Democracy (see Table 3.26). Democrats in Arkansas grabbed power quickly and maintained their strength throughout antebellum period.

⁷⁰For alternative views see, Bergeron, Antebellum Politics in Tennessee, 144-57; and Kruman, Parties and Politics, 27.

TABLE 3.25.

VOTER INTEREST AND PARTY COMPETITION. THE UPPER SOUTH
PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS: 1828-1860.

Year	% Democratic	% Opposition	% Turnout	Competition	N
1828	27	11	37	16	150
1832	35	7	42	28	200
1836	22	22	44	0	225
1840	32	38	70	-6	245
1844	34	35	69	-1	248
1848	30	32	63	-2	250
1852	33	30	57	3	277
1856	38	29	67	9	330

SOURCES: The county election returns for presidential elections from 1828 to 1860 appearing here and elsewhere in this paper were taken from the machine readable data base compiled by the Interconsortium for Political Research, Ann Arbor, Michigan.

NOTE: The voter interest and party competition presents for each lower South presidential election between 1828 and 1860 the proportion of the possible electorate casting ballots for either the Democratic candidate or his opposition. The level of turnout provides a rough measure of voter interest by summing the number of adult males voting for both parties in a given election. The party competition measure is obtained by subtracting the percentage of opposition support in one presidential election from the Democratic total. The closer the competition number comes to zero, the more fierce the partisan competition.

TABLE 3.26.

VOTER INTEREST AND PARTY COMPETITION. ARKANSAS
PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS: 1836-1860.

Year	% Democratic	% Opposition	% Turnout	Competition	N
1836	14	8	22	6	20
1840	36	28	65	8	23
1844	40	23	63	17	22
1848	29	24	54	5	24
1852	29	18	47	9	28
1856	40	19	59	19	46

NOTE: For an explanation of the procedures used to develop the statistical measures in the table above see Table 3.25.

Upper South presidential elections between 1836 and 1856 were marked by high degrees of voter stability. Nevertheless, the repetition of party votes was less important to forging outcomes than the emergence of new voters into the electorate in 1836, 1840 and 1844 and Whig apathy in 1852. Peripheral voters and new voters provided a volatile element in the otherwise stable upper South electorate. Whether supporting the Whig or Democratic candidate in presidential elections from 1828 to 1856, new and previous nonvoters examined the issues and candidates of the national parties and at times entered the active electorate. Historians who have emphasized voter consistency and the maintenance of partisan lines from 1836 to 1856 have missed the subtle shifts in the electorates of Arkansas, Tennessee, and North Carolina in the 1840s and early 1850s as well as the substantial increase in voter turnout in Virginia in 1852 that subsequently strengthened Democratic power in the state.⁷¹

⁷¹See Bergeron, Antebellum Politics in Tennessee, 144-57; Kruman, Parties and Politics, 27; and Alexander, "The Dimensions of Voter Partisan Constancy." These authors emphasize foremost the stability of the electorate in the upper South ignoring the role of partisan dropout rates, the nonvoter, and the entering voter.

CHAPTER IV

THE BANNER OF PARTY: SOUTHERN KNOW-NOTHINGS AND THE
ELECTION OF JAMES BUCHANAN.

Lamenting the defeat of Millard Fillmore in the 1856 presidential election, Kenneth Raynor, noted Whig politician and slaveholder from North Carolina, wrote an open letter to the public in the Raleigh Register predicting that Buchanan would "not only be a minority President," but he would also "owe his elevation" to "foreigners" having "forced him upon his reluctant and resisting countrymen."¹ The anti-foreign and anti-Catholic sentiment of the American or Know-Nothing party was well known in 1856, but Raynor's overt nativistic attitudes were atypical of most southerners. Lacking a large foreign population and a dominant interest in political nativism, southern newspaper editors emphasized the problem of slavery in the territories and discussed governmental policies that they believed most effective in protecting southern institutions.² For the most part, Americans and

¹"The Hon. Kenneth Raynor to the American Party of Raleigh," The Raleigh Register, November 19, 1856.

²"The Lesson of the Late Canvass," The New Orleans Daily Creole, November 21, 1856; "The Northern Elections," and The New Orleans Bee, September 11, 1856; "Letter to the Editor," ibid., September 11, 1856; "The Latest Policy," ibid., October 1, 1856; "The Charge Repeated," ibid., October 3, 1856; "The Union," The Daily Picayune, October 8, 1856; "Circulate the Documents," The Mississippian, April 16, 1856; "Bannerhead," The Southern Recorder, September 9, 1856; "To the People of the United States," "The Presidency: the

Democrats in the 1856 presidential election in the South fought along partisan battlelines established in previous electoral contests.

In his correspondence with fellow Mississippi Whigs, William Sharkey, prominent lawyer and judge, suggested that southerners should support the American party because it viewed the Constitution as the final arbitrator in disputes between the northern and southern states over slavery. Although many of Sharkey's political friends apparently conceded that the American party provided the best alternative to the Democratic party, some of them had difficulty with the "apparent" violation, within the American party platform of the First amendment to the United States Constitution and suggested that "Whigs" should distance themselves from the anti-Roman sentiments of American party members who would exclude individuals from participation in

Signs," "Discussions," ibid., September 16, 1856; "Read and Ponder," ibid., September 23, 1856; "Which will they believe?" The Federal Union, October 14, 1856; "Democrats are you ready?" ibid., October 28, 1856; "Is Mr. Fillmore in favor of restoring the Missouri Compromise!" The Floridian and Journal, September 13, 1856; "What is the Difference?" ibid., September 20, 1856; "The American Convention and their Nominees," Arkansas State Gazette, May 3, 1856; "Letter from a Democrat," ibid., August 9, 1856; "Buchanan and Fremont on Slavery," ibid., October 18, 1856; "The Coalition between 'Democrats' and Abolitionists," "Tables Turned," The Raleigh Register, July 23, 1856; "Buchanan Gone," ibid., August 20, 1856; "Hear a Democratic American," The Republican Banner, September 10, 1856; "The Civil War in Kansas," ibid., September 12, 1856; and "Mr. Fillmore--the Missouri Compromise," Brownlow's Knoxville Whig, October 4, 1856.

their party merely on the basis of religious beliefs.³ The emergence of the Know-Nothing party, nevertheless gave southern Whigs an alternative to the party of Andrew Jackson. Rather than developing a new voter constituency or having to draw former 1852 Pierce men into their ranks, the American party in the South attracted primarily old Whigs into their fold in 1856 (see Table 4.1 and 4.2).

The nativistic and anti-Catholic rhetoric of the American party apparently produced virtually no dent in the partisan voting patterns of southern citizens. An insignificant number of voters switched parties between 1852 and 1856. The slavery issue, and not hatred of foreigners or religious bigotry, dominated southern editorials and political debates. Democratic newspaper editors focussed on the abolitionist tendencies of the American party candidate, Fillmore, and proclaimed him to be a "deadly enemy" to southern

³Unsigned letter to William L. Sharkey, Sharkey Papers, Correspondence, 1830-1881, Natchez Trace Collection, The University of Texas. See also James B. Colgrove to Sharkey, September 15, 1856, ibid.; and Charles D. Furme to Sharkey, May 9, 1855, ibid. In spite of the small number of foreign-born persons in most of the South, nativistic sentiment still existed among both Democrats and former Whigs. The editor of the Southern Recorder referred to the foreign vote in the North as a "cancer on the body politic." He also warned that the fate of the American government could be dependent upon the "unstable movements of those mighty masses from the monarchies of Europe." Certainly southern politicians used every argument possible to stir possible voters to cast a ballot for their candidate. See "To the People of the United States," The Southern Recorder, September 16, 1856; and "Americanism," The New Orleans Daily Creole, October 28, 1856.

TABLE 4.1.

ESTIMATED RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN THE 1852 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION
AND SUBSEQUENT VOTING IN THE 1856 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION IN THE
LOWER SOUTH.

	1852-1856				Percent of Electorate
	Dem. 1852	Whig 1852	Non Voters	Entering Voters	
Democrat 1856	27	0	7	7	41
American 1856	0	16	7	5	28
Not Voting 1856	0	0	31	0	31
All Voters	27	16	45	12	100

Note: Actual N = 296.

TABLE 4.2.

ESTIMATED RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN THE 1852 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION AND
SUBSEQUENT VOTING IN THE 1856 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION IN THE
UPPER SOUTH.

	1852-1856				Percent of Electorate
	Dem. 1852	Whig 1852	Non Voters	Entering Voters	
Democrat 1856	31	0	8	0	38
American 1856	0	26	4	0	29
Not Voting 1856	0	1	22	8	33
All Voters	31	27	34	8	100

Note: Actual N = 277.

institutions.⁴ The pro-Democratic editor of the Floridian and Journal suggested that the main issue in 1856 was whether the South would submit to restrictions which would "forever limit her power of self-protection and doom her to the despotism of a remorseless sectional majority in Congress?"⁵ The Whig press emphasized the "fanaticism" and disunionist tendencies of the southern Democrats and suggested that only measures emphasizing foremost the Union of states properly protected southern interests.⁶ Whigs may have feared federal interference with the institution of slavery, but they believed that federal protection of slavery within the bounds of the Constitution was the only safe, wise, and sure course.⁷ Southern partisans agreed on the necessity of Federal protection of the South's peculiar institution, but they differed on how government action would be implemented.

⁴"Circulate the Documents," The Mississippian, April 16, 1856; "Mr. Fillmore's position on the Missouri Compromise," The Federal Union, October 7, 1856; and "What is the Difference?" The Floridian and Journal, September 20, 1856.

⁵"Intelligent Voters of Leon!" The Floridian and Journal, October 4, 1856.

⁶"Traditional Whig Convention," The Southern Recorder, September 9, 1856; "To the People of the United States," ibid., September 16, 1856; "The Janus--Faud Candidate," ibid., September 23, 1856; The Arkansas State Gazette, August 9, 1856, August 16, 1856, October 18, 1856; "The Coalition between 'Democrats' and Abolitionists", The Raleigh Register, July 23, 1856; "Hear a Democratic American," The Republican Banner, September 10, 1856; and "Democracy and Disunion," ibid., October 12, 1856.

⁷Cooper, The South, 245. Cooper emphasizes the repetition of previous partisan alignments in the 1856 presidential election.

The 1856 partisan debate in the South primarily hinged on how much value should be given to the American Union.

In both the upper and lower South in 1856 former Pierce supporters turned out in mass and cast their ballots for Buchanan (see Table 4.1 and 4.2). The Democratic party also gathered more new and previous nonvoters into their camp on election day in 1856 than did their opponents. In the upper South, Buchanan drew twice as much support among previous nonvoters than did Fillmore. The Democratic party, as a consequence, strengthened its position in the upper South (see Table 4.2). Similarly, southern Whigs who actively supported Winfield Scott in 1852 continued to vote against the Democratic ticket in 1856. One Mississippian noted in a letter to Sharkey that thousands of former Whigs believed that Fillmore was "as safe a man to trust with the interests of the South as [was] James Buchanan."⁸ Moreover, Fillmore, a former Whig himself, proved worthy of southern support, according to Sharkey, because Fillmore was an alternative to the "potentially disunionist" "Southern Rights" Democrats.⁹ A few States' Rights Whigs in the lower South, disillusioned by the nomination of Scott in 1852, failed to vote in 1852

⁸Colgrove to Sharkey, undated letter, Sharkey Papers, Correspondence, 1830-1881, Natchez Trace Collection, The University of Texas.

⁹"The Union," The Daily Picayune, October 8, 1856; "Disunion not a necessity but a Choice," The New Orleans Daily Creole, October 22, 1856; "Who will vote for Fillmore," The New Orleans Bee, November 4, 1856; and "Read and Ponder," The Southern Recorder, September 23, 1856.

and voted Democratic in the 1856 presidential election (see Tables 2.12 and 2.13). Nevertheless, in 1856 the American party in the South received most of its support from former Whigs.¹⁰ The 1856 presidential race was a paragon of voter partisan constancy as it mirrored previous voting patterns of the southern electorate.¹¹

Recently political historians analyzing electoral politics on a national level in the antebellum period have suggested that the most important factor in determining a voter's partisanship (and thus ultimately choice of a candidate) derived from his ethnic and religious background.¹² For example, religious and cultural cleavages in the Michigan electorate apparently structured the realignment which occurred in the state in the 1850s.

¹⁰For a discussion of Whigs who left the party see Chapter 2.

¹¹As Bergeron suggests the Whigs persevered in the fight against the Jacksonians regardless of the banner they were forced to fight under. Paul H. Bergeron, Antebellum Politics in Tennessee (Lexington, 1982), 157. For an alternative view see Marc Kruman, Parties and Politics in North Carolina, 1836-1865 (Baton Rouge and London, 1983), 164, 172, 178; and Cecil S. H. Ross, "Dying Hard, Dying Fast: The Know-Nothing Experience in Mississippi," (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Notre Dame, 1982), 237.

¹²Ronald P. Formisano, "Toward a Reorientation of Jacksonian Politics: A Review of the Literature, 1959-1975," Journal of American History, 63 (June 1976): 61-62; Joel H. Silbey, The Partisan Imperative: The Dynamics of American Politics Before the Civil War (New York and London, 1985), xiv-xv; and John L. Shover, "Ethnicity and Religion in Philadelphia Politics, 1924-1940," American Quarterly, 25 (December 1973), 499.

Midwestern Whiggery, it is argued, was the "Christian Party" and the Democracy was the party of ethnic minorities and Catholics.¹³ According to the ethnocultural interpretation of Northern state voting, large portions of the electorate lacked "meaningful beliefs," even on issues that resulted in intense political controversy.¹⁴ Instead, local feelings and emotions framed by religious heritages overrode economic concerns and focused a voter's attention on particular issues and parties.

The ethnoculturalists have had a difficult time applying their theoretical model to political development in the South. With the exception of Louisiana, Maryland, and Texas, few states in the region had large groupings of "unassimilated" foreign-born persons.¹⁵ Catholic and Lutheran churches accounted for less than five percent of the total church seating accommodations in upper and lower southern states (see Appendix L and M). In spite of the diversity of southern culture, southern white communities

¹³Ronald P. Formisano, The Birth of Mass Political Parties: Michigan, 1827-1861 (Princeton, 1971), 8-10; and Richard B. Latner and Peter Levine, "Perspectives on Antebellum Pietistic Politics," Reviews in American History, 4 (March 1976), 15-24.

¹⁴Formisano, The Birth of Mass, 12. For a refutation of these arguments see Eric Foner, "The Causes of the Civil War," Civil War History, 20 (September 1974), 200-201.

¹⁵W. Darrell Overdyke, The Know-Nothing Party in the South, (Baton Rouge, 1950), 16. Overdyke estimates that in the 1850s fully twenty-five percent of Louisiana's population was foreign-born. In the South foreign-born males accounted for about ten percent of all males of voting age.

were composed predominantly of British stock Protestants with similar cultural heritages.¹⁶ Did, however, this ethnoreligious homogeneity enable southerners to make sense of the "Black Republican" onslaught and form a corporate opinion that secession was the only method to protect their institutions?¹⁷

If ever an election in the nineteenth-century South should have divided voters along cultural and religious lines it would have been the 1856 presidential election in which the anti-foreign and anti-Catholic Know-Nothing party replaced the Whigs as the main opposition to the Democrats. Did Know-Nothing appeal in the South scramble previous coalitions of voters along class, religious, and ethnic lines? Or was previous party affiliation the best predictor of mass support for the two parties in the election of 1856? It presents an unusual opportunity to examine the extent to which religious divisions and former voting preferences in the electorate shaped the partisan vote.

Commenting on the upcoming 1856 presidential election, the editors of the New Orleans Christian Advocate believed that the Know-Nothing party would avoid sectional friction by uniting the American people on two substantially new issues:

¹⁶Burton W. Folsom, II., "Party Formation and Development in Jacksonian America: the Old South," Journal of American Studies, 7 (December 1973), 227.

¹⁷Silbey, The Partisan Imperative, xix.

anti-foreignism and anti-Catholicism.¹⁸ The South, with almost seventy percent of its population associated with evangelical Protestant churches, allegedly presented fruitful ground for the rhetoric of the American party.¹⁹ Baptists, Methodists, and Presbyterians disagreed with Catholics, Episcopalians, and Lutherans over the process of salvation and, perhaps more significantly, over the way in which one obtained knowledge of God. Evangelical Protestants interpreted the Bible according to the personal revelation they received from God, while Catholics relied on a priestly hierarchy.²⁰ Did theological differences, however, affect the way in which southern evangelicals cast their votes in the 1856 election? Were the ranks of the American Party filled with more evangelicals than their Democratic opponents?

In order to assess the influence in the Buchanan/Fillmore

¹⁸The New Orleans Christian Advocate as quoted in Overdyke, The Know-Nothing Party, 292.

¹⁹See Overdyke, The Know-Nothing Party, 236, 238; Ross, "Dying Hard, Dying Fast," 166, 167; and Richard Carwardine, "The Know-Nothing Party, the Protestant Evangelical Community and American National Identity," Studies in Church History, 18 (1982), 451. For the purpose of this paper evangelicals are defined as Christians who emphasize the atonement of Jesus of Nazareth as the means of grace by which sinful mankind might be saved. In the South the Baptists, Methodists, and Presbyterians primarily made up the group referred to as protestant evangelical. It is the same definition used by Edward Crowther Riley, "Southern Protestants, Slavery and Secession: A Study in Religious Ideology, 1830-1861" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Auburn University, 1986), 9.

²⁰Ross, "Dying Hard, Dying Fast," 167, 168.

contest of religious factors on voting choices, estimates of the size of religious groupings of the southern electorate were derived from the 1860 census data on church seating accommodations by using the number of seats each denomination held in a particular county as a relative measure of church membership. These estimates, admittedly crude, represent the most accurate aggregate data currently available for southern states.²¹ Contingency tables were created to estimate the probable choices made by members of particular churches in the 1856 balloting. The estimates of voting by religious groups for both the upper and lower South states suggest that the three dominate denominational groups, Baptists, Methodists, and Presbyterians, remained primarily within the Democratic ranks in both regions of the South (see Tables 4.3 and 4.4).²² One pastor's notion that fully seventy percent of the Methodist church members in Mississippi were active sympathizers with the Know-Nothing Party was an

²¹For a note on religious accommodation data see Paul Goodman, "A Guide To American Church Membership Data Before The Civil War," Historical Methods Newsletter, 10 (Fall 1977), 183-90. Although county data for church membership exists for many northern states, for most of the South membership data are scattered and incomplete. See The American Baptist Almanac, 1854 (Philadelphia, 1854), 26-27.

²²There were certainly important divisions within these three denominational groups representing social, theological, and economic differences among the congregants. For the purpose of this study they have been aggregated together and are assumed to hold certain doctrines in common. For a discussion of this diversity see, David Edwin Harrell, Jr., "Religious Pluralism: Catholics, Jews, and Sectarians," in Charles Reagan Wilson, ed., Religion in the South (Jackson, 1985), 66-67.

TABLE 4.3.

ESTIMATED RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION
AND VOTING IN THE 1856 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION
LOWER SOUTH (WITH TEXAS)

Denomination	Percent for Buchanan	Percent for Fillmore	Percent Not Voting
Nonchurchgoers	0	0	100
Catholic	0	75	25
Episcopalian	0	33	66
Lutheran	0	0	100
Disciples of Christ	100	0	0
Baptist	72	28	0
Methodist	57	39	4
Presbyterian	50	25	25
All Other Churches	0	0	100
All Voters	41	28	31

Note: Actual N = 344. The use of church seating accommodations is, admittedly, a crude measure of the percentage of adult white males who were formally affiliated with a specific church. Catholics, moreover, are underrepresented by just counting "seats." Catholic masses probably served three or four groups of parishioners in the same church building, whereas there was relatively less duplication among Protestant denominations. Systematic undercounting of Catholics, however, would make no difference in the above estimates from what they would be if, for example, Catholic seats were doubled or tripled and all other church seatings were left unchanged.

The estimates of the political affiliation of religious congregants in the lower and upper South were analyzed by multiple "ecological" regression, taking the percentage of religious church seating accommodations as the dependent variables. The independent variables, analyzed separately for each choice, were the proportions of the electorate voting for Douglas, Bell or Opposition, and Breckinridge. To avoid multicollinearity the 1860 nonvoting percentages were not used. The estimates presented above are individual voting choices derived from aggregate data. All variables used in the regression equations were weighted by the adult white male population.

TABLE 4.4.

ESTIMATED RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION
AND VOTING IN THE 1856 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION
UPPER SOUTH

Denomination	Percent for Buchanan	Percent for Fillmore	Percent Not Voting
Nonchurchgoers	33	33	33
Catholic	0	0	100
Episcopalian	0	0-50	50-100
Lutheran	50	0	50
Disciples of Christ	50-100	0-50	0
Baptist	42	25	33
Methodist	39	27	34
Presbyterian	42	50	8
All Other Churches	60	0	40
All Voters	38	29	33

N = 344.

Note: For an explanation of methods used see Table 4.3.

exaggeration.²³ Of the evangelicals in the South, only Presbyterian parishioners in the upper South cast more ballots for Fillmore than Buchanan. Taken in conjunction with estimates of cross-over voting between 1852 and 1856, the estimates suggest that evangelical Protestants failed to make any significant move into the American party camp.

The emphasis of Baptists, Methodists, and Presbyterians in the South on salvation and the spiritual purity of their congregations led them to "privatize" their religion and this, in turn, helps to explain the diversity of political expressions taken by southern evangelical Protestants.²⁴ Economic circumstances surrounding evangelical worshippers shaped the "privatization" process. The institution of slavery transformed their theology and in turn the way in which they viewed their world.²⁵ As a result, southern evangelicals focused on spiritual instead of temporal problems. Unlike their northern "brothers", they showed little willingness to address social and moral problems of

²³Ross, "Dying Hard, Dying Fast," 173. Augustus B. Longstreet was a Methodist minister who doubled as President at the University of Mississippi and he suggested in 1856 that massive numbers of Methodists moved into the American party as a result of its nativist tendencies. See also Carwardine, "The Know-Nothing Party," 454. He suggests that evangelicals swelled into the American party.

²⁴John B. Boles, "Evangelical Protestantism in the Old South: From Religious Dissent to Cultural Dominance," in Wilson, ed., Religion in the South, 27.

²⁵Jack P. Maddex, Jr., "'The Southern Apostasy' Revisited: The Significance of Proslavery Christianity," Marxist Perspectives, 7 (Fall 1979), 137, 139.

the community at large. Their goal was to reform the individual sinner and thereby change the world.²⁶

Both Methodist and Baptist editors during the 1856 campaign emphasized their continued commitment to the evangelization of the black "race" as well as the conversion of their "wayward" white neighbors.²⁷ One Methodist minister claimed he preached to "colored" congregations ranging from 400 to 1200 individuals every Sunday and had turned "not a few" away from "Satan" into the "kingdom of God."²⁸ Southern evangelicals viewed the purpose of the pulpit and the religious press as communicating "truths" that affected "man in his spiritual relations" with no toleration for "side issues."²⁹ Indeed, evangelical editors criticized northern ministers for consistently making

²⁶Boles, "Evangelical Protestantism in the Old South," 27-28. Boles suggests further that it was this desire to reform the individual which allowed southern evangelicals to compromise with their society on the issue of emancipation. By accepting slavery as a permanent institution they were allowed to bring the gospel to the slaves.

²⁷For examples see, "They Don't Fellowship Us!" The New Orleans Christian Advocate, September 13, 1856; "Protestant Episcopal Convention," ibid., October 25, 1856; and "A Pious Overseer," ibid., November 8, 1856.

²⁸"They Don't Fellowship Us!" The New Orleans Christian Advocate, September 13, 1856.

²⁹In an article entitled "Northern and Southern Baptist Statistics," October 30, 1856, the editor of the Southwestern Baptist noted that "it would not, I think, be practicable for a Southern minister to use his pulpit as the vehicle for the dissemination of his political views." For a similar viewpoint see, "Letter to the Editor," The Religious Herald, November 4, 1852.

the abolition of slavery a topic of discussion in the pulpit.³⁰ The Methodist press suggested that the primary difference between southern and northern Methodism arose "from the subject of slavery" and their northern brethren's attempt to "obliterate" the true condition of the slave in the South.³¹

Some of the evangelical press expressed concern over the possible incursion of the Catholic church into America because new immigrants came increasingly from areas where the Catholic church dominated.³² Yet the evangelical press generally promoted tolerance of Catholicism during the 1856 campaign. One Methodist editor opposed any bigoted attitude aimed at Catholics or Jews, claiming that prejudicial attitudes caused "the ruin of many churches."³³ And although the Baptist press mentioned the "blight of Popery," it

³⁰ "Protestant Episcopal Convention," The New Orleans Christian Advocate, October 25, 1856; "Northern and Southern Baptist Statistics," The Southwestern Baptist, October 30, 1856; and "Slavery, Scriptural and Statistical," The Religious Herald, November 6, 1856.

³¹"They Don't Fellowship Us!" The New Orleans Christian Advocate, September 13, 1856. One Baptist editor argued that the abolitionists simply can not understand that "slavery is the just and normal relation between white and black." See "Slavery, Scriptural, and Statistical," The Religious Herald, November 6, 1856.

³²"Religions Abroad," The Christian Advocate, November 6, 1856; and "Spirit of Romanism Unchanged," ibid., November 13, 1856.

³³"The Election and the Church," The Christian Advocate, November 20, 1856.

refused to support either presidential candidate in 1856.³⁴ Furthermore, unanimity on the opposition to Catholics was by no means obvious as several other editors deplored the current religious bigotry brought on by the political campaign.³⁵ Perhaps most evangelicals agreed with the editor of the Christian Advocate when he suggested that "there is nothing of special interest here just at present, except who is to occupy the "White House" at Washington for the next four years."³⁶

Southern evangelicals participated in the 1856 presidential election at much higher rates than the unchurched in their communities and they displayed a variety of expressions, within limits, in the political arena. Significant numbers of evangelicals cast ballots for the Know-Nothing party candidate, but the agitation against foreigners and Catholics did not motivate evangelicals who voted for Pierce in 1852 subsequently to cast ballots for Fillmore. On the contrary, Know-Nothings perhaps did as much

³⁴"Popery the Blight of Nations," The Religious Herald, December 23, 1852. In an article during the election campaign the editors complained of the attempt of "a few Irish Catholics to prevent the immersion of a young convert [Catholic] at the Second Baptist Church." See "The Late Catholic Outrage," ibid., October 30, 1856.

³⁵"Church Bigotry," The Christian Advocate, November 13, 1856; and "Christian Moderation," The New Orleans Christian Advocate, November 8, 1856.

³⁶"Presidential Elections," The Christian Advocate, November 13, 1856. He ends his editorial by suggesting that, "We have no fears. God is the ruler of the universe. Let his name be praised!"

to alienate southern Protestants as they did to encourage their entry into their ranks. The secrecy of the American party's unusual ceremonies, handshakes, grips, signs, passwords, and pledges offended the southern evangelical's desire to remain uncommitted to and untainted by the world.³⁷ The candidates selected by southern churchgoers in 1856 were, for the most part, a reflection of past partisan affiliation rather than the result of any new commitment to a party with an anti-Catholic religious dogma.³⁸

The most difficulty in applying ethnocultural arguments to southern voting stems from the behavior of Catholic voters. In the lower South, according to the estimates generated here, almost three of every four Catholic parishioners voted for the Fillmore (see Table 4.3). If their electoral choices were determined by the overt Protestantism of the American party, why did so many Catholics vote in 1856 for Fillmore? Louisiana was the one state in the lower South with a substantial number of Catholic parishioners. In New Orleans alone the majority of the city's churches were Catholic.³⁹

³⁷Carwardine, "The Know-Nothing Party," 458.

³⁸This is in opposition to Ross who suggests that the American party in 1856 was not the re-creation of the Whigs. He argues that the religious appeal of the American party did play some role in bringing new members to the party. Ross, "Dying Hard, Dying Fast," 237, 238.

³⁹Amos W. Bell, comp., The State Register: Comprising an Historical and Statistical Account of Louisiana, From Its Earliest Settlement as a Territory Down To Its Present Period As A State; Together With an Accurate List of All State and Parish Officers (Baton Rouge, 1855), 99.

The estimates presented here for religious affiliation and voting patterns in 1856 in Louisiana suggest that one out of every two Catholics voted for Fillmore, while the remainder of the Catholic vote was divided between Buchanan and choosing not to vote (see Table 4.5). Primary source material also supports this statistical appraisal of the Catholic vote in Louisiana. In the municipal elections in New Orleans held on March 26, 1855, when Democrats captured only one city office, local supporters of the Know-Nothings rejoiced that this provided conclusive proof that a Catholic community supported their party.⁴⁰ The American party in Louisiana sent a Catholic and son of a wealthy planter, Charles Gayarre, as a member of their delegation to the June 1855 national meeting of the party in Philadelphia.⁴¹ When the American Convention adjourned insisting upon an anti-Catholic clause and excluding the regularly appointed delegates from Louisiana, "hundreds" of Catholics in New Orleans threatened to withdraw their affiliation.⁴² Raynor,

⁴⁰W. Darrell Overdyke, "The History of the American Party in Louisiana, Part II," Louisiana Historical Quarterly, 16 (July 1933), 260.

⁴¹See Jon L. Wakelyn, "Catholic Elites in The Slaveholding South," in Randall M. Miller and Jon L. Wakelyn, eds., Catholics in the Old South: Essays on Church and Culture (Mercer, Ga.: 1983), 230-31.

⁴²For a discussion of attitudes in New Orleans at the time of the convention see, "A Reaction," The New Orleans Bee, July 7, 1855. In July of 1855 the American party of Louisiana officially denounced the eighth article (the religious test) of the Philadelphia platform, see "Platform of the American Party of Louisiana," ibid., July 27, 1855.

TABLE 4.5.

ESTIMATED RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION
AND VOTING IN THE 1856 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION
LOUISIANA

Denomination	Percent for Buchanan	Percent for Fillmore	Percent Not Voting
Nonchurchgoers	13-26	0-9	74-79
Catholic	10-40	50	10-40
Episcopalian	0	0-40	60-100
Lutheran	0	0	100
Baptist	55-67	24-33	0-21
Methodist	25-50	50-75	0
Presbyterian	20-25	17-25	50-63
All Other Churches	0-50	50-100	0
All Voters	24	23	53

N = 48.

Note: For an explanation of methods used see Table 4.3.

a noted supporter of the nativist platform, was angered that Louisianians would "make another strong and vigorous effort to induce the National Council to . . . abolish the anti-Roman Catholic feature."⁴³ After the Louisiana American party succeeded in getting their delegation admitted to the national American party convention in the spring of 1856, Raynor referred to them as "Bogus Americans" who subjected their "consciences to the custody of the Priesthood."⁴⁴

Many of the influential members of the New Orleans community were descendants of French Canadians or Creoles, of which one newspaper estimated, nine-tenths were Catholics.⁴⁵ Most of them had been long-time supporters of the Whig party's tariff and internal improvement policies which they

Also for a discussion of the American platform in 1856 see Edward W. Chester, A Guide to Political Platforms (Hamden, Ct., 1977), 69-71; and for Louisiana, Howard, Political Tendencies in Louisiana, 84-86.

⁴³Kenneth Raynor to Daniel Ullman, May 4, 1855. Ullman Papers, New York Historical Society. In the same letter Raynor also expressed the extreme fear of Catholicism that was characteristic of a few elites. He noted that if "Roman Catholics are admitted into our order, . . . the Jesuits will control our order, in less than two years." In February of 1856 when the Louisiana delegation was finally admitted with Catholic members Raynor said they "virtually unamericanized the American party." See Kenneth Raynor to Daniel Ullman, June 23, 1856, Ullman Papers, New York Historical Society.

⁴⁴Kenneth Raynor to Anna Ella Carrol, March 7, 1856, Anna Ella Carrol Papers, Maryland State Historical Society.

⁴⁵"A Reaction," The New Orleans Bee, July 7, 1855. Also see Roger Baudier, The Catholic Church in Louisiana (New Orleans, 1939), 379-81.

felt had brought New Orleans prosperity.⁴⁶ In addition, New Orleans Whigs often viewed the Democrats as an overzealous party willing to protect southern institutions even to the extent of leaving the Union. A major internal or sectional conflict, according to the Whigs, threatened to disrupt the economy of New Orleans and the state.⁴⁷ Moreover, Louisiana Catholics appeared to have been traditionally anti-Democrats, fearing cultural hegemony of the Democratic Anglo-Protestants. Thus even in 1856, faced with the choice of voting for a Democrat or an anti-Catholic party, the latter choice proved to be the most popular option among Louisiana Catholics.

Proponents of "100% Americanism," such as Raynor, might have also driven some French Catholics in New Orleans out of the political arena altogether.⁴⁸ The editor of the French Catholic newspaper in New Orleans, Le Propagateur Catholique, found it difficult to support either party in the 1856 election. He noted that although he might choose to embrace the Democrats because of the anti-Catholic sentiment within the American party, he preferred Stephen Douglas to Buchanan. In addition, he disapproved of the Democratic vice-

⁴⁶"Platform of the American Party of Louisiana," The New Orleans Bee, July 27, 1855; and "Disunion not a necessity but a choice," The New Orleans Daily Creole, October 22, 1856. See Wakelyn, "Catholic Elites in The Slaveholding South," 211-40.

⁴⁷"The Union," The Daily Picayune, October 8, 1856.

⁴⁸"A Reaction," The New Orleans Bee, July 7, 1855.

presidential nominee, John Breckinridge, "whose family has always shown, for many generations, a violent hostility against Catholics."⁴⁹ Voting choices in the 1856 presidential race proved to be difficult for Louisiana Catholics and they perhaps agreed with the Le Propagateur Catholique editor when he suggested that in this election Catholics "are aligned with no party."⁵⁰ In Louisiana and the rest of the South, anti-Catholicism failed to realign the electorate along lines more congruent with religious divisions of the electorate.⁵¹

The two principal political parties in the antebellum period have also been viewed in terms of representing different class interests. Whigs were allegedly the sugar planters of Louisiana, businessmen in Baltimore, Richmond, and New Orleans, and the large slaveholders in the lower South. Because they championed trade, order, and prosperity, the Whigs drew into their ranks cosmopolitan men who desired

⁴⁹"Nouvelle Orleans," Le Propagateur Catholique, October 18, 1856. For further comments on the anti-Catholic sentiment in the 1856 campaign see, "Le republicanisme des Puritans," Le Propagateur Catholique, April 14, 1855.

⁵⁰"Nouvelle Orleans," Le Propagateur Catholique, October 18, 1856.

⁵¹Jean H. Baker, Ambivalent Americans: The Know-Nothing Party in Maryland (Baltimore, 1977), 3-5. Baker suggests that the opposite is true; that religious criteria were the most important in determining voter choices in 1856 as the electorate was totally reshuffled. William J. Cooper, Jr., The South and the Politics of Slavery, 1828-1856, (Baton Rouge and London, 1978), 245. Cooper agrees with the conclusions presented here.

to maintain the economic status quo and commercial contacts with the North. Democrats were portrayed as disproportionately yeoman farmers and lower-class whites who benefitted from the egalitarian policies of the Jackson administrations and maintained a provincial outlook.⁵²

In an effort to measure the propensity of certain economic groups to vote in particular ways, relationships between slaveholder and nonslaveholder status and voting divisions in 1856 were calculated and are presented for both regions of the South (see Tables 4.6 and 4.7). For the purpose of the analysis the slaveholder class was divided arbitrarily into four categories: (1) small slaveholders holding between one and three slaves; (2) medium slaveholders possessing between four and nine slaves; (3) large slaveholders possessing ten and nineteen slaves; and (4) plantation slaveholders possessing twenty or more slaves.⁵³

In the 1856 balloting for president in the lower South, slaveholders were more likely to support Fillmore than Breckinridge (see Table 4.6). The net result was that

⁵²Robert F. Durden, The Self-Inflicted Wound: Southern Politics in the Nineteenth Century (Lexington, 1985), 45-47. For a similar viewpoint on the state of Louisiana see, Derek L. Hackett, "Slavery, Ethnicity, and Sugar: An Analysis of Voting Behavior in Louisiana, 1828-1844," Louisiana Studies, 13 (Summer 1974), 84-86.

⁵³Frederick A. Bode and Donald E. Ginter, "A Critique of Landholding Variables in the 1860 Census and the Parker-Gallman Sample," Journal of Interdisciplinary History, 15 (Autumn 1984), 292. They suggest that slaveholding is a good measure of wealth differences in the Old South.

TABLE 4.6.
 SLAVEHOLDER VOTING PROBABILITIES IN THE
 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION OF 1856
 LOWER SOUTH

	Small Slh.	Medium Slh.	Large Slh.	Plantation Slh.	Non Slh.	All Voters
Buchanan	4	2	1	0	34	41
Fillmore	5	5	4	5	8	28
Nonvoters	2	0	0	0	30	31
All Voters	11	8	5	5	71	100

Note: Actual N = 267. The estimates of the political affiliation of slaveholders in the lower and upper South were analyzed by multiple "ecological" regression, taking the percentage of the various categories of slaveholders as the dependent variables. The independent variables, analyzed separately for each choice, were the proportions of the electorate voting for Douglas, Bell or Opposition, and Breckinridge. To avoid multicollinearity the 1860 nonvoting percentages were not used. The estimates presented above are individual voting choices derived from aggregate data. All variables used in the regression equations were weighted by the adult white male population.

TABLE 4.7.
 SLAVEHOLDER VOTING PROBABILITIES IN THE
 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION OF 1856
 UPPER SOUTH

	Small Slh.	Medium Slh.	Large Slh.	Plantation Slh.	Non Slh.	All Voters
Buchanan	3	3	2	1	29	38
Fillmore	3	2	1	0	23	29
Nonvoters	4	2	1	1	26	33
All Voters	9	7	4	2	78	

Note: Actual N = 281. For a note on methodology see Table 4.6.

slaveholders accounted for over seventy percent of the entire vote cast for the American candidate in the region. Yet there were important differences in the voting behavior of large and small slaveholders. About one-third of the slaveholders possessing less than ten slaves gave their votes to Breckinridge, while those who held more than ten slaves gave almost their entire support to Fillmore. Large slaveholders exercised political clout beyond their raw numerical strength in the electorate because they turned out and voted at a higher rate than nonslaveholders. Approximately ten percent of the eligible male electorate and over thirty percent of all slaveholders owned more than ten slaves. They formed the bulk of the American party constituency in the cotton states. In contrast, almost eighty-three percent of the strength of the Democratic party in the 1856 election in the lower South came from men who did not own slaves. Conventional historical wisdom thus appears to have been substantially correct: The Americans, inheritors of the Whig tradition, drew most of their support from the economically powerful slaveholding classes, while the Democrats depended in large part upon the allegiance of nonslaveholders.⁵⁴

⁵⁴Thomas Brown, Politics and Statesmanship: Essays on the American Whig Party (New York, 1985), 154-55. Brown's suggestion that large slaveholders did not predominantly support the Whig party is not supported by the data for the lower South. Carl N. Degler, The Other South: Southern Dissenters in the Nineteenth Century (New York, 1974), 106-07. Degler's conclusions about the nature of the parties in

In the upper South slaveholders and nonslaveholders were divided in 1856 in their support of Buchanan and Fillmore (see Table 4.7). The estimates presented here suggest that in the upper South forty percent of the slaveholders supported Buchanan while almost thirty percent voted for Fillmore. More important, a third of upper South slaveholders did not cast ballots, for one reason or another, in the 1856 election. Only ten percent of slaveholders, in way of comparison, sat out the balloting in the lower South (see Tables 4.6 and 4.7). Lack of interest shown by upper South slaveholders proved most acute among those with few slaves: almost half of the small slaveholders sat out the 1856 election in the upper South.

On the whole, slaveholders in Arkansas, North Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia were much less likely to participate in the election than their counterparts in the lower South. Furthermore, nonslaveholders in the upper South turned out and voted in 1856 at higher rates than the slaveholding classes, in direct contrast to the trend established in the cotton states (see Table 4.7). In addition, upper South slaveholders and nonslaveholders divided their ballots almost equally between the two parties in 1856. The nonslaveholding class gave roughly forty percent of its support to Buchanan and one-third to Fillmore. The American party in this region

the lower South is very similar to the picture presented here.

lacked any clear slaveholder connection.⁵⁵ The probabilities suggest on the whole that more slaveholders actually claimed Democratic ties in the 1856 election.

When slaveholding voting patterns in the upper South are examined in each state separately, a clarification in the overall voting pattern for the region emerges. The slaveholding classes in the upper South narrowly continued to support the Whig party except in North Carolina. The slaveholder/nonslaveholder estimates for North Carolina reveal that approximately half of Buchanan's total vote in the state came from the slaveholding classes, while Fillmore received only about one-third of his support from slaveholders (see Table 4.8). Slaveholders owning less than ten slaves--a group comprising seventy-five percent of all slaveholders in the state--overwhelmingly supported Buchanan.⁵⁶ The upper South then, with almost ten percent fewer slaveholders than the lower South, presented a diversified political pattern in terms of the economic undergirding of each party.

To further evaluate the social composition of the various southern state voting constituencies in the 1856 presidential

⁵⁵See Brown, Politics and Statesmanship, 154-156.

⁵⁶Slaveowners in North Carolina wielded power in the state legislature, in both parties, far disproportionate to their actual numbers. Kruman asserts that this was a natural outgrowth of the representation system in the state. For further discussion see Kruman, Parties and Politics, 48-51.

Table 4.8.

SLAVEHOLDER VOTING PROBABILITIES IN THE
PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION OF 1856 IN NORTH CAROLINA

	Small Slh.	Medium Slh.	Large Slh.	Plantation Slh.	Non Slh.	All Voters
Buchanan	6	6	2-4	2	18-20	36
Fillmore	4	2	0-2	2	17-19	27
Nonvoters	0	0	0	0	37	37
All Voters	10	8	4	3	76	

Note: Actual N = 75. For a note on methodology see Table 4.6.

election, several variables were created to illustrate the voting behavior of counties in the South. Class, an important component in historical analysis, is difficult to measure considering the empirical data available for the period in question. Slaveowners held extremely valuable property in the South and with it came economic and social power which served to differentiate them from the rest of the population.⁵⁷ For this study, several measures in addition to slaveholder status were initially computed to approach a measure of class differentiation. Additional indicators included cash value of farms per acre, percentage of unimproved acres, and an intracounty measure equality of land distribution.⁵⁸ An agricultural variable of wheat production served as an indicator of counties with economic systems

⁵⁷Gavin Wright, The Political Economy of the Cotton South: Households, Markets, and Wealth in the Nineteenth Century (New York, 1978), 147. For similar notes on slaveholder/nonslaveholder differences see Bode and Ginter, "A Critique of Landholding," 290-292; and Donghu Yang, "Notes on the Wealth Distribution of Farm Households in the United States, 1860: A New Look at Two Manuscript Census Samples," Explorations in Economic History, 21 (January 1984), 97-99.

⁵⁸The Gini index of inequality, which is derived from the Lorenz curve, is calculated from the formula presented in Charles M. Dollar and Richard J. Jensen, Historian's Guide to Statistics: Quantitative Analysis and Historical Research (New York, 1971), 122-25. Recently the Gini index has come under severe criticism as a use for the measurement of land inequality in the antebellum South. The extremely high rate of farm tenancy, which remains unreported in the compendium to the decennial census, renders an accurate measure of land distribution almost impossible using this data base. See Bode and Ginter, "A Critique of Landholding," 282, 284.

different from plantation agriculture.⁵⁹ Although it was theoretically possible to grow cotton and wheat on the same farm, in practice cotton harvesting often extended well into the winter when southerners planted wheat. Thus the highest level of wheat production in the South developed in areas outside the cotton belt.⁶⁰ The per capita investment of a county in cotton manufactures provided a measure of relative industrial strength. The percentage of foreign-born white males yielded a rough index of ethnicity. Finally, the percentage of church seats held by each religious denomination furnished a crude measure of religious preference.

In order to uncover the underlying demographic patterns of support for the presidential candidates in 1856, the voting returns for Buchanan and Fillmore were regressed upon comparable background variables that measured both social and economic characteristics. The procedure used, stepwise regression analysis, revealed the relative effect of each background or explanatory variable on a particular voting outcome while simultaneously controlling for the effects of

⁵⁹In order to control for size, the total production of a commodity in every county was divided by its total population. Then, following Alexander's procedure, the county with the highest per capita production was assigned a value of 1.0 and the per capita production in the remaining counties was expressed as a percentage of the maximum. See Alexander, "The Basis of Alabama's Antebellum Two-Party System," 120.

⁶⁰Samuel B. Hilliard, Hog Meat and Hoecake: Food Supply in the Old South, 1840-1860 (Carbondale, 1972), 163-70.

the remaining explanatory variables. The analysis thus disentangled statistically the effects of all the background variables in order to ascertain what importance ought to be assigned to each in an explanation of voting behavior. All data in the regression equations were treated as descriptions of the social and economic environment or milieu affecting individual voting decisions. Therefore the behavior of geographical voting units, in this case counties, and not the behavior of individual voters, was under study.

One of the most prominent problems in multiple regressions analysis is the problem of "multicollinearity." That arises when multiple indicators for the same underlying concept are included as predictors or background variables in a multiple regression analysis. Multicollinearity violates a basic assumption of regression analysis, namely, that each of the variables employed to explain the variance in the dependent variable must be independent of the other explanatory variables. Closely correlated predictors make the partial regression coefficients unreliable.⁶¹ Recently historians have tried to avoid these pitfalls by stating simply that whenever two variables are correlated at .70 or above, they

⁶¹For a discussion of this problem see John H. Mueller, Karl F. Schuessler, and Herbert L. Costner, Statistical Reasoning in Sociology (New York, 1977), 308-10; and Jarol B. Manheim and Richard C. Rich, Empirical Political Analysis: Research Methods in Political Science (New York and London, 1986), 288-89.

exclude the one explaining the smaller amount of variance.⁶² While this may be effective there are times when multicollinearity exists when much lower correlation figures are present. In this analysis several other checks were included to minimize the problem of multicollinearity. Variables producing high R^2 values for the equation tested but having statistically insignificant regression coefficients were dropped from the analysis. Secondly, variables were examined for dramatic changes in their regression coefficients when other independent variables were dropped or added to the equation. When the tolerance of a variable or the proportion of variability not explained by other variables, was small, and therefore produced a large standard error of the coefficient, the variables in the equation were examined to determine which variables furnished actual indicators of the same social or economic milieu.⁶³

⁶²See Peyton McCrary, Clark Miller, and Dale Baum, "Class and Party in the Secession Crisis: Voting Behavior in the Deep South, 1856-1861," Journal of Interdisciplinary History, 8 (Winter, 1978), 450; and Robin E. Baker and Dale Baum, "The Texas Voter and the Crisis of the Union, 1859-1861," Journal of Southern History, 53 (August 1987), 405n.

⁶³For example, in the equations presented here both the percentage of slaveholders and the Gini index of inequality for each county were entered initially. But when both variables were in the equation the tolerance level for Gini dropped below .45. It became apparent that where slaveholders were present in the South there was also a high degree of land inequality. Therefore, the two variables were actually indicators of the differences in wealth holding within counties. For this analysis the percentage of slaveholders was retained as the best measure of wealth distribution and the Gini index was dropped from the analysis. See Appendix A for further discussion.

Finally indicators which varied little and whose regressions relationships were produced by a small number of extreme cases were discarded.⁶⁴

In addition to excluding variables which were highly intercorrelated, independent variables that apparently represented similar social or religious viewpoints were combined into a single indicator. For example, it is doubtful that the membership practices of the major Protestant denominations in the South differed significantly.⁶⁵ Almost sixty percent of all southerners associated either with the Baptist or Methodist churches and where there were large numbers of Baptists there were likely to be equally large numbers of Methodists. The three evangelical denominations were combined into one measure. Other church groups whose church structure and social ethics

⁶⁴See J. Morgan Kousser, "Must Historians Regress? An Answer to Lee Benson," Historical Methods, 19 (Spring 1986), 74-75. Kousser suggests that in his study of Tennessee, foreign-born groups had to be left out of his regression equations on a theoretical basis because of their relatively small numbers. It makes little sense to say, even if the relationship appears to be a strong one, that the small numbers of foreign-born persons in the South shaped the vote of any particular political party. In the lower South, foreign-born males accounted for only six percent of the entire adult male population. Most foreign-born persons in the lower South resided in Louisiana and Texas. Ten percent of the adult male population in Louisiana and thirteen percent of the adult males in Texas were foreign-born. How can a numerically small number of foreign-born males, living in a few specific areas in the lower South, be said to have shaped the vote for the region? On this basis foreign-born were excluded from the analysis presented here.

⁶⁵Kousser, "Must Historians Regress," 71.

differed from the evangelical denominations (Catholics, Lutherans, Episcopalians, and Disciples of Christ) were combined into a second indicator. Three other variables were retained after all tests were conducted as being representative of specific economic categories in the South: production of wheat; percentage of slaveholders; and investment in cotton manufactures.⁶⁶ These variables were then introduced into the equation with some confidence that multicollinearity had been reduced.

The analysis presented here also relies on measures of significance which differ substantially from past analyses of antebellum southern politics. Most quantitative studies have

⁶⁶An additional test was conducted by combining several variables which were statistically related into factor groups. For example, the percentage of slaveholders, production of corn, cotton, and swine, the dollar amount of animals slaughtered, and the number of mules on a farm were highly intercorrelated. These variables were subsequently introduced into a factor analysis and a factor score was produced for all the variables combined. The variable was named Plantation factor, representing goods and services of a plantation, and was then reintroduced back into the regression equation with four other independent variables: wheat, religion1, religion2, and cotton manufactures. Although the Plantation factor was significant it still did not produce level of significance figures or R^2 values as high as those of the percentage of slaveholders in the equation alone. As a result slaveholders was retained as the indicator best representing the plantation system in the South. Similar procedures were also conducted for grain growing areas with the result being to retain the level of production of wheat as the best indicator of grain growing regions. For an example of the use of grouped factor scores in regression analysis see, Jerry C. Oldshue, "A Study of the Influence of Economic, Social, and Partisan Characteristics on Secession Sentiment in the South, 1860-1861: A Multiple and Partial Correlation Analysis Employing the County as the Unit of Observation," (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, The University of Alabama, 1975.)

relied upon what has been referred to as the coefficient of determination or R^2 as indication of the proportion of the variance in the vote explained by the entire equation and that of a particular background variable.⁶⁷ This has given the R^2 value more significance than it deserves. The coefficient of determination is best seen as characterizing the geometric shape of the regression points and little else. A high R^2 value suggests that the data points placed on a graph are distributed in a long thin tube. When the opposite relationship exists the points are shorter and fatter. The R^2 value of the equation or an independent variable does not directly measure the goodness of fit nor the strength of the relationship described.⁶⁸

In an effort to find a measure which describes the actual influence or strength of a relationship, i.e. how much effect a given change in the independent variable has on the dependent variable, a measure has been developed, the level importance statistic, which is computed by simply multiplying

⁶⁷See McCrary et al., "Class and Party," 449; and Baker and Baum, "The Texas Voter," 407-408.

⁶⁸Christopher Achen notes R^2 is a measure directly related to the variance of the independent variables, which are not subject to experimental manipulation. The variances are a function of the sample, not of the underlying relationships. A large variance in the independent variables often produces a high R^2 value and can lead to misleading conclusions of the regression analysis. For a complete discussion of the problems of R^2 see Christopher H. Achen, Interpreting and Using Regression, Sage University Paper series on Quantitative Applications in the Social Sciences, Series No. 07-029, (Beverly Hills, Ca., and London, 1982), 58-60.

the mean of each independent variable by its regression coefficient. Thus if x_j is the mean of the j^{th} independent variable, then for the j^{th} coefficient: level importance = $\beta_j x_j$. Further when the level of importance for each variable is added together, including the intercept, the result is exactly the mean of the dependent variable. As a result, one can learn, with the addition of the level of importance measure, how much actual influence each independent variable exerted on the vote in question. The measures will be both positive and negative, but all together they will add up the actual vote.⁶⁹ The level of importance can be a key measure when attempting to understand the relative impact of independent variables on particular voting patterns.

The results of the regression analysis for the lower South suggest some subtle social differences between the support for Buchanan and Fillmore in 1856, but no real class divisions are evident (see Table 4.9). The variable which had the greatest impact among those variables entered on the Buchanan vote was "Religion1" representing evangelical faiths in the South. As was already noted in the presentation of individual religious estimates, evangelical groups in the South were more likely to vote for the Democratic party, although significant numbers of them voted for Fillmore as well (see Tables 4.3 and 4.4). Church groups represented in

⁶⁹For a complete discussion of this measure along with other important measures of importance see Achen, Interpreting and Using Regression, 71-73.

TABLE 4.9.

THE INFLUENCE OF EXPLANATORY VARIABLES ON VOTING PATTERNS IN
THE 1856 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION IN THE LOWER SOUTH

Dependent Variable	Explanatory Variables	Reg. Coef.	Beta Coef.	Standard Errors Reg. Coef.	T Score	Cha. in R ²	Level of Imp.
Buchanan [R ² =.37] σ ² =.12	Religion1	.14	.31	.02	2.39	.30	.09
	Religion2	-.36	-.26	.06	-1.88	.05	-.03
	Wheat	.89	.13	.27	2.10	.01	.02
	Slaveholders	.10	.10	.04	-.85	.01	.02
	Cotton Man.	-.00	-.03	.00	-1.05	-----	.00
	Constant	.30					
Fillmore [R ² =.40] σ ² =.10	Slaveholders	.42	.52	.04	9.16	.35	.09
	Wheat	.77	.14	.27	2.95	.03	.02
	Religion1	.05	.14	.02	1.08	.01	.03
	Cotton Man.	.00	.07	.00	1.58	.01	.00
	Religion2	.03	.03	.06	-.84	-----	.00
Constant	.11						
Not Voting 1856 [R ² =.54] σ ² =.14	Religion1	-.19	-.30	.03	-2.76	.39	-.12
	Slaveholders	-.53	-.39	.05	-6.89	.10	-.12
	Wheat	-1.75	-.19	.33	-4.46	.04	-.04
	Religion2	.32	.17	.07	1.98	.02	.03
	Cotton Man.	-.00	-.03	.00	-.48	-----	.00
Constant	.60						

Note: Actual N = 340. Here and elsewhere the voting units are weighted by voting population to ensure that smaller counties are not overrepresented in the analysis. Standard errors, however, are computed according to the original, unweighted number of counties and are thus essentially the standard deviations of actual voting percentages from voting percentages predicted by the regression lines. The regression coefficients, when written in additive equation form, describe the relationship of the independent variables to a voting decision as a mathematical function. The procedure used was the SPSSX regression program in which the variables were entered into the equation on the basis of their partial correlation coefficients.

"Religion2" had a negative impact on the Buchanan vote. Catholics, Lutherans, and Episcopalians apparently found little in the Democratic party which appealed to them. In terms of the support for Fillmore, counties with large numbers of slaveholders had the greatest positive impact on his vote. The other four variables had little influence on the American party presidential vote. Finally, counties containing large numbers of evangelicals, slaveholders, and having high levels of wheat production had important negative impacts on the level of nonvoting. In areas dominated by slaveholders, evangelicals, and yeoman wheat farmers voter participation and interest was high. In contrast, interest in the election proved low in counties that had larger numbers of nonevangelical or liturgical churches.

The 1856 election appears to be have been largely a continuance of previous political alliances in the lower South. In this region the American party drew substantial support from counties with large numbers of slaveholders (see Tables 4.9). On the other hand the Democrats and Buchanan gained substantial support from Baptist and Methodist groups with many poor and middle class whites numbered among their parishioners.⁷⁰ In addition, evangelical-Protestant counties

⁷⁰John Lee Eighmy, Churches in Cultural Captivity: A History of the Social Attitudes of Southern Baptists (Knoxville, 1976), 19; and Elizabeth Fox-Genovese and Eugene D. Genovese, "The Old South Considered as a Religious Society," National Humanities Center Newsletter, 6 (Summer 1985), 5, 6.

tended to engender voter support for both political parties in 1856, while counties containing large concentrations of Catholic and Lutheran parishioners experienced high levels of voter abstention. Catholic churches, often disproportionately located in the few cities in the South, served European immigrants who were relative newcomers to the region. They were perhaps more concerned with establishing close ties with their new communities than involving themselves in a political fray.⁷¹ Nevertheless, the political rhetoric of the Know-Nothings produced virtually no change in the voting constituencies of either major party in the lower South. In the cotton states the Democrats maintained their previous supporters and the American party inherited the old Whig constituency in the lower South.

The multiple regression analysis for the upper South reveals very little about the nature of the partisan vote in the presidential contest of 1856 (see Table 4.10). The equations for Buchanan and Fillmore produced low R^2 values as well as insignificant measures of importance. The Democratic and American parties in the upper South defy economic or religious classifications. Both parties drew support from a cross section of southern citizens in terms of wealth and religion. The only finding that remained similar for both regions was the nature of the nonvoter category. The

⁷¹Baudier, The Catholic Church, 425. See Baudier's description of Archbishop Odin's relationship with his flock during the secession crisis and the Civil War.

TABLE 4.10.

THE INFLUENCE OF EXPLANATORY VARIABLES ON VOTING PATTERNS IN
THE 1856 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION IN THE UPPER SOUTH

Dependent Variable	Explanatory Variables	Reg. Coef.	Beta Coef.	Standard Errors Reg. Coef.	T Score	Cha. in R ²	Level of Imp.
Buchanan [R ² =.00] σ ² =.14	Religion2	-.08	-.06	.09	-.34	-----	-.01
	Slaveholders	.03	.03	.05	1.09	-----	.01
	Wheat	-.04	-.03	.08	-1.16	-----	.00
	Cotton Man.	-.00	-.01	.00	-.23	-----	.00
	Religion1 Constant	-.01 -	-.01 -	.03 -	-.92 -	----- -	-.01 -
Fillmore [R ² =.01] σ ² =.13	Cotton Man.	-.00	-.09	.00	-1.37	.01	.00
	Religion2	-.12	-.08	.09	.72	-----	-.01
	Wheat	.06	.04	.08	-.34	-----	.01
	Religion1	-.03	-.05	.03	.76	-----	-.02
	Slaveholders Constant	.02 -	.02 -	.06 -	.39 -	----- -	.00 -
Not Voting 1856 [R ² =.02] σ ² =.14	Religion2	.21	.13	.09	-.36	.02	.02
	Cotton Man.	.00	.09	.00	1.63	-----	.00
	Slaveholders	-.05	-.05	.05	-1.51	-----	-.01
	Religion1	.03	.05	.03	.14	-----	.02
	Wheat Constant	-.02 -	-.01 -	.08 -	1.51 -	----- -	.00 -

Note: Actual N = 321. For a note on methodology see Table 4.9.

nonevangelicals, who formed less than seven percent of the population in the upper South, had the greatest positive effect on the not voting percentage. Small groups of ethnic and religiously diverse regions of the South failed to participate as heavily in the electoral process as did evangelical Protestants.⁷² In an election dominated by questions about the institution of slavery and attacks on foreign residents nonevangelicals had little at stake to drive them to the polls. Otherwise, the demographic models of the upper South reveal very little about the composition of the partisan vote.

The only state in either region to exhibit critical lines of class cleavage in 1856 was Arkansas (see Table 4.11). In the regression analysis for 1856 in Arkansas the best predictor of the vote for Buchanan was the level of production of wheat. Support for the Democratic party in Arkansas had traditionally come from small farmers.⁷³ Yet the relative positive impact of wheat production was less significant when compared to the negative impact of the percentage of slaveholders on the Democratic vote. Arkansas counties with few slaveholders and large numbers of wheat farmers tended to vote heavily Democratic. In contrast, the percentage of slaveholders had a significant positive impact

⁷²Baker and Baum, "The Texas Voter," 417.

⁷³Gene W. Boyett, "Quantitative Differences Between the Arkansas Whig and Democrat Parties, 1836-1850," Arkansas Historical Quarterly, 34 (Autumn 1975), 214.

TABLE 4.11.

THE INFLUENCE OF EXPLANATORY VARIABLES ON VOTING PATTERNS IN
THE 1856 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION IN ARKANSAS

Dependent Variable	Explanatory Variables	Reg. Coef.	Beta Coef.	Standard Errors		T Score	Cha. in R ²	Level of Imp.
				Reg. Coef.	Coef.			
Buchanan [R ² =.17] σ ² =.08	Wheat	.06	.17	.07		1.32	.09	.02
	Slaveholders	-.25	-.30	.17		-.94	.03	-.04
	Religion1	.06	.21	.06		.66	.03	.03
	Cotton Man.	.02	.17	.01		1.42	.03	.00
	Religion2	.03	.02	.23		.19	-----	.00
Fillmore [R ² =.59] σ ² =.06	Slaveholders	.69	.74	.12		5.75	.50	.11
	Religion1	-.06	-.21	.04		-1.03	.04	-.03
	Religion2	.26	.18	.16		1.71	.03	.01
	Cotton Man.	-.01	-.12	.01		-1.50	.01	.00
	Wheat	-.02	-.06	.05		-.49	-----	.00
Not Voting 1856 [R ² =.16] σ ² =.11	Slaveholders	-.44	-.39	.22		-2.38	.13	-.07
	Religion2	-.29	-.16	.29		-1.07	.02	-.01
	Wheat	-.03	-.08	.09		-.76	.00	.01
	Cotton Man.	-.00	-.03	.01		-.30	-----	.00
	Religion1	.00	.01	.02		.05	-----	.00

Note: Actual N = 46. For a note on methodology see Table 4.9.

on the vote for Fillmore. Thus the 1856 presidential election in Arkansas exhibited distinct class divisions as slaveholders by-and-large refused to support the party of Buchanan. In this respect Arkansas appears to have shared more in common with the states of the lower South.⁷⁴

In order to determine the relative impact of the demographic variables when compared to previous political alignments, the partisan vote of each county in the separate regions was introduced into the equations (see Table 4.12 and 4.13). For example, the vote for the Democratic candidate in 1852, Pierce, was introduced into the equation for Buchanan, the vote for the Whig candidate, Scott, was entered into the equation for Fillmore and previous nonvoters in 1852 was entered into the equation for not voting for president in 1856. In both the upper and lower South the relative impact of previous political alignments proved considerably more important than any social or economic descriptions entered into the equations. In the upper South the party affiliations of 1852 produced significant positive impacts on the political variables of 1856. Only in the case of the vote for Fillmore in the lower South did the vote for Scott prove less significant than the social and economic variables. Nevertheless, the level of support for Scott in the lower South still had a greater impact on the Fillmore

⁷⁴This is in contrast to the picture painted by James Michael Woods, Rebellion and Realignment: Arkansas's Road to Secession (Fayetteville, 1987), 86-89.

Table 4.12

THE INFLUENCE OF EXPLANATORY VARIABLES ON VOTING PATTERNS IN
THE 1856 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION IN THE LOWER SOUTH

Dependent Variable	Explanatory Variables	Reg. Coef.	Beta Coef.	Standard Errors Reg. Coef.	T Score	Cha. in R ²	Level of Imp.
Buchanan [R ² =.62] σ ² =.10	Pierce	.76	.56	.05	12.64	.51	.24
	Religion2	-.29	-.21	.05	-2.32	.08	-.02
	Religion1	.07	.15	.02	.76	.02	.05
	Wheat	.42	.06	.23	1.35	-----	.01
	Slaveholders	.04	.04	.04	-1.45	-----	.01
	Cotton Man.	-.00	-.03	.00	-1.12	-----	.00
	Constant	.13					
Fillmore [R ² =.57] σ ² =.08	Scott	.67	.53	.05	12.12	.43	.13
	Religion1	.07	.18	.02	1.98	.11	.05
	Slaveholders	.15	.18	.04	3.20	.02	.04
	Wheat	.58	.11	.22	3.00	.01	.01
	Religion2	-.09	-.08	.05	-2.46	-----	-.01
	Cotton Man.	.00	.03	.00	.37	-----	.00
	Constant	.07					
Not Voting 1856 [R ² =.69] σ ² =.12	Nonvoters '52	.59	.45	.04	11.00	.47	.30
	Religion1	-.14	-.22	.03	-2.26	.16	-.10
	Religion2	.37	.20	.06	3.13	.03	.03
	Slaveholders	-.24	-.17	.05	-3.35	.01	-.07
	Wheat	-1.22	-.13	.29	-4.10	.01	-.02
	Cotton Man.	-.00	-.00	.00	.20	-----	.00
	Constant	.17					

Note: Actual N = 337. For a note on methodology see Table 4.9.

Table 4.13

THE INFLUENCE OF EXPLANATORY VARIABLES ON VOTING PATTERNS IN
THE 1856 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION IN THE UPPER SOUTH

Dependent Variable	Explanatory Variables	Reg. Coef.	Beta Coef.	Standard Errors Reg. Coef.	T Score	Cha. in R ²	Level of Imp.
Buchanan [R ² =.64] σ ² =.08	Pierce	.78	.81	.04	21.68	.61	.27
	Slaveholders	-.10	-.10	.04	-2.19	.01	-.02
	Religion2	-.13	-.09	.06	-2.11	.01	-.01
	Cotton Man.	-.00	-.06	.00	-1.35	-----	.00
	Religion1	.02	.03	.02	-1.00	-----	.01
	Wheat	.01	.00	.05	-.17	-----	.00
	Constant	.15					
Fillmore [R ² =.71] σ ² =.07	Scott	.88	.85	.03	26.08	.70	.26
	Slaveholders	-.07	-.07	.03	-1.75	.01	-.02
	Cotton Man.	-.00	-.03	.00	-1.03	-----	.00
	Wheat	-.02	-.01	.04	-.78	-----	.00
	Religion2	.01	.01	.05	1.16	-----	.00
	Religion1	.01	.01	.02	1.10	-----	.01
	Constant	.04					
Not Voting 1856 [R ² =.23] σ ² =.11	Nonvoters '52	.52	.62	.04	12.43	.36	.19
	Religion2	.16	.10	.07	.27	.01	.01
	Cotton Man.	.00	.09	.00	1.81	.01	.00
	Slaveholders	.09	.09	.05	.95	.01	.02
	Religion1	-.00	-.00	.03	.06	-----	.00
	Wheat	-.00	-.01	.06	1.21	-----	.00
	Constant	.10					

Note: Actual N = 314. For a note on methodology see Table 4.9.

vote than all the other variables combined.

The voting patterns in the Buchanan-Fillmore contest in the South proved to be similar to the presidential contests of the previous sixteen years. After the solidification of party lines in 1840, southern voters rarely changed their political affiliations by casting ballots against their party candidates. Even the Know-Nothing party, with its anti-Catholic and nativist agenda, failed to attract former Pierce men into its ranks.⁷⁵ Southern voters in 1856 continued to frame their choices in terms of previous political affiliations. Like the Creole Catholics of New Orleans, who were faced with the choice of an anti-Catholic party or the Democratic alternative, most Whigs preferred the former. The American party merely provided a new label for the old Whig opposition. The American party continued to be the party of wealthy slaveholders in the lower South, although partisan choices were more likely to be the result of past political frames of references than of any social, economic, or cultural factor present in the region.

⁷⁵Ross, "Dying Hard, Dying Fast," 237.

CHAPTER V

BLACK REPUBLICANISM OR THE UNION!

UPPER AND LOWER SOUTH VOTING PATTERNS IN THE 1860

PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

In the late fall of 1860 William Sharkey, a prominent judge and Whig politician, noted in his speech to some "concerned citizens" in Mississippi, that the upcoming presidential election would determine the future of the United States: "It is now republicanism or the Union, choose between them; the destiny of the government hangs upon the results, and its fall cannot be overlooked."¹ The possibility of Abraham Lincoln's election struck fear into the hearts of most southerners regardless of their political affiliations. Former Whig politicians referred to Lincoln as the "arch-agitator," an "obnoxious" "Black Republican" who threatened to "trench" upon the rights of southerners.² The southern Democrat press proved less kind, suggesting that Lincoln and Seward were "both bigoted, unscrupulous and cold-

¹William L. Sharkey, *Speeches and Literary Productions*, William Lewis Sharkey Papers, Natchez Trace Collection, The University of Texas.

²"The Evil and the Remedy," *The New Orleans Bee*, November 10, 1860; "Great Union Mass Meeting at Salisbury," *The Raleigh Register*, October 17, 1860; and "Letter From B. H. Hill," *The Southern Recorder*, October 23, 1860. See also the Address of the State Central Executive Committee of the National Constitutional Union Party of Louisiana, July 1860, Southern Pamphlet Collection, Natchez Trace Collection, The University of Texas.

blooded enemies of the peace and equality of the slaveholding States," and claiming that Seward was "strongly marked with the blood of negro ancestry."³ Although southerners concurred that Lincoln must be defeated, they were unable to agree on how to accomplish this task or even on uniting behind one candidate for their region. The citizens of the South were presented with three candidates opposing Lincoln in 1860. Southern Democrats had split into two camps, one major group supporting the "Southern Rights" ticket headed by John C. Breckinridge and the other minor group backing the "regular" national Democratic candidate, Stephen Douglas. Both factions appealed to former Franklin Pierce and James Buchanan supporters. The newly-formed Constitutional Union party nominated former Whig John Bell, and primarily gathered in old Whigs and Know-Nothings to their camp. Prior to the 1860 presidential balloting one former anti-Democratic supporter noted that he was still a "Whig yet to the backbone" and would continue to vote for "Whig candidates dead or alive."⁴ Faced with a critical national presidential

³"The Deed is Done----Disunion the Remedy," The Mississippian, November 9, 1860. For similar opinions see "Young Men," The Mississippian, October 9, 1860; "The Black Republicans for Bell," ibid.; "Bell Worthy of a Place in Lincoln's Cabinet," ibid. October 12, 1860; "The Issue," ibid., October 16, 1860; "The Beginning of the End," The Floridian and Journal, November 10, 1860; and "Southern Men Awake and Prepare for the Conflict," The Federal Union, October 9, 1860.

⁴Arman Chalk to Shannon, Crutcher-Shannon Family Papers, Natchez Trace Collection, The University of Texas.

election, southerners apparently were affected by old political mindsets that had been ingrained in them since the formation of the Second Party system.⁵

Did the Constitutional Unionists and "Southern Rights" Democrats, the two major slave-state parties in 1860, illustrate "consensus within a framework of party competition?"⁶ Newspaper editorials from both the Bell and Breckinridge camps suggested that there was agreement on a devotion to the institution of slavery.⁷ In the Southern Recorder, Georgia Whigs stated they were tired of being called "Freesoilers," and claimed they were "Southern born, Southern raised, slaveholders,--men whose greatest interest is in slavery--whose every hope is identified with the

⁵Thomas B. Alexander, "The Dimensions of Voter Partisan Constancy in Presidential Elections from 1840 to 1860," in Stephen E. Maizlish and John J. Krishna, eds., Essays on American Antebellum Politics, 1840-1860, (Arlington, Tx., 1982), 109.

⁶John V. Mering, "The Slave-State Constitutional Unionists and the Politics of Consensus," Journal of Southern History, 43 (August 1977), 396.

⁷"Speech of A. H. Stephens, Given in the Georgia House of Representatives, November 11, 1860," The Southern Recorder, November 20, 1860; "B. H. Hill's Speech," ibid., November 27, 1860; "Retaliatory Legislation," The Federal Union, November 20, 1860; "Remarkable Unanimity," The Mississippian, November 9, 1860; "Secession a Conservative Remedy," The Floridian and Journal, November 24, 1860; "Mr. Bell on the Slavery Question," Arkansas State Gazette, July 21, 1860; "The Conspiracy to Break up the Union," ibid., August 4, 1860; "A Thorough Pro-Slavery Platform," ibid., September 22, 1860; and "Great Union Mass Meeting at Salisbury," The Raleigh Register, October 17, 1860.

South,"⁸ George Winchester, prominent Natchez attorney and politician, perhaps best characterized southern opinion in 1860 when he suggested that abolitionists and Black Republicans had convinced northern male voters that the slave system was a moral, social, and political evil, with inherent economic inequalities. The "peculiar" would be eradicated when Republicans obtained control of the Presidency and destroyed the laws that protected slavery in the southern states.⁹ Winchester further claimed that the destruction of the institution of slavery would result in the economic subjugation of the South to the North.

The two dominant parties in the South in 1860, however, differed on how best to preserve the institution of slavery.¹⁰ The Constitutional Union party sought foremost to protect slavery through strict adherence to the Constitution and its laws.¹¹ In the editorial debates in the presidential election, Bell and his supporters, convinced that only a national candidacy could stop Lincoln, avoided the issue of slavery in the territories in an insincere attempt to appeal

⁸"Letter From the Hon. B. H. Hill," The Southern Recorder, October 23, 1860.

⁹Undated letter from George Winchester to William Sharkey, Sharkey Papers, Natchez Trace Collection.

¹⁰Mering contends that both parties claimed fidelity to the United States, stressing their own unionism while accusing the other of desiring secession, "The Slave-State Constitutional," 396.

¹¹"Extremists," The Southern Recorder, November 27, 1860.

to old Whig and Know-Nothing elements in the Northern states.¹² When the election of Lincoln appeared inevitable, editors supporting Bell's candidacy continued to call for compromising measures in an effort to resolve the difficulties between the two regions of the country. They agreed that if Lincoln were elected legally and by a majority of the people under the Constitution, they would not consider such an election as a reason to dissolve the Union.¹³ After the November balloting, Benjamin Hill of Georgia noted that Lincoln had been elected lawfully and he was not willing to leave the Union until the government violated the Constitution and joined with the abolitionists in a confrontation with the South.¹⁴ William Pugh, a Louisiana slaveholder and former Whig, contemplated secession, but only

¹²Address of the State Central Executive Committee of the National Constitutional Union Party of Louisiana, July 1860, 3-6, Southern Pamphlet Collection, Natchez Trace Collection, The University of Texas. Also see "Mr. Bell on the Slavery Question," Arkansas State Gazette, July 21, 1860.

¹³"The Evil and the Remedy," The New Orleans Bee, November 10, 1860. For similar opinions in Whig papers see "Mr. Hill's Letter," The Southern Recorder, October 23, 1860; "Letter From B. H. Hill to the Editors," ibid., November 6, 1860; "The Disunion Question, Considered With Special Reference to the Current Denials, Subterfuges, and Dodge of the Breckinridge Party," The Republican Banner, October 27, 1860; "The Federal Union--It Must be Preserved," ibid., November 7, 1860; "Hopeful Indications," The Daily Picayune, November 3, 1860; "The Result," ibid., November 8, 1860; "Let Every Man Think About His Acts," The Arkansas State Gazette, November 10, 1860; and "Union Men Be On Your Guard!" Brownlow's Knoxville Whig, November 17, 1860.

¹⁴"B. H. Hill's Speech," The Southern Recorder, November 27, 1860.

considered separation under the condition that all the Slave-States leave the Union together so that the North would "know what would truly satisfy us," strengthening the possibility that all the states might remain within the Union.¹⁵ Most Bell supporters desired to protect the institution of slavery and the economic well-being of their region by forcing the non-slaveholding states to abide by the law of the land. Extralegal measures, such as secession, were only foreseen when all legal means had been exhausted.¹⁶

While not all Democrats were disunionists clamoring for immediate secession, a different tenor existed in their political camp when compared to the Constitutional Unionists. Most southern Democrats were reluctant to remain in the Union if Lincoln won the election.¹⁷ Immediately following the

¹⁵William Whitnell Hill Pugh to his sister, December 1860, William Whitnell Hill Pugh Papers, The University of Texas.

¹⁶The Raleigh Register, October 10, 1860. Also see an article entitled "The Beauties of Disunion," ibid., October 24, 1860. The editors suggest that all those in favor of "civil war, starvation, rain, desolation, robbery, arson, murder, and utter destruction," should vote for disunion and the Southern Democrats. One former Whig noted that the election of Lincoln would bring some good to the South because he would sweep all the Democrats out of office and put in "honest men." Hunt F. James to William Massie, Correspondence, William Massie Papers, The University of Texas.

¹⁷"The Issue," The Mississippian, October 16, 1860. In a similar article appearing in the October 19, 1860 issue the editors claimed that they were unwilling to swap the "niggers for the Union." See also "Southern Men Awake, and Prepare for the Conflict," The Federal Union, October 9, 1860; "Outlawing the Weed," ibid., October 30, 1860; "The True Policy," ibid., November 27, 1860; "What Will Georgia Do?" ibid., November

presidential balloting, numerous Democratic editors noted their unwillingness to remain in a Union dominated by "Black Republicans." The mere election of Lincoln, even though he had not even taken office, was cause to agitate for secession.¹⁸ The Mississippian suggested that Democrats were unanimously for immediate state secession as a result of the election of Lincoln.¹⁹ The Democratic governor of Florida declared in a message to the state Senate and House of Representatives that the only hope the southern states had for the protection of their property and ultimately peace under Republican rule was secession from "our faithless perjured confederates."²⁰ Their hardline stand was also reflected in their opinion of Douglas, the candidate of the national Democratic party, who they pictured as an abolitionist and traitor to the "true" Democratic party.²¹

27, 1860; and "The Best Way to Act if Action Becomes Necessary," The Floridian and Journal, November 3, 1860.

¹⁸"What Will Georgia Do?" The Federal Union, November 27, 1860; and "The Deed is Done----Disunion the Remedy," The Mississippian, November 9, 1860.

¹⁹"Remarkable Unanimity," The Mississippian, November 9, 1860.

²⁰"Governor's Message," The Floridian and Journal, December 1, 1860.

²¹Bysthell Haynes to William Whitnell Hill Pugh, October 13, 1860, Pugh Papers, The University of Texas. See "The Private Opinions of a Democratic Paper About the Douglasites Publicly Expressed," The Mississippian, October 9, 1860; "Douglas in the South," ibid., October 16, 1860; "Clear as Mud," ibid., October 16, 1860. In the article, "Clear as Mud," editors characterized Douglas' position on slavery as

Both the Breckinridge and Bell positions on how best to protect southern institutions and rights reflected their past political heritages. The southern Whig and Know-Nothing parties of the 1840s and 1850s were superceded in 1860 by the Constitutional Unionists who continued to place a higher value on the American Union than the "Southern Rights" Democrats. The political data on the upper and lower South for 1860 undergirds this proposition. The contingency cell estimates presented here for the presidential election pairs from 1856 to 1860 in the lower South suggest a high degree of political stability during the period (see Tables 5.1 and 5.2). The lower South presents some difficulties in analyzing the election of 1860 for the whole region because in Texas the Bell and Douglas forces joined in a Fusion electoral ticket in an attempt to defeat Breckinridge.²² For this reason two series of estimates are presented here. The first includes Texas with the Bell and Douglas forces combined into an opposition estimate. The second excludes

follows: "Mr. Douglas believes that if slavery ain't a mind to go where she is a mind to, she may stay where she is, if she doesn't want to, subject to the decision of the Supreme Court, and of the people of the Territories when they is agreed on that p'int." See also "The Douglas Purpose in the South," The Federal Union, October 30, 1860; and "Mr. Douglas for Lincoln," ibid., October 30, 1860.

²²The Fusionist ballot contained electors pledged to vote for any candidate who might be able to prevent Lincoln's election. For a discussion of the election of 1860 in Texas see Robin E. Baker and Dale Baum, "The Texas Voter and the Crisis of the Union, 1859-1861," Journal of Southern History, 53 (August 1987): 395-420.

TABLE 5.1.

ESTIMATED RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN THE 1856 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION AND
 SUBSEQUENT VOTING IN THE 1860 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION IN THE
 LOWER SOUTH (WITH TEXAS)

	1856-1860				Percent of Electorate
	Dem. 1856	Amer. 1856	Non Voters	Entering Voters	
So. Democrat 1860	31	0	0	8	40
Opposition 1860	5	24	4	0	32
Not Voting 1860	0	1	24	4	29
All Voters	35	24	43	10	100

Note: Actual N = 354.

TABLE 5.2.

ESTIMATED RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN THE 1856 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION AND
 SUBSEQUENT VOTING IN THE 1860 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION IN THE
 LOWER SOUTH (WITHOUT TEXAS)

	1856-1860				Percent of Electorate
	Dem. 1856	Amer. 1856	Non Voters	Entering Voters	
So. Democrat 1860	32	1	0	4	38
Democrat 1860	5	0	3	0	8
Const. Union 1860	0	25	0	1	27
Not Voting 1860	0	2	24	3	27
All Voters	37	27	28	8	100

Note: Actual N = 277.

Texas and therefore shows the Bell and Douglas forces as separate entities.

The critical feature of the 1860 presidential election was the split in the Democratic party (see Tables 5.1 and 5.2).²³ In the lower South the bulk of the former Democrats supported Breckinridge and the "Southern Rights" Democratic ticket. Apparently Breckinridge successfully projected himself to the southern Democratic faithful as the one candidate who could guarantee the protection and preservation of the institution of slavery. In Texas only about fourteen percent of former Buchanan men cast ballots against Breckinridge. Elsewhere former Democrats who refused to support Breckinridge aligned exclusively with the Douglas camp, maintaining the position that he was the most likely candidate to defeat the "Black Republican" candidacy of Lincoln. The estimates also suggest that southern Democrats outpolled their opponents among previous nonvoters and new voters who entered the active electorate or became eligible to vote in 1860. A Mississippi Democrat perceptively noted that the "States' Rights" Democrats naturally attracted new residents and young males voting for the first time into

²³See Peyton McCrary, Clark Miller, and Dale Baum, "Class and Party in the Secession Crisis: Voting Behavior in the Deep South, 1856-1861," Journal of Interdisciplinary History, 8 (Winter 1978), 429-57; Peyton McCrary, Abraham Lincoln and Reconstruction: The Louisiana Experiment (Princeton, 1978), 357-69; J. Mills Thornton, III., Politics and Power in a Slave Society: Alabama, 1800-1860 (Baton Rouge and London, 1978); and William J. Cooper, Jr., Liberty and Slavery: Southern Politics to 1860 (New York, 1983).

their camp.²⁴ Breckinridge's solid commitment to the economic status quo and the maintenance of slavery convinced most former Democrats and new voters in the region to support his candidacy.²⁵ Although the Douglas forces convinced some previous nonvoters to enter the electorate on their behalf. Yet Douglas' position on the Lecompton Constitution and the Dred Scott case alienated him from most southern Democrats as he obtained only 8 percent of the vote in the lower South, with most of those votes coming from the few cities in the region.²⁶

Like Fillmore in 1856, Bell gained almost his entire strength from former opponents of the Democracy, former Whigs and Know-Nothings. The data certainly suggest that the opposition forces maintained continuity during the 1850s.²⁷ But, in contrast to Douglas and Breckinridge, Bell failed to convince voters on the periphery that he could be trusted

²⁴"Young Men," The Mississippian, October 9, 1860.

²⁵For a discussion of the platforms of the two candidates see, Betty Dix Greeman, "The Democratic Convention of 1860: Prelude to Secession," Maryland Historical Magazine, 67 (Fall 1972), 225-53; and Edward W. Chester, A Guide to Political Platforms (Hamden, Ct., 1977), 72-80.

²⁶For a discussion of Douglas' support in the southern states in 1860 see Robert W. Johannsen, "Stephen A. Douglas and the South," Journal of Southern History, 33 (February 1967), 32-41; and John T. Hubbell, "The Douglas Democrats and the Election of 1860," Mid-America, 55 (April 1975), 108-33.

²⁷For an alternative view see John V. Mering, "Persistent Whiggery in the Confederate South: A Reconsideration," South Atlantic Quarterly, 69 (Winter 1970), 130, 131.

with the destiny of the South and its institutions.

Peripheral voters apparently were drawn to the electorate by the slavery question.²⁸

The election of 1860 in the lower South produced the beginnings of a major realignment in southern politics. The rift in the Democratic party in 1860 combined with the continuation of an strong anti-Democratic coalition headed by Bell cut significantly into Democratic party strength in the region that had been building since the 1852 presidential election (see Table 2.1). In Louisiana Breckinridge carried the state's electoral vote by only a small margin over Bell. A successful combination of the Douglas and Bell votes could have defeated the Breckinridge forces.²⁹ Breckinridge and the "Southern Rights" Democracy, willing to sacrifice even the Union to preserve southern institutions, broke national Democratic unity and forced a realignment of core voters in the lower South.³⁰

The upper South exhibited similar voting patterns in

²⁸See Donald Walter Curl, "The Baltimore Convention of the Constitutional Union Party," Maryland History Magazine, 67 (Fall 1972), 254-77.

²⁹Durward Long, "Political Parties and Propaganda in Alabama in the Presidential Election of 1860," Alabama Historical Quarterly, 25 (Spring-Summer 1963), 135; and Alexander, "The Dimensions of Voter Partisan Constancy," 113.

³⁰"Democracy in 1856 vs. Democracy in 1860," Arkansas State Gazette, August 11, 1860. For a discussion of core voter position in the 1860 election see John V. Mering, "The Slave-State Constitutional," 395-410; and idem, "Allies or Opponents? The Douglas Democrats and the Constitutional Unionists," Southern Studies, 23 (Winter 1984), 376-85.

1860, although presenting a much more competitive electoral race between the forces of Breckinridge and Bell (see Table 5.3). Throughout the upper south, Breckinridge defeated Bell by less than 15,000 votes. Bell supporters claimed prior to the election that "scores of former Democrats had rallied under the banner of the Constitutional Union party."³¹ The estimates presented here suggest that few former Democrats supported the candidacy of Bell. Douglas' ability to convince approximately nine percent of former Buchanan supporters to cast ballots for him enhanced the chances of the Constitutional Unionists, for the split in the Democratic party enabled Bell to draw extremely close to Breckinridge in terms of the popular vote.

In contrast to the lower South where Democratic candidates drew substantial support from previous nonvoters and new voters, the Constitutional Unionists in the four states of the upper South obtained the bulk of the peripheral and new voters who entered the active electorate in 1860. With fewer slaves and slaveholders in the upper South, previous nonvoters and new voters held stronger ties to the Union and proved to be unwilling to support a party accepting disunion as a means of protecting southern institutions. In the upper South, the election of 1860 also marked a

³¹"Vote for Bell to Defeat Lincoln," Arkansas State Gazette, September 15, 1860; ibid., October 20, 1860; "The Disunion Question, Considered with Special Reference to the Current Denials, Subterfuge, and Dodge of the Breckinridge Party," The Republican Banner, October 27, 1860.

TABLE 5.3.

ESTIMATED RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN THE 1856 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION AND
 SUBSEQUENT VOTING IN THE 1860 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION IN THE
 UPPER SOUTH

	1856-1860				Percent of Electorate
	Dem. 1856	Amer. 1856	Non Voters	Entering Voters	
So. Democrat 1860	32	0	0	1	33
Democrat 1860	3	1	0	2	5
Const. Union 1860	1	25	4	2	32
Not Voting 1860	0	1	26	2	29
All Voters	35	26	30	8	100

Note: Actual N = 330.

significant change when the rift in the Democratic party produced more dramatic shifts in power than it had in the Cotton States.³²

Newspapers in the South presented a united front in delineating the preservation of southern rights and thus the question of Union or disunion had been the paramount and all absorbing issue in the 1860 canvass.³³ Partisan differences arose as each group asserted a different plan for the protection of southern rights.³⁴ The objective of each candidate was the same: to convince southern voters that his plan guaranteed southern rights. As in the lower South, Bell and Douglas advocates continued to insist that only by relying on the Constitution and remaining within the Union could southerners protect their social and economic institutions.³⁵ One Bell supporter in Tennessee noted that

³²For a discussion of the relation of economics and political development see the review article, James Oakes, "The Politics of Economic Development in the Antebellum South," Journal of Interdisciplinary History, 15 (Autumn 1984), 305-16. Also see Henry T. Shanks, The Secession Movement in Virginia, 1847-1861 (Richmond, 1934), 115; and Thomas Edward Jeffrey, "The Second Party System in North Carolina, 1836-1860," (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, The Catholic University of America, 1976), 400-01.

³³See "The Buchanan Administration," The Republican Banner, October 3, 1860.

³⁴Long, "Political Parties," 125; David Porter, "The Southern Press and the Presidential Election of 1860," West Virginia History, 33 (October 1971), 1-13.

³⁵See Porter, "The Southern Press," 1-13; "Secession," The Republican Banner, October 9, 1860; and "Mr. Breckinridge Slavery Record," ibid., October 12, 1860.

even "if the voice of a majority of the American people shall be found recorded to-day in favor of Abraham Lincoln for President, it is the duty of every true American citizen to acquiesce in that verdict."³⁶

In the aftermath of Lincoln's election Breckinridge supporters found consolation only in a preemptive revolution through disunion. One southern Democratic editor exemplified this spirit as he called for southern men to prepare to act for "if Lincoln is elected, the irrepressible conflict predicted by him and Seward, will commence, whether we wish it or not."³⁷ Therefore southern institutions could only be preserved by taking decisive action before Lincoln had the opportunity to "violate and destroy" slavery, and with it the South's economic and social well being. In the election of 1860, in both the upper and lower South, the Breckinridge forces had already called for action outside the normal bounds of partisan expression by bolting from the national Democratic party. The foundations of the Democratic party in the South were shaken. In the upper South some former Buchanan men questioned the wisdom of disunion and found more

³⁶"The Federal Union--It Must Be Preserved!" The Republican Banner, November 7, 1860.

³⁷"Southern Men Awake, and Prepare for the Conflict!" The Federal Union, October 9, 1860. See also "Let Us Be Neither Rash Nor Diffident," ibid., November 20, 1860; "The True Policy," ibid., November 27, 1860; "The Issue," The Mississippian, October 16, 1860; "Editorial," ibid., October 29, 1860; "The Best Way to Act if Action Becomes Necessary," The Floridian and Journal, November 3, 1860; and "The Beginning of the End," ibid., November 10, 1860.

in common with Douglas and Bell than they did with Breckinridge.

The role of the southern religious institutions in the election of 1860 has been the renewed subject of recent debate among historians. The political rupture in the nation in the election of 1860 and the subsequent secession proceedings replicated to a remarkable degree the divisions over slavery that had led to the denominational schisms among evangelical Protestant churches in the nation in the years preceding the Civil War.³⁸

Why did the Baptist, Methodist, and Presbyterian churches in the North become the proponents of abolition and their counterparts to the south supporters of the institution of slavery?³⁹ American evangelicals appeared to be less

³⁸Clarence C. Goen, "Broken Churches, Broken Nation: Regional Religion and North-South Alienation in Antebellum America," Church History, 52(March 1983), 21.

³⁹For a discussion of northern evangelical support of abolition see Russell D. Parker, "The Philosophy of Charles G. Finney: Higher Law and Revivalism," Ohio History, 82 (Summer-Autumn 1973), 142-53; Anne C. Loveland, "Evangelicalism and 'Immediate Emancipation' in American Antislavery Thought," Journal Of Southern History, 32 (May 1966), 172-88; and Roger Anstey, "Slavery and the Protestant Ethic," Historical Reflections (Canada), 6 (1979), 157-81. For a discussion of the southern evangelical support of slavery see Edward Riley Crowther, "Southern Protestants, Slavery and Secession: A Study in Religious Ideology, 1830-1861," (unpublished Ph.d. dissertation, Auburn University, 1986); John Lee Eighmy, Churches in Cultural Captivity: A History of the Social Attitudes of Southern Baptists (Knoxville, 1972); Drew Gilpin Faust, "Evangelicalism and the Meaning of the Proslavery Argument: The Reverend Thornton Stringfellow of Virginia," Virginia Magazine of History and Biography, 85 (January 1977), 3-17; W. Harrison Daniel, "The Southern Baptists in the Confederacy," Civil War History, 6

affected by doctrine than external social and economic conditions. On the surface the churches in the North and South appeared similar, but at their ecclesiastical roots they were distinctly different. Mainline denominations South "privatized" their religion, emphasizing individual salvation over social concerns. They were subsequently more concerned with a slave's eternal salvation than with his temporal freedom.⁴⁰ The ecclesiastical divisions between North and South served to heighten tensions and polarize the political positions of communicants.

In an attempt to discern possible religious undergirding of partisan choices, estimates of relationships were generated between religious affiliation and voting in the presidential election of 1860 for the lower South (see Table 5.4 and 5.5). Evangelicals in the cotton South reflected the same split in their voting patterns as for all voters in the region as a whole. Although a clear majority of Methodists and Baptists supported the Breckinridge splinter party, the probabilities suggest that a substantial

(December 1960), 389-401; *idem.*, "Southern Protestantism and Secession," The Historian, 29 (May 1967), 391-408; Glen Jeansonne, "Southern Baptist Attitudes Toward Slavery, 1845-1861," Georgia Historical Quarterly, 55 (Winter 1971), 510-22; and Lewis M. Purifoy, "The Southern Methodist Church and the Proslavery Argument," Journal of Southern History, 32 (August 1966), 325-41.

⁴⁰Goen, "Broken Churches, Broken Nation," 23-24; John B. Boles, "Evangelical Protestantism in the Old South: From Religious Dissent to Cultural Dominance," in Charles Reagan Wilson, ed., Religion in the South, (Jackson, 1985), 28-29.

TABLE 5.4.

ESTIMATED RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION
AND VOTING IN THE 1860 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION
LOWER SOUTH (WITH TEXAS)

Denomination	Percent for Breckinridge	Percent for Opposition	Percent Not Voting
Nonchurchgoers	12	12	88
Catholic	0	50	50
Episcopalian	0	33	66
Lutheran	0	0	100
Disciples of Christ	0	100	0
Baptist	55	45	0
Methodist	57	43	0
Presbyterian	50	50	0
All Other Churches	0	0	100
All Voters	40	32	39

Note: Actual N = 404. The use of church seating accommodations is, admittedly, a crude measure of the percentage of adult white males who were formally affiliated with a specific church. Catholics, moreover, are underrepresented by just counting "seats." Catholic masses probably served three or four groups of parishioners in the same church building, whereas there was relatively less duplication among Protestant denominations. Systematic undercounting of Catholics, however, would make no difference in the above estimates from what they would be if, for example, Catholic seats were doubled or tripled and all other church seatings were left unchanged.

The estimates of the political affiliation of religious congregants in the lower and upper South were analyzed by multiple "ecological" regression, taking the percentage of religious church seating accommodations as the dependent variables. The independent variables, analyzed separately for each choice, were the proportions of the electorate voting for Douglas, Bell or Opposition, and Breckinridge. To avoid multicollinearity the 1860 nonvoting percentages were not used. The estimates presented above are individual voting choices derived from aggregate data. All variables used in the regression equations were weighted by the adult white male population.

TABLE 5.5.

ESTIMATED RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION
AND VOTING IN THE 1860 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION
LOWER SOUTH (WITHOUT TEXAS)

Denomination	Percent for Douglas	Percent for Breckinridge	Percent for Bell	Percent Not Voting
Nonchurchgoers	0	0	9	91
Catholic	0	0	40	60
Episcopalian	0	0	33	66
Lutheran	0	0	0	100
Disciples of Christ	0	50	50	0
Baptist	10	68	22	0
Methodist	10	57	33	0
Presbyterian	22	33	33	12
All Other Churches	0	0	100	0
All Voters	8	38	27	27

Note: Actual N = 314. For an explanation of methods used see Table 5.4.

number of them cast their ballots for Bell. Presbyterians split almost equally between the voting choices offered on the ballot. Although there might have been unanimity among the churchmen on support of slavery, there was no united support for a particular candidate. Perhaps what is most important is that evangelicals turned out at much higher rates than nonchurchgoers, Episcopalians, or other small denominations in the region. The estimates suggest that the three dominant evangelical groups accounted for all of the Democrat vote and a large portion of the Bell vote, but very few of the nonvoters. If nothing else, the evangelicals exhibited a heightened sense of concern politically both in 1856 and in 1860.

The opinions of editors of evangelical religious journals reveals that some clergymen were reluctant to encourage their readers to vote for any particular presidential candidate. In accordance with their views on the role of religion in southern society, editors refused to support one particular candidate.⁴¹ The Texas Christian Advocate refused to give counsel to its Methodist readers in the crisis election and only suggested prayer.⁴² A sister newspaper criticized northern brethren for their political activity and referred to them as "vote-mongers who prostrate

⁴¹Lewy Dorman, Party Politics in Alabama From 1850 Through 1860 (Wetumpka, Al., 1935), 166, 167.

⁴²The Texas Christian Advocate, October 25 1860.

our Christian civilization."⁴³ But if they could not agree on which candidate to support, they openly opposed the abolitionized Republicans, suggesting that "the election of a Black Republican administration" would destroy the rights of the South.⁴⁴ Parishioners were thus encouraged to vote for candidates who would best protect the interests of the South. For most evangelicals in the lower South this meant support of the Breckinridge wing of the Democratic party. Furthermore, the discussions engendered by the evangelical religious press apparently served to encourage the political participation of their congregants in both major political camps.

Evangelicals formulated a corporate ideology that sought foremost to protect the institution of slavery in the South. The author of an article which appeared in the New Orleans Christian Advocate communicated this concept best when he suggested that a "Black Republican" victory in 1860 would mean "the abolition of slavery" and establishment of "free-negro equality." He further asserted that if the southerners submitted to "abolition rule," slavery would be destroyed, causing the South to "sink gradually into the

⁴³"The Advocate and Party Politics," The New Orleans Christian Advocate, October 3, 1860; and "The Present Political Crisis," ibid., October 17, 1860.

⁴⁴"The Present Election: What to Do in Case of a Republican Victory," The New Orleans Christian Advocate, October 31, 1860; and The Texas Christian Advocate, October 25, 1860.

political and commercial insignificance of the British West Indies."⁴⁵ The primary concern of evangelicals who chose to voice an opinion on paper was not the loss of theological freedom, for after all they could still seek to convert slaves even if they were freed, but over the loss of a way of life both economically and socially tied to the institution of slavery.⁴⁶ Their voices were raised highest when their particular species of human "property" was threatened. Southern slaveholders stood to lose "four thousand millions of dollars."⁴⁷ Economic conditions in the South, more than theological positions, formed southern evangelical views of slavery.

Only one state in the lower South exhibited political polarization among evangelicals and their more liturgical brethren (see Table 5.6). In Texas, the Baptists, Methodists, and Presbyterians were found overwhelmingly in the Breckinridge camp. Only thirteen percent of them, Presbyterians, voted for the opposition camp. The Bell and Douglas fusion ticket garnished support from Texas Lutherans,

⁴⁵"The Presidential Election," The New Orleans Christian Advocate, October 31, 1860. See also, "The Southern Movement," ibid., November 21, 1860.

⁴⁶Jack P. Maddex, Jr., "The Southern Apostasy' Revisited: The Significance of Proslavery Christianity," Marxist Perspectives, 7 (Fall 1979), 140.

⁴⁷"The Great Political Crisis," The Southwestern Baptist, November 29, 1860; "The Presidential Election," The New Orleans Christian Advocate, October 31, 1860; and "The Crisis," The Texas Christian Advocate, November 15, 1860.

TABLE 5.6.

ESTIMATED RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION
AND VOTING IN THE 1860 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION
TEXAS

Denomination	Percent for Breckinridge	Percent for Opposition	Percent Not Voting
Nonchurchgoers	2	49	49
Catholic	0	0	100
Episcopalian	0	0	100
Lutheran	0	50-100	50-100
Disciples of Christ	33	66	0
Baptist	100	0	0
Methodist	100	0	0
Presbyterian	75	13	13
All Other Churches	33	66	0
All Voters	46	23	31

Note: Actual N = 95. For an explanation of methods used see Table 5.4.

members of the Disciples of Christ and large numbers of the unchurched. Texas Catholics and Episcopalians abstained from voting in the 1860 election.

Unique social, political, and economic conditions were at the base of the political polarization among churchgoers. Breckinridge easily defeated the combination of Bell and Douglas forces in the November balloting. Since the admission of Texas into the Union the Democratic party had been the dominant force in state politics. The southern Democrats appeared to present voters a clear choice in 1860 in terms of which party would best protect southern interests and the institution of slavery. Second, the state was split into two distinct economic regions. The plantation system economically dominated eastern Texas, a region primarily settled by immigrants from the cotton states, and from predominantly evangelical heritages. In the north central counties of the state, stretching southward from the Red River Valley to the Blackland prairies centered around Dallas, wheat was the cash crop. Immigrants came originally from the border states of Tennessee and Kentucky, and included numerous Disciples of Christ churches and many unchurched yeoman farmers. Thus, to some extent, the differences in Texas voting patterns resulted from different economic systems and immigration patterns as the north central region of the state supported Bell and Douglas and

eastern Texas the candidacy of Breckinridge.⁴⁸

Texas differed from the rest of the cotton states in having large numbers of non-Anglo citizens and aliens. The Germans in the Hill country of Texas and the hispanic population in south Texas had little in common with slave agriculture and thus seldom supported the "Southern Rights" Democrats in the state. In terms of religious affiliation, these immigrants joined almost exclusively the Catholic and Lutheran churches. It is no surprise that these relative newcomers, with little stake in the debate over slavery, voted for the Fusion ticket or sat out the balloting altogether. Finally, the dramatization of the "abolition" conspiracy in Texas was the subject of numerous religious newspaper editorials throughout the South and perhaps served to further the divisions already enhanced by social and economic differences. Many evangelical editors accused so-called "abolitionists" in the state of committing arson, placing strychnine in the hands of blacks to poison wells, arming them with weapons to shoot whites, and loosing slaves

⁴⁸Baker and Baum, "The Texas Voter," 412-418. Note: In Texas ninety percent of the counties that possessed greater than the mean average of evangelical accommodations also contained more slaveholders than the average county in the state. This is in direct contrast to the rest of the lower South where only sixty-four percent of the dominant evangelical counties also contained greater than the average number of slaveholders.

to inflict rape and assassination on the white population.⁴⁹ These reported incidents, widely promulgated in Texas, served to strengthen the Democratic parties hand in the state. Thus, Texas appears to have been somewhat of an aberration in the cotton States as religious groups dramatically split in their political loyalties.⁵⁰

The upper South exhibited patterns of religious divisions in the electorate in 1860 similar to the lower South (see Table 5.7). The evangelical groups predominated in the Democratic party, but significant numbers of Baptists and Methodists sat out the balloting. Moderation was much more apparent in this region as congregants received little political advice as they were encouraged to support "Southern Rights," and to "carry your religion with you to the polls."⁵¹ Yet in contrast to the lower South, upper South editors made at times a concerted attempt to ask their followers to give the Republicans a chance. The Tennessee Baptist suggested that the mere election of Lincoln provided little cause for alarm or great fear of the loss of

⁴⁹"The Conspiracy in Texas!" The New Orleans Christian Advocate, August 22, 1860; "Incendiarism in Texas," The Texas Christian Advocate, August 2, 1860; and "Conspiracy in Texas," The Christian Advocate, September 13, 1860.

⁵⁰For a discussion of religion and politics in Texas during the period see Baker and Baum, "The Texas Voter," 412-18.

⁵¹"A Christian Politician," The Religious Herald, October 11, 1860; and "American Intelligence," The Tennessee Baptist, November 3, 1860.

TABLE 5.7.

ESTIMATED RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION
AND VOTING IN THE 1860 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION
UPPER SOUTH

Denomination	Percent for Douglas	Percent for Breckinridge	Percent for Bell	Percent Not Voting
Nonchurchgoers	26	21	16	37
Catholic	0	0	0	100
Episcopalian	0	0	0-50	50-100
Lutheran	0	50	50	0
Disciples of Christ	0	50-100	0-50	0
Baptist	0	46	42	13
Methodist	0	36	33	30
Presbyterian	17	33	50	0
All Other Churches	20	20	20	40
All Voters	8	34	33	25

Note: Actual N = 314. For an explanation of methods used see Table 5.4.

property.⁵² Other newspapers also exhibited no great excitement when Breckinridge and Bell failed at the polls in November.⁵³ The upper South, with fewer plantations and in closer proximity to the North, expressed sentiments which reflected their economic and social interests. Theology or religious differences affected voting patterns minimally.

The nonevangelicals and unchurched potential voters formed a politically cohesive unit in the upper and lower South where they rarely voted for the Democratic party, although the Know-Nothings certainly drove some immigrants into the Democratic party in 1856. More often nonevangelicals and nonchurchgoers failed to enter the active electorate (see Tables 5.4, 5.5, 5.7.) Catholic and Lutheran churches, concentrated in Louisiana and Texas, primarily served large numbers of European immigrants, French Creoles, and Hispanic parishioners. In Texas, in the late antebellum period the Lutheran church became a cohesive cultural and religious entity providing for the needs of mostly German immigrants. Thus the parishioners of these churches had not been socialized into the social system of slavery and many feared becoming enmeshed in civil strife in their adopted homeland. The Episcopal church, eminently urban, with

⁵²"American Intelligence," The Tennessee Baptist, November 3, 1860; and ibid., November 10, 1860.

⁵³"Presidential Election," The Religious Herald, November 15, 1860; and "The Country," The Christian Advocate, November 29, 1860.

wealthy congregants, reflected their conservatism. The Disciples contained both slaveholders and nonslaveholders and their voting patterns reflected this diversity. Finally, the unchurched, accounting for about twenty percent of the population, alienated from a culture dominated by evangelical religious groups, remained isolated from social and political gatherings. As a result nonchurchgoers rarely entered the electorate.⁵⁴

Religious affiliation thus provides some explanations for voting choices 1860 presidential election. Religious congregants in the upper and lower South differed in the way they voted in 1860, but not because of theological differences between churches. Voting evangelicals in the upper South expressed a divergence of opinion in the 1860 presidential elections when compared to their brethren in the cotton states. The institution of slavery dominated southern culture to the extent that most religious groups felt a

⁵⁴Anthony B. Lalli and Thomas H. O'Connor, "Roman Views on the American Civil War," Catholic Historical Review, 57 (April 1971), 28, 29; Peter J. Parish, "The Instruments of Providence: Slavery, Civil War, and the American Church," Studies in Church History, 20 (1983), 296; Joseph Blount Cheshire, The Church in the Confederate States: A History of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Confederate States (New York and London, 1912), 5-38; Du Bose Murphy, A Short History of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Texas (Dallas, 1935); Carlos E. Castaneda, Our Catholic Heritage in Texas, 1519-1936 (7 vols.; Austin, 1936-1958), 7, 216-18; David T. Bailey, Shadow on the Church: Southwestern Evangelical Religion and the Issue of Slavery, 1783-1860 (Ithaca, N.Y., and London, 1985), 171-77; and L. Richard Bradley, "The Lutheran Church and Slavery," Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly, 44 (February, 1971), 32-41.

necessity to see the institution and their property preserved.⁵⁵ They subsequently developed a corporate defense of slavery, the maintenance of which they felt necessary to the existence of their culture.⁵⁶ The only churches which escaped this influence to some extent served large foreign populations who had little economic interest in the plantation system. Most foreign-born congregants preferred to abstain from voting rather than voice an opinion for a "Southern Rights" candidate in 1860.

If a "Black Republican" victory at the polls in November of 1860 meant ultimately the destruction of slavery and the plantation system, how did southern slaveholders respond at the ballot box?⁵⁷ Did slaveholders seek to protect their property by supporting Douglas, Bell, or Breckinridge? The Constitutional Union party inherited the votes of wealthier southerners or large slaveholders in the cotton states (see Tables 5.8-5.10). The estimates presented

⁵⁵For example see Bradley, "The Lutheran Church and Slavery," 32-41. Bradley notes that the Lutheran newspaper in the cotton states, The Southern Lutheran, was a committed defender of slavery. He concludes that the church reflected the propaganda of the geographical local in which it was found.

⁵⁶See The Old School Presbyterian Church an Abolitionist Conspiracy? (Port Gibson, Miss: Reveille Print Shop, 1861), i-ii. Southern Pamphlet Collection, the Natchez Trace Collection, The University of Texas. See also Daniel, "Southern Protestantism and Secession," 408; and Crowther, "Southern Protestants, Slavery, and Secession," 307, 319.

⁵⁷"The Issue," The Mississippian, October 16, 1860; and "The Great Political Crisis," The Southwestern Baptist, November 29, 1860.

Table 5.8.

SLAVEHOLDER VOTING PROBABILITIES IN THE
PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION OF 1860
LOWER SOUTH (WITH TEXAS)

	Small Slh.	Medium Slh.	Large Slh.	Plantation Slh.	Non Slh.	All Voters
Breckinridge	5	4	2	2	28	40
Opposition	5	5	3	4	15	32
Nonvoters	1	0	0	0	29	29
All Voters	10	8	5	5	73	

Note: Actual N = 446. The estimates of the political affiliation of slaveholders in the lower and upper South were analyzed by multiple "ecological" regression, taking the percentage of the various categories of slaveholders as the dependent variables. The independent variables, analyzed separately for each choice, were the proportions of the electorate voting for Douglas, Bell or Opposition, and Breckinridge. To avoid multicollinearity the 1860 nonvoting percentages were not used. The estimates presented above are individual voting choices derived from aggregate data. All variables used in the regression equations were weighted by the adult white male population.

TABLE 5.9.

SLAVEHOLDER VOTING PROBABILITIES IN THE
PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION OF 1860
LOWER SOUTH (WITHOUT TEXAS)

	Small Slh.	Medium Slh.	Large Slh.	Plantation Slh.	Non Slh.	All Voters
Douglas	1	1	0	0	6	8
Breckinridge	4	3	2	1	30	38
Bell	5	5	4	4	8	27
Nonvoters	1	0	0	0	26	27
All Voters	11	9	5	5	71	

Note: Actual N = 323. For an explanation of methods used see Table 5.8.

TABLE 5.10.

SLAVEHOLDER VOTING PROBABILITIES IN THE
PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION OF 1860
UPPER SOUTH

	Small Slh.	Medium Slh.	Large Slh.	Plantation Slh.	Non Slh.	All Voters
Douglas	1	0	0	0	4	5
Breckinridge	3	3	2	1	24	33
Bell	4	4	2	1	21	32
Nonvoters	1	0	0	0	29	29
All Voters	9	7	4	2	78	

Note: Actual N = 353. For an explanation of methods used see Table 5.8.

here suggest that in the lower South slaveholders accounted for approximately seventy percent of the entire vote cast for Bell (see Tables 5.8 and 5.9). In the lower South, eighty percent of slaveholders owning more than ten slaves cast ballots for Bell. On the other hand, slaveholders in the upper South were more divided in their opinions of the candidates. Only one third of the Constitutional Union vote came from the slaveholding class (see Table 5.10). In addition, the largest slaveholders in the states of the upper South split evenly between Breckinridge and Bell.⁵⁸ The estimates of slaveholding presented here remain the same when viewed at the state level. The Constitutional Unionists in the lower South drew the majority of the slaveholding class into its camp, and received substantial backing from slaveholders in the upper South.⁵⁹ Plantation slaveholders, although strong supporters of southern rights, supported Bell in hopes of defeating Lincoln within the Union rather than risking disunion and the apparent economic and social

⁵⁸These estimates come very close to those discovered by Daniel Crofts and presented in an unpublished paper entitled, "Secession Crisis Voting Behavior in Southampton County, Virginia," The Conference on Southern History, The Citadel, 1987, 4,5. Crofts was able to obtain viva voce voting records for Southampton County Virginia which he matched with census records to determine economically who actually cast ballots for the candidates in 1860. His analysis presents actual totals not estimates.

⁵⁹William L. Barney, The Secessionist Impulse: Alabama and Mississippi in 1860 (Princeton, 1974), 99-100. Barney suggests that this is a vast oversimplification of southern politics and he argues that there is no such division between the parties.

dislocation that could destroy their substantial holdings.⁶⁰

In contrast to the Bell constituency, nonslaveholders favored Breckinridge or Douglas. In the lower South nonslaveholders accounted for seventy-eight percent of the total Democratic vote and the upper South almost seventy-four percent. The estimates lend support to the argument that the Democratic party in the South was primarily made up of poor whites, yeoman farmers, and small slaveholders.⁶¹ Jacksonian attacks on the wealthy during the formation of the second party system, the extension of the franchise along with other proposals apparently encouraged the entry of lower socioeconomic classes into the Democratic party.⁶² Both Breckinridge and Douglas appealed to large groups of nonslaveholders that had traditionally voted Democratic in the antebellum period. Nevertheless, large numbers of nonslaveholders still remained out of the electoral arena in 1860. Nonslaveholders accounted for almost all citizens who failed to vote in the election.

One Democratic editor suggested that southern nonslaveholders who supported Breckinridge's candidacy were more deeply interested in perpetuating of the institution of

⁶⁰Hunt F. James to William Massie, November 10, 1860; Hunt James to William Massie, November 13, 1860, William Massie Papers. See also Robert F. Durden, The Self-Inflicted Wound: Southern Politics in the Nineteenth Century (Lexington, 1985), 83-85.

⁶¹Dorman, Party Politics in Alabama, 14.

⁶²Thornton, Politics and Power, xix.

slavery, "materially and socially," than slaveowners.⁶³ George Winchester, noted Natchez politician and lawyer, agreed that free white laborers of the South had the greatest stake in the 1860 election. He asserted that the election of Lincoln could only result in "degrading Free White laborers to the social rank of pre-Black laborers" placing him in an even lower social and economic status than he had been subjected to before.⁶⁴ Nevertheless, nonslaveholders were less active than slaveholders in their support of presidential candidates in the South in 1860 (see Tables 5.8-5.10).

In order to uncover shifts in demographic patterns of support for voter coalitions in the upper and lower South in November of 1860, the presidential voting patterns were regressed upon a handful of background variables that measured both social and economic characteristics of the region's counties in 1856. The procedure used, stepwise regression analysis, revealed the relative effect of each background variable on a specific voting outcome while simultaneously controlling for the effects of the remaining explanatory variables. An indicator of evangelical strength in the South combined seating accommodations for Baptists,

⁶³"The Interest of Non-Slaveholders in the South in the Perpetuation of African Slavery," *The Mississippian*, October 12, 1860. See also Crowther, "Southern Protestants, Slavery, and Secession," 273.

⁶⁴George Winchester to William L. Sharkey, undated letter in 1860, Sharkey Papers.

Methodists, and the Presbyterians, and a second variable took into account all other religious groups. Because of the nature of the nonevangelical faiths in the South, this variable is also a rough measure for ethnicity. Slaveholders represented the presence of the plantation economy in a county, but also provided a measure for the diversity of wealth holdings. Wheat growing capacity indicated counties with economies which differed from cotton plantation regions and accounts for large numbers of yeoman farmers in the South. Finally, cotton manufacturing provided an approximation for the amount of investment in industry within a county.⁶⁵ Again, the voting behavior of geographical voting units, counties, not individuals, was under study in this portion of the analysis.

What were the underlying elements of support for parties in the election of 1860 for the lower South? (see Table 5.11 and 5.12). Breckinridge received most support from counties containing large numbers of evangelicals, who in the lower South, as has already been noted, staunchly supported slavery and were the apparent vanguard of his forces.⁶⁶ The Democrats in this region had long eclipsed the

⁶⁵For a further discussion of the procedures used in this analysis see the notes and variable descriptions in the previous chapter.

⁶⁶The editor of the Mississippi Baptist noted in the fall of 1860 that "we are the stern uncompromising friends of the slave and slavery." The editor was quoted in Percy Lee Rainwater, Mississippi: Storm Center of Secession, 1856-1861 (Baton Rouge, 1938), 174-75.

TABLE 5.11.

THE INFLUENCE OF EXPLANATORY VARIABLES ON VOTING PATTERNS IN
THE 1860 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION IN THE LOWER SOUTH
(Without Texas)

Dependent Variable	Explanatory Variables	Reg. Coef.	Beta Coef.	Standard Errors Reg. Coef.	T Score	Cha. in R ²	Level of Imp.
Breckinridge [R ² =.33] σ ² =.14	Religion1	.17	.32	.04	3.37	.27	.12
	Religion2	-.47	-.30	.09	-5.59	.04	-.04
	Slaveholders	.15	.14	.05	-1.13	.02	.04
	Wheat	-.11	-.12	.04	-4.42	.01	-.02
	Cotton Man. Constant	-.00 .27	-.03	.00	-.84	-----	.00
Douglas [R ² =.06] σ ² =.09	Wheat	.11	.23	.03	6.12	.03	.02
	Religion2	.16	.19	.06	1.37	.03	.01
	Cotton Man.	.00	.07	.00	.07	-----	.00
	Slaveholders	-.02	-.04	.03	1.37	-----	-.01
	Religion1 Constant	.01 .05	.04	.02	-1.34	-----	.00
Bell [R ² =.44] σ ² =.09	Slaveholders	.45	.56	.04	9.41	.36	.14
	Wheat	.14	.22	.03	4.47	.07	.02
	Religion2	-.09	-.08	.07	-1.57	.01	.01
	Cotton Man.	.00	.08	.00	1.87	-----	.00
	Religion1 Constant	.01 .11	.02	.03	.08	-----	.00
Not Voting 1860 [R ² =.63] σ ² =.12	Religion1	-.19	-.31	.03	-3.34	.45	-.13
	Slaveholders	-.56	-.43	.04	-8.38	.13	-.17
	Religion2	.39	.21	.07	.85	.03	.03
	Wheat	-.15	-.14	.03	-4.20	.02	-.02
	Cotton Man. Constant	-.00 .57	-.05	.04	-.89	-----	.00

Note: Actual N = 310. Here and elsewhere the voting units are weighted by voting population to ensure that smaller counties are not overrepresented in the analysis. Standard errors, however, are computed according to the original, unweighted number of counties and are thus essentially the standard deviations of actual voting percentages from voting percentages predicted by the regression lines. The regression coefficients, when written in additive equation form, describe the relationship of the independent variables to a voting decision as a mathematical function. The procedure used was the SPSSX regression program in which the variables were entered into the equation on the basis of their partial correlation coefficients.

TABLE 5.12.

THE INFLUENCE OF EXPLANATORY VARIABLES ON VOTING PATTERNS IN
THE 1860 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION IN THE LOWER SOUTH
(With Texas)

Dependent Variable	Explanatory Variables	Reg. Coef.	Beta Coef.	Standard Errors Reg. Coef.	T Score	Cha. in R ²	Level of Imp.
Breckinridge [R ² =.26] σ ² =.14	Religion2	-.46	-.31	.07	-2.69	.20	-.04
	Religion1	.10	.20	.03	1.50	.05	.07
	Slaveholders	.16	.14	.05	-.52	.01	.04
	Cotton Man.	-.00	-.05	-.00	-1.16	.00	.00
	Constant	.32					.00
Opposition [R ² =.32] σ ² .13	Slaveholders	.44	.42	.05	10.01	.25	.12
	Wheat	1.38	.21	.32	6.12	.05	.03
	Religion1	.08	.17	.03	2.82	.01	.05
	Cotton Man.	.00	.12	.00	2.30	.01	.00
	Religion2	.08	.06	.07	-.06	-----	.01
Not Voting 1860 [R ² =.61] σ ² =.13	Religion1	-.19	-.31	.06	-5.14	.42	-.12
	Slaveholders	-.58	-.43	.04	-10.40	.12	-.16
	Wheat	-1.42	-.17	.28	-4.28	.04	.03
	Religion2	.37	.20	.06	-2.92	.03	.03
	Cotton Man.	-.00	-.05	.00	-1.31	-----	.00
	Constant	.58					

Note: Actual N = 400. For a note on methodology see Table 5.11.

opposition parties in terms of political power and were the foremost spokesmen for the protection of southern rights. The evangelicals, primarily Methodists and Baptists, became the haven for the underclasses in the South and their ballot selections perhaps revealed a class bias towards the "party of wealth," the Constitutional Unionists.⁶⁷ Bell apparently received primarily the support of the old Whig and Know-Nothing party forces in 1860 (see Tables 5.1-5.3). The variable having the greatest impact on the Constitutional Union vote was the percentage of slaveholders within counties.

Plantation areas in the region, when compared to the other indicators entered into the equation, were by far the most important force behind the vote for Bell.⁶⁸ The variables entered into the equation to predict the Douglas vote proved to have little predictive power. Douglas' support was minimal in the lower South and widely scattered and therefore proved difficult to analyze empirically. In addition, voter interest tended to be low in counties with larger percentages of nonevangelicals. In comparison, evangelical and slaveholding counties had increased levels of

⁶⁷For a discussion of class divisions in the southern churches see Elizabeth Fox-Genovese and Eugene D. Genovese, "The Old South Considered as a Religious Society," National Humanities Center Newsletter, 6 (Summer 1985), 1-6.

⁶⁸Dorman, Party Politics, 14; and Rainwater, Mississippi, 11-12. The regression analysis again renders Barney's theories less probable. See Barney, The Secessionist Impulse, 99-100.

voter participation. Evangelicals throughout the region kept their congregants aware of the crisis situation through newspapers and sermons and slaveholders participated in politics because of their dominant economic interests. These counties certainly possessed a heightened political awareness in the election of 1860.⁶⁹

The social and economic bases of voting patterns in the election of 1860 in the upper South proved much more difficult to identify (see Table 5.13). The regression analyses for Arkansas, North Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia had little predictive power for any of the electoral categories. Counties with larger numbers of slaveholders had a small positive impact on both the vote for Breckinridge and Bell. Evangelical counties, although the statistical relationship was weak, supported the camp of the southern

⁶⁹McCrary et al., suggest similar results but their analysis presents problems as they entered variables into the equation that were clearly descriptions of the same social and economic milieu and therefore can result in less reliable generalizations. Indices of cotton, swine, cattle, and sugar production are all correlated with slaveholding. Thus the inclusion of all these measures in their equations can significantly mask trends in the analysis. Furthermore the introduction of foreign-born males into the equation significantly alters the interpretation of the equation as this group was extremely small in the lower South and was concentrated in only a few areas. The suggestion that the absence of foreign-born males in a county is the best predictor of the Breckinridge vote in the region actually reveals little (p. 450-51). Over ninety percent of all voters in the South were native-born Americans and therefore to say that "Breckinridge ran strongest in rural counties where most of the electorate was native-born," could probably be said of most political candidates in the South, although foreign-born males were important in Louisiana (p. 450). McCrary et al., "Class and Party," 449-52.

TABLE 5.13.

THE INFLUENCE OF EXPLANATORY VARIABLES ON VOTING PATTERNS IN
THE 1860 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION IN THE UPPER SOUTH

Dependent Variable	Explanatory Variables	Reg. Coef.	Beta Coef.	Standard Errors Reg. Coef.	T Score	Cha. in R ²	Level of Imp.
Breck. [R ² =.04] σ ² =.06	Slaveholders	.16	.15	.06	2.97	.02	.04
	Religion1	.08	.11	.04	1.00	.01	.05
	Cotton Man.	-.00	-.06	.00	-.78	-----	.00
	Wheat	-.07	-.04	.09	-1.58	-----	-.01
	Religion2	-.01	-.01	.10	.32	-----	.00
	Constant	.27					
Douglas [R ² =.11] σ ² =.15	Religion1	-.09	.17	.01	-4.06	.07	-.05
	Cotton Man.	.00	.15	.00	2.33	.02	.00
	Religion2	-.11	-.10	.04	-1.48	.02	-.01
	Slaveholders	.03	-.06	.02	1.27	-----	.01
	Wheat	-.00	-.04	.04	-.50	-----	.00
	Constant	.11					
Bell [R ² =.06] σ ² =.12	Wheat	.22	.17	.07	.91	.03	.02
	Slaveholders	.13	.15	.05	3.15	.01	.03
	Religion2	-.15	-.10	.08	.24	.01	-.01
	Religion1	-.03	-.06	.03	-.06	-----	-.02
	Cotton Man.	-.00	-.04	.00	-.81	-----	.00
	Constant	.30					
Not Voting 1860 [R ² =.10] σ ² =.14	Slaveholders	-.30	-.29	.05	-6.93	.07	-.07
	Religion2	.25	.15	.08	-.15	.01	.03
	Religion1	.05	.09	.03	.77	.01	-.01
	Wheat	-.14	-.09	.08	1.21	.01	-.02
	Cotton Man.	.00	.04	.00	.48	-----	.00
	Constant	.32					

Note: Actual N = 342. For a note on methodology see Table 5.11.

Democrats. Support for Breckinridge weakened in wheat growing areas where voters sustained the Bell forces. Similar to the lower South, counties dominated by the plantation system experienced significantly higher rates of turnout. Nevertheless, the indicators entered into the equations here were of little consequence in trying to determine the underlying bases of support for the various candidates in the election of 1860. The political organizations in the upper South, which continued to support a large opposition party even in 1860, apparently found supporters from all social and economic backgrounds.⁷⁰

When two states of the upper South were considered separately the election of 1860 statistically improved. As in 1856, Arkansas had much more in common politically with the lower South than with North Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia (see Table 5.14). Arkansas regression analysis results mirror the findings for the cotton South. The greatest impact on the vote of the Breckinridge-Joseph Lane ticket in Arkansas came from counties with higher numbers of evangelicals. In addition, slaveholding counties, clearly most influential on the vote for Bell, also tended to reflect a higher turnout rate than other counties in the state. Arkansas exhibited class divisions in 1860 that had been

⁷⁰For a discussion of these issues in the upper South see Jeffrey, "The Second Party System," 397-401; Kruman, Parties and Politics, 180-81; and Bergeron, Antebellum Politics, 163-64.

TABLE 5.14.

THE INFLUENCE OF EXPLANATORY VARIABLES ON VOTING PATTERNS IN
THE 1860 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION IN ARKANSAS

Dependent Variable	Explanatory Variables	Reg. Coef.	Beta Coef.	Standard Errors Reg. Coef.	T Score	Cha. in R ²	Level of Imp.
Breck. [R ² =.22]	Religion1	.12	.36	.03	-2.67	.16	
	Slaveholders	.20	.20	.09	.91	.02	
	Religion2	-.21	-.15	.14	1.16	.02	
	Cotton Man.	.01	.08	.01	.10	.01	
	Wheat	.03	.06	.04	.86	-----	
Douglas [R ² =.16]	Religion1	-.08	-.41	.05	2.22	.12	
	Religion2	.13	.13	.25	-1.09	.01	
	Wheat	.04	.17	.08	.56	.01	
	Slaveholders	.10	.17	.17	1.25	.02	
Bell [R ² =.55]	Slaveholders	.81	.81	.12	6.68	.50	
	Cotton Man.	-.02	-.15	.01	-1.94	.02	
	Religion1	-.05	-.15	.04	-.73	.01	
	Wheat	.05	.13	.06	.59	.01	
	Religion2	.17	.11	.18	.87	-----	
Not Voting 1860 [R ² =.54]	Slaveholders	-1.06	-.83	.17	-6.42	.51	
	Wheat	-.11	-.22	.08	-1.41	.03	
	Cotton Man.	.01	.06	.01	.70	-----	
	Religion2	-.08	-.04	.25	-.25	-----	
	Religion1	.01	.02	.05	-.27	-----	

Note: Actual N = 53. For a note on methodology see 5.11.

apparent since the foundation of the second party system in the state.⁷¹

North Carolina also tended to be uncharacteristic of the upper South in the election of 1860 (see Table 5.15). Quite contrary to the rest of the South, slaveholding counties in this state increased the levels of turnout for Breckinridge.⁷² Plantation areas in North Carolina possessed excellent transportation facilities and therefore had little reason to move into the Whig party when it was forming. Already entrenched in power, slaveholding counties in North Carolina preferred to remain within the Democratic fold to wield their influence.⁷³ In addition, the slaveholding counties in the state had a greater positive influence on voter participation than did the slaveholding counties in the region as a whole. Slaveholding counties tended to produce much higher rates of voter participation when compared to the other indicators. On the whole, the social and economic indicators in the upper South had less predictive power on the 1860 vote than they did in the Cotton states.

To determine the relative effect of previous partisan alignments when compared to the social and economic

⁷¹See Gene W. Boyette, "Quantitative Differences Between the Arkansas Whig and Democratic Parties, 1836-1850," Arkansas Historical Quarterly, 34 (Autumn 1975), 220-21.

⁷²Crofts, "The Political and Social Origins of Opposition," 30-31.

⁷³Kruman, Parties and Politics, 15, 16.

TABLE 5.15.

THE INFLUENCE OF EXPLANATORY VARIABLES ON VOTING PATTERNS IN
THE 1860 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION IN NORTH CAROLINA

Dependent Variable	Explanatory Variables	Reg. Coef.	Beta Coef.	Standard Errors Reg. Coef.	T Score	Cha. in R ²	Level of Imp.
Breck. [R ² =.30] σ ² =.17	Slaveholders	.58	.40	.15	3.12	.21	.15
	Wheat	-.26	-.32	.09	-2.17	.06	-.01
	Religion2	.23	.15	.23	.75	.01	.02
	Cotton Man.	.00	.05	.00	.55	-----	.00
	Religion1	.03	.04	.12	.56	-----	.03
Douglas [R ² =.05] σ ² =.02	Slaveholders	.03	.18	.02	1.19	.03	.00
	Cotton Man.	.00	.11	.08	.18	.01	.00
	Wheat	.01	.10	.03	.51	-----	.00
	Religion1	.01	.04	.00	.89	-----	.00
	Religion2	-.00	-.01	.01	-.01	-----	.00
Bell [R ² =.12] σ ² =.14	Wheat	.15	.25	.08	1.69	.07	.01
	Cotton Man.	-.01	-.17	.00	-1.43	.02	.00
	Religion1	-.14	-.18	.10	-1.02	.03	-.11
	Slaveholders	-.04	-.04	.13	.18	-----	.01
	Religion2	-.03	-.03	.20	.12	-----	.00
Not Voting 1860 [R ² =.51] σ ² =.09	Slaveholders	-.57	-.62	.08	-6.82	.42	-.14
	Religion1	.10	.16	.06	.62	.05	.08
	Wheat	.09	.17	.05	1.33	.01	.01
	Religion2	-.19	-.19	.11	-1.74	.02	-.02
	Cotton Man.	.00	.11	.00	1.07	.01	.00

Note: Actual N = 78. For a note on methodology see Table 5.11.

indicators for the counties, the voting selections of white males in the presidential election of 1856 were introduced into the regression equations for both regions (see Tables 5.16-5.18). The results are strikingly similar for both the upper and lower South. Previous political choices in 1856 had a much greater impact on the 1860 vote than any of the social or economic variables entered into the equations except in the case of Douglas.⁷⁴ When the vote for Buchanan is introduced into the equation explaining levels of turnout for Breckinridge, the relative influence of the other variables is reduced. Knowledge of the extent to which voters favored Buchanan accounted for almost all the variation in the Breckinridge vote in 1860. Similarly, the degree of support for Fillmore in 1856 was relatively more

⁷⁴In addition, the importance of previous political alignments and the vote for president in 1860 is reinforced when the political alignments in 1856 are entered into equations attempting to predict voter strength in 1860 and compared with the equations presented in tables 5.11, 5.12, and 5.13. A key statistical measure of comparison, the standard error of the regression, describes just how far the average dependent variable departs from its forecasted value. The standard error has the same unit of measure as the dependent variable. In each of the three equations for both upper and lower South, for secession, against secession, and not voting in 1861, previous political alignments in 1856 provide lower standard error measures than do the equations containing social and economic variables. Thus the regression analysis suggests that previous political affiliations produce a regression with a closer fit when compared with the equations in tables 5.11, 5.12, and 5.13. For a discussion of the standard error of the regression measure see Christopher H. Achen, Interpreting and Using Regression, Sage University Paper series on Quantitative Applications in the Social Sciences, Series No. 07-029 (Beverly Hills, Ca., and London, 1982), 61-63.

TABLE 5.16.

THE INFLUENCE OF EXPLANATORY VARIABLES ON VOTING PATTERNS IN
THE 1860 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION IN THE LOWER SOUTH
(Without Texas)

Dependent Variable	Explanatory Variables	Reg. Coef.	Beta Coef.	Standard Errors Reg. Coef.	T Score	Cha. in R ²	Level of Imp.
Breckinridge [R ² =.64] σ ² =.10	Buchanan	.79	.72	.06	10.75	.61	.32
	Wheat	-.16	-.18	.04	-5.69	.01	-.02
	Religion1	.05	.09	.03	2.53	.01	.03
	Religion2	-.13	-.08	.08	.46	-----	-.01
	Slaveholders	.07	.06	.05	-.18	-----	.02
	Cotton Man.	-.00	-.02	.00	-.31	-----	.00
	Constant	.04					
Douglas [R ² =.06] σ ² =.09	Wheat	.11	.23	.03	5.57	.03	.02
	Religion2	.17	.20	.06	.93	.02	.01
	Cotton Man.	.00	.07	.00	.11	-----	.00
	Buchanan	.03	.05	.05	.41	-----	.01
	Slaveholders	-.03	-.06	.08	1.23	-----	-.01
	Religion1	.01	.03	.03	-1.51	-----	.01
	Constant	.04					
Bell [R ² =.82] σ ² =.05	Fillmore	.80	.78	.04	19.84	.79	.23
	Wheat	.07	.11	.02	3.68	.01	.01
	Slaveholders	.12	.15	.03	4.17	.01	.04
	Religion2	-.10	-.09	.05	-2.18	-----	-.01
	Religion1	-.03	-.07	.02	-.79	-----	-.02
	Cotton Man.	.00	.02	.00	1.35	-----	.00
	Constant	.01					
Not Voting 1860 [R ² =.85] σ ² =.08	Nonvoters '56	.68	.70	.04	10.54	.82	.19
	Religion1	-.07	-.11	.03	-2.25	.01	-.04
	Slaveholders	-.20	-.15	.04	-5.64	.01	-.06
	Religion2	.10	.05	.06	.22	-----	.01
	Wheat	-.04	-.04	.03	-2.50	-----	-.01
	Cotton Man.	-.00	-.03	.00	-.87	-----	.00
	Constant	.17					

Note: Actual N = 267. For a note on methodology see Table 5.11.

TABLE 5.17.

THE INFLUENCE OF EXPLANATORY VARIABLES ON VOTING PATTERNS IN
THE 1860 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION IN THE LOWER SOUTH
(With Texas)

Dependent Variable	Explanatory Variables	Reg. Coef.	Beta Coef.	Standard Errors Reg. Coef.	T Score	Cha. in R ²	Level of Imp.
Breckinridge [R ² =.59] σ ² =.11	Buchanan	.77	.71	.06	10.23	.57	.32
	Wheat	-.85	-.12	.29	-4.32	.01	-.02
	Religion2	-.15	-.10	.06	-1.23	.01	-.01
	Slaveholders	.08	.07	.05	-.07	.01	.02
	Cotton Man.	-.00	-.03	.00	-.74	-----	.00
	Religion1 Constant	.01 .07	.02	.03	.61	-----	.01
Opposition [R ² =.48] σ ² =.11	Fillmore	.64	.50	.06	10.76	.43	.18
	Slaveholders	.17	.16	.05	4.92	.02	.05
	Wheat	.92	.14	.31	4.95	.02	.02
	Cotton Man.	.00	.08	.00	1.60	.01	.00
	Religion2	.04	.09	.07	.05	-----	.00
	Religion1 Constant	.05 .04	.04	.03	1.21	-----	.03
Not Voting 1860 [R ² =.78] σ ² =.09	Nonvoters '56	.58	.59	.04	10.48	.72	.19
	Slaveholders	-.28	-.21	.04	-7.44	.03	-.08
	Religion1	-.09	-.14	.02	-3.15	.02	-.06
	Religion2	.15	.09	.06	1.77	.01	.01
	Cotton Man.	-.00	-.04	.00	-1.23	-----	.00
	Wheat Constant	-.33 .25	-.04	.26	-2.04	-----	-.01

Note: Actual N = 339. For a note on methodology see Table 5.11.

TABLE 5.18.

THE INFLUENCE OF EXPLANATORY VARIABLES ON VOTING PATTERNS IN
THE 1860 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION IN THE UPPER SOUTH

Dependent Variable	Explanatory Variables	Reg. Coef.	Beta Coef.	Standard Errors Reg. Coef.	T Score	Cha. in R ²	Level of Imp.
Breckinridge [R ² =.65] σ ² =.09	Buchanan	.89	.78	.04	21.92	.61	.35
	Slaveholders	.17	.15	.04	3.74	.02	.04
	Religion1	-.07	.10	.02	1.71	.01	.04
	Cotton Man.	-.00	-.05	.00	-.91	-----	.00
	Religion2	.08	.05	.06	.72	-----	.01
	Wheat	-.07	-.04	.06	-1.14	-----	.01
	Constant	-.09					
Douglas [R ² =.12] σ ² =.06	Religion1	-.09	-.33	.02	-3.85	.08	-.05
	Cotton Man.	.00	.13	.00	2.42	.02	.00
	Religion2	-.10	-.14	.04	-1.47	.02	-.01
	Buchanan	.04	.09	.03	1.73	.01	.02
	Slaveholders	.02	.03	.02	.66	-----	.00
	Wheat	.01	.01	.04	-.19	-----	.00
	Constant	.09					
Bell [R ² =.85] σ ² =.05	Fillmore	.85	.90	.02	38.68	.81	.26
	Wheat	.17	.13	.03	3.29	.02	.02
	Slaveholders	.10	.11	.02	5.16	.01	.02
	Religion2	-.07	-.05	.04	-1.76	-----	-.01
	Cotton Man.	.00	.03	.00	.91	-----	.00
	Religion1	-.01	-.03	.01	-1.96	-----	-.01
	Constant	.05					
Not Voting 1860 [R ² =.67] σ ² =.08	Nonvoters '56	.77	.77	.03	16.95	.60	.25
	Slaveholders	-.26	-.26	.04	-7.59	.06	-.06
	Religion1	.04	.07	.02	2.07	-----	.02
	Wheat	-.11	-.07	.05	.03	-----	-.01
	Religion2	.09	.06	.06	.82	-----	.01
	Cotton Man.	-.00	-.03	.00	-.86	-----	.00
	Constant	.08					

Note: Actual N = 319. For a note on methodology see Table 5.11.

important than any of the social or economic variables in determining the vote for Bell. Also, counties which had large proportions of nonvoters in 1856 continued to have large proportions of nonvoters in 1860. Because of the unusual nature of the sources of strength for Douglas in the South, the indicators constructed here failed to effectively describe his constituency.⁷⁵

Evangelicals were perhaps more likely to support the Democratic party and slaveholders the opposition, but the voter's theological positions of voters and their economic status were not the determining factors in deciding who they would cast ballots for in the 1860 election. The two parties certainly represented different interests both economically and socially in the region. The vast majority of voters in the election of 1860 continued to support the candidate of their party or voted against their traditional opponents: former Whigs, solidly backed Bell; the Democrats, Breckinridge. The slightly different postures of Bell and Breckinridge on how best to protect southern rights reflected past political positions rather than any new formulation of policy. Even in the critical presidential election of 1860,

⁷⁵This analysis does not change when viewed at the state level. In every state of the confederate South previous political patterns were more important in determining the position of voters in subsequent elections. See the appropriate regression analyses in the state appendices.

southern voters continued for the most part, the same habitual voting patterns they had established a decade earlier.⁷⁶

⁷⁶Alexander, "The Dimensions of Voter Partisan Constancy," 109-113; Jeffrey, "The Second Party System," 392; Kruman, Parties and Politics, 123; and Bergeron, Antebellum Politics, 163, 164.

CHAPTER VI

SLAVEHOLDERS AND SOUTHERN DEMOCRATS:

PREEMPTIVE COUNTERREVOLUTION IN THE LOWER SOUTH

Following the news of Abraham Lincoln's election, Governor J. J. Pettus of Mississippi told the people of his state that they "must pay the penalty" and "must leave our fair land blighted, cursed with Black Republican politics and free Negro morals, to become a cesspool of vice, crime, and infamy."¹ Lincoln's victory for many southerners threatened a way of life that they were determined to preserve. During the two months following the November presidential balloting, the lower southern states held elections for delegates to secession conventions which, in turn, would decide ultimately if their states would remain in the Union.²

¹The Mississippi Free Trader quoted in Douglas P. Starr, "Secession Speeches of Four Deep South Governors Who Would Rather Fight Than Switch," Southern Speech Communication Journal, 38 (Winter 1972): 139-40.

²For interpretations of secession in the South see William Barney, The Road to Secession: A New Perspective on the Old South (New York, Washington, and London, 1972); Dwight L. Dumond, The Secession Movement, 1860-1861 (New York, 1931); Eric Foner, "The Causes of the Civil War," Civil War History, 20 (September 1974): 197-214; Peter D. Jermann, "The Reluctant Nation? The Question of Southern Nationalism and Secession, 1860-1861," Cithara, 21 (May 1982), 24-32; Peyton McCrary, Clark Miller, and Dale Baum, "Class and Party in the Secession Crisis: Voting Behavior in the Deep South, 1856-1861," Journal of Interdisciplinary History, 8 (Winter 1978), 442-44; James M. McPherson, Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era (New York and London, 1988); James Tice Moore, "Secession and the States: A Review Essay," Virginia Magazine

The secession convention balloting provides historians with a unique opportunity to study citizen voting behavior in crises elections where a ballot option was an alternative to open political rebellion. The absence of party labels in the secession elections made it possible for citizens in the cotton states to voice opinions transcending ties of traditional partisan loyalty.

Secession moved forward on a state-by-state basis rather than by regional action. Southern fire-eaters remembered the lessons of the Nashville convention in 1850 when the regional meeting produced a spirit of caution and eventual delay of secession proposals. Secession supporters this time were committed to immediate state action. One separationist noted that "delay is dangerous," because it was "the only policy our enemies have yet been able to suggest; and if secure its

of History and Biography, 94 (January 1986), 60-76; David L. Potter, The Impending Crisis, 1848-1861 (New York, 1976); Ralph A. Wooster, "An Analysis of the Membership of the Secession Conventions of the Lower South," Journal of Southern History, 24 (August 1958), 360-68. For state studies of secession in the lower South see William L. Barney, The Secessionist Impulse: Alabama and Mississippi in 1860 (Princeton, 1974); Robin E. Baker and Dale Baum, "The Texas Voter and the Crisis of the Union, 1859-1861," Journal of Southern History, 53 (August 1987), 395-420; Walter L. Buenger, Secession and the Union in Texas (Austin, 1984); Stephen A. Channing, Crisis of Fear: Secession of South Carolina (New York, 1970); Clarence P. Denman, The Secession Movement in Alabama (Montgomery, 1933); Michael P. Johnson, Toward a Patriarchal Republic: The Secession of Georgia (Baton Rouge and London, 1977); Percy Lee Rainwater, Mississippi: Storm Center of Secession, 1856-1861 (Baton Rouge, 1938); and J. Mills Thornton, III., Politics and Power in a Slave Society: Alabama, 1800-1860 (Baton Rouge and London, 1978).

adoption, their ultimate purpose [of defeating secession] will be accomplished."³ Capitalizing upon the shock, anger, and frustration that most southerners felt in the aftermath of Lincoln's election, secessionists in the cotton states seized the emotional initiative and proceeded to push their states out of the Union.⁴

Long the center of secessionist sentiment in the lower South, South Carolina acted first. The South Carolina legislature accurately read public opinion before the November presidential election and voted to remain in session until the results were known to enable it to act as quickly as possible in case of a Republican victory. After learning of Lincoln's political victory, the legislature ordered the election of delegates to a secessionist convention, setting December 17, 1860, as the date for the convention's assemblage. In the ensuing election of delegates, the secessionist candidates won an overwhelming victory. As militia units across the state stepped up their preparations for war, South Carolina convention members formalized what had already become a fait accompli by voting 169-0 to dissolve the existing bonds between their state and the

³From The Charleston Mercury, in Donald E. Reynolds, Editors Make War: Southern Newspapers in the Secession Crisis (Knoxville, 1970), 290. For a similar sentiment in this state see the Newberry Conservatist quoted in Reynolds, 142.

⁴Dwight L. Dumond, Southern Editorials on Secession (Gloucester, Ma., 1964), 331; and McPherson, Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era, 234-35; and Reynolds, Editors Make War, 141.

Union.⁵

The editors of The New Orleans Bee wrote that the example of South Carolina's secession "will prove more irresistibly contagious than ten thousand appeals from the public men of the South."⁶ Their analysis proved correct because South Carolina's bold step triggered immediate reactions in the rest of the lower South. During the first two months of 1861 each of the remaining states adopted a secession ordinance: the Mississippi convention acted first, followed by Florida, Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, and Texas. With the exception of Texas, the conventions did not submit their secession ordinances to the voters for ratification. Although some accused the members of the conventions of engaging in a secessionist conspiracy against the people, most convention officials felt voter ratification unnecessary since the delegates had made their positions clear to the public when they were elected. The delegates unquestionably reflected the sentiments of their constituents.⁷ The balloting for

⁵Channing, Crisis of Fear: Secession in South Carolina, 282-85; Clement Eaton, A History of the Old South: The Emergence of a Reluctant Nation (New York, 1975), 493-94; McPherson, Battle Cry of Freedom, 234-35; and Reynolds, Editors Make War, 147-48.

⁶The New Orleans Bee, December 22, 1860.

⁷Even editors of the New Orleans Bee suggested that unionists "if there are any left, they are few in numbers, and indisposed to give free vent to their opinions." The New Orleans Bee, November 28, 1860. McPherson, Battle Cry of Freedom, 235. Note: delegates to the Texas convention voted to submit the ordinance of secession to the people of Texas for ratification on February 23, 1861 and required that each

delegates was extremely close in some states.

"Cooperationist" delegates often represented citizens who ranged from conditional secessionists to die-hard unionists.

During the crisis months of "Secession Winter", partisan newspapers in the lower South maintained positions they had solidified in the presidential race. Although the supporters of John C. Breckinridge and John Bell agreed that slavery and the rights of the South must be protected, they continued to disagree in editorials on the best means of accomplishing this goal. Most "Southern Rights" Democrats exhibited an unwillingness to remain under a government controlled by "Black Republicans" and called for immediate secession. Breckinridge supporters in Georgia suggested that the cotton states stop all trade with the "negro-stealing States," "keep cool," and "keep their powder dry" in preparation for the inevitable conflict.⁸ Others called for immediate state action to leave the Union.⁹ Although lawfully elected, the Republicans threatened the "sacred rights of property," a

voter express his opinion viva voce. See Buenger, Secession and the Union in Texas; and Ernest William Winkler, ed., Journal of the Secession Convention of Texas, 1861 (Austin, 1912), 35-36.

⁸"Retaliatory Legislation," The Federal Union, November 20, 1860.

⁹"The Deed is Done----Disunion the Remedy," The Mississippian, November 9, 1860; "Alabama Baptist State Convention all for Secession," ibid., November 20, 1860; "The True Policy," and "What Will Georgia Do?", The Federal Union, November 27, 1860; "Secession a Conservative Remedy," The Floridian and Journal, November 24, 1860; and "Governor's Message," ibid., December 1, 1860.

right that "Southern Rights" Democrats claimed was worthy of the dissolution of the Union.¹⁰ Many "Southern Rights" Democrats had already taken a first step toward secession when they refused to support Stephen A. Douglas for president.

In the November election the Douglas and Bell forces had competed for the anti-Breckinridge vote in the cotton states. As the election for secession convention delegates approached, former Bell and Douglas men took the lead in working out compromises between conditional and unconditional Unionists which ended in coalitions of so-called "cooperationist" slates. Cooperationists recognized the same rights of property as the "Southern Rights" Democrats, but their proposed method of protecting this right was quite different. The cooperationists presented various arguments short of immediate secession. On one end of the spectrum were cooperative secessionists who hailed southern independence as much as immediate secessionists, but who argued that immediate secession should be postponed until all the southern states could act in concert and present the North with a united front.¹¹

Most cooperationists were "Ultimatists" and suggested that a convention of southern states meet and draw up a list

¹⁰"Co-operation," The Federal Union, January 29, 1861.

¹¹Barney, The Secessionist Impulse, 237-45; and Dumond, The Secession Movement, 122-23.

of demands for presentation to the incoming Lincoln administration.¹² One southern ultimatumist, William W. Pugh of Louisiana, suggested that the "whole South propose the conditions on which she is willing to remain in the Union and then there is no mistaking her wants."¹³ If the Lincoln administration failed to respond to the ultimatum then a united South would leave the Union.

There were cooperationists who were conditional unionists and argued that the best position for the South was to continue to secure her rights under the Constitution.¹⁴ Since the Constitution recognized and protected slavery, there was no need for the dissolution of the Union, even under a "Black Republican" government, as long as the law was enforced.¹⁵ Editors of the New Orleans Bee perhaps said it best when they asserted that they would use "every effort and means to which, under the Constitution and laws, as honorable

¹²McPherson, Battle Cry For Freedom, 237.

¹³William Whitnell Hill Pugh to his sister, December 1860, The William Whitnell Hill Pugh Papers, The University of Texas.

¹⁴"B. H. Hill's Speech", and "Extremists", The Southern Recorder, November 27, 1860; "To the Co-operation Delegates of the 3rd Congressional District," ibid., January 18, 1861; "Co-operation," The New Orleans Bee, December 24, 1860; and "Idle Expectations", ibid., December 24, 1860.

¹⁵"B. H. Hill's Speech," The Southern Recorder, November 27, 1860; "B. H. Hill's Letter of Acceptance," ibid., January 8, 1861.

men, we can resist."¹⁶ Finally, there were a handful of unconditional Unionists who saw no reason to dissolve ties to the Union.

Thus, in order to assess the political nature of secession convention balloting in this period in the lower South, regression estimates of individual voting behavior between the 1856 and 1860 presidential election and the secession referenda were generated from county election returns. Although party lines were absent in the 1861 secession convention elections and referenda, the intellectual foundations for cooperationist arguments were rooted in the anti-Breckinridge forces in the cotton states.¹⁷ Ideally, estimates could be generated for all the states of the lower South, but the returns for the Florida convention delegate elections do not exist or have not been located. In addition, Texas presents two problems in a study of the political basis of the secession referenda. Douglas and Bell supporters combined forces in a fusion ticket in the 1860 election in attempt to defeat Breckinridge, therefore making it impossible to differentiate between the two political groups. Second, Texas was the only state in the

¹⁶"The Evil and the Remedy," The New Orleans Bee, November 10, 1860.

¹⁷McCrary et al., "Class and Party," 442-44; and Lionel Crocker, "The Campaign of Stephen A. Douglas in the South, 1860," in J. Jeffrey Auer, ed., Antislavery and Disunion, 1858-1861: Studies in the Rhetoric of Compromise and Conflict (Gloucester, Ma., 1968), 263-64.

lower South where secession was subjected to a popular referendum. The balloting, however, occurred much later than the secession convention elections elsewhere in the lower South and took place after the formation of the Confederacy-- a development which tended to depress the anti-secessionist vote and render the meaning of "cooperationist" meaningless.

Prior to Lincoln's election in 1860 partisan lines had remained relatively unbroken throughout the cotton states (see Table 2.6). Each party enjoyed the support of an impressive block of partisan supporters in late antebellum presidential elections.¹⁸ The 1860 presidential election and the subsequent split in the Democratic party between Douglas and Breckinridge initiated a substantial shift in voter preferences in the region (see Tables 5.1-5.3). Supporters of Douglas and Breckinridge in the lower South voiced different views in the secession convention and referendum elections because voters questioned and registered their varying commitment to the Union (see Table 6.1). Of the Democratic voters who supported Buchanan and subsequently supported Breckinridge, only about sixty-four percent voted for delegates pledged to immediate secession. Approximately thirteen percent of the former Buchanan-Breckinridge men opted for cooperationist slates, while the remaining twenty-

¹⁸Thomas B. Alexander, "The Dimensions of Voter Partisan Constancy in Presidential Elections from 1840 to 1860," in Stephen E. Maizlish and John J. Krishna, eds., Essays on American Antebellum Politics, 1840-1860 (Arlington, Tx., 1982), 71.

TABLE 6.1.

ESTIMATED RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN VOTING ON THE ORDINANCE OF SECESSION
AND PRIOR VOTING IN THE 1856 AND 1860 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS
LOWER SOUTH

Voter Group	Estimated Percentage of 1861 Electorate	Percentage For Secession	Percentage Against Secession	Percentage Not Voting
Buchanan and Breckinridge	31%	64% ^A	13% ^A	23%
Buchanan and Opposition	5%	20%	60%	20%
Buchanan and Not Vot. 60	0%	0%	0%	0%
Fillmore and Breckinridge	0%	0%	0%	0%
Fillmore and Opposition	24%	30%	66%	4%
Fillmore and Not Vot. 60	1%	0%	0%	100%
Not Vot. 56 Breckinridge	8%	63%	0%	37%
Not Vot. 56 Opposition	4%	0%	0%	100%
Not Vot. 56 Not Vot. 60	28%	0%	0%	100%
All Voters	100%	32%	23%	45%

Note: The voting returns were analyzed by multiple "ecological" regression, taking the percentages of choices of potentially eligible voters in the secession elections (i.e., "for secession," "against secession," and not voting) as the dependent variables. The independent variables, analyzed separately for each choice, were: (1) the proportions of the electorate voting for Buchanan, Fillmore, Breckinridge, and Opposition (i.e., vote for Douglas and Bell), and (2) all first-order interactions among these variables. To avoid multicollinearity, the 1856 and the 1860 nonvoting percentages were not used. For instance, to estimate the proportion of Buchanan/Breckinridge voters who favored secession, the intercept of the equation for the secessionists was added to the slopes for "proportion voting for Buchanan in 1856," "proportion voting for Breckinridge in 1860," and the appropriate interaction. This sum estimated the proportion secessionists in 1861 for a hypothetical county composed solely of Runnels and Breckinridge voters: in other words, the proportion of such voters favoring secession. All variables used in the regression equations were weighted by the adult white male population.

TABLE 6.1 (CONTINUED)

Source: The secession convention election returns Alabama, Louisiana, and Mississippi are taken from the data archives in the Department of History at Texas A&M University. It is the same data gathered by McCrary et al. for "Class and Party." The Secession referendum returns for Texas are taken from Joe T. Timmons, "The Referendum in Texas on the Ordinance of Secession, February 23, 1861: The Vote," East Texas Historical Journal, 11 (Fall 1973), 12-28. For a note on the secession returns see Robin E. Baker and Dale Baum, "The Texas Voter and the Crisis of the Union, 1859-1861," Journal of Southern History, 53 (August 1987), 401. The Secession convention returns for Georgia were taken from Michael P. Johnson, "A New Look at the Popular Vote for Delegates to the Georgia Secession Convention," Georgia Historical Quarterly, 56 (Summer 1972), 259-275.

three percent chose to sit out the secession balloting altogether. Former 1856 Democrats who voted against Breckinridge in 1860, clearly favored cooperation as the best option for the states of the lower South. Following the lead of Douglas, the national Democrats in the South refused to give their support to the disunionists.¹⁹ The crack in the southern Democratic party that emerged in 1860 began to widen as voters divided over the most appropriate form of action for the cotton states.

The Know-Nothings and Constitutional Unionists were equally in disarray in 1861. Approximately two-thirds of the Millard Fillmore men who subsequently voted for John Bell or Douglas cast ballots for anti-secessionist options in the early months of 1861. Former Fillmore-Opposition men and Buchanan-anti-Breckinridge men clearly formed the base for the cooperation and anti-secession vote in the cotton states. Nevertheless, a substantial number of former Fillmore-Opposition men, presumably many slaveholders, supported the immediate secessionist cause. Although the dominant majority of consistent partisans in the lower South exhibited continued support for divergent causes, they found the

¹⁹Douglas noted in a stump speech at Norfolk, Virginia on August 25, 1860, that he desired "no man to vote for me, unless he hopes and desires to see the Union maintained and preserved intact." Quoted in Crocker, "The Campaign of Stephen A. Douglas," 265. It is apparent from the estimates that most of the Douglas Democrats took his statements to heart when they cast ballots in the secession elections.

choices much more difficult in the secession elections.²⁰

Perhaps most importantly, former Fillmore-Opposition supporters retained a keen interest in the secession campaigns. In the cotton states only about four percent of the former Fillmore-Opposition men remained on the sidelines during the secession balloting. One prominent historian has suggested that the majority of southerners actually opposed immediate separation from the Union but that true Union support was masked because Union supporters in the region were kept away from the polls. The estimates presented here suggest exactly the opposite.²¹ More than one out of every five of the former Buchanan-Breckinridge failed to cast ballots in the secession elections--a rate at least five times greater than their anti-Democratic opponents. The dominant sentiment among cotton state voters in the early days of 1861 was for immediate secession.²² Many former active voters apparently felt in the months following the

²⁰McCrary, Miller, Baum, "Class and Party," 429-457. The analysis presented here is similar to that detailed by McCrary and his students. There are, however, several significant differences: they treated Texas as a separate entity; the referendum votes for Georgia were not readily available so they omitted that state from the analysis; they failed to account for the number of possible males who entered the electorate between 1856 to 1861; and they did not analyze the secession elections with multidimensional contingency tables. The tables presented here, therefore, represent a significant addendum to the McCrary study.

²¹ David M. Potter, Lincoln and His Party in the Secession Crisis (New Haven, 1942), 213-17.

²²McPherson, Battle Cry of Freedom, 235.

election of Lincoln that their votes in the secession elections were unimportant because many considered secession a fait accompli in the cotton states.²³

In addition, the immediate secessionists appeared to be much more successful at drawing young voters into their camp (see Table 6.2). New voters who entered the electorate between 1856 and 1861 cast ballots for secession or did not vote. The estimates suggest that almost one out every two entering voters cast ballots for secession. The separationists also drew support from Breckinridge men who for one reason or another had not voted for president in 1856 (see Table 6.1). The notion that Breckinridge Democrats appealed to youthful southerners on the "make" who still wanted the institution of slavery preserved so they would have an opportunity to move into the slaveholding class is nominally supported by the estimates of voting presented here.²⁴ Secessionist appeals to white supremacy and the extension of slavery convinced new voters in the cotton states that the separationists could best preserve the institutions and the way of life in the South.²⁵

Excluding Texas from the analysis in order to uncover

²³Ralph A. Wooster, Secession Conventions of the South (Princeton, 1962), 263-66. See also "The Deed is Done-- Disunion the Remedy," The Mississippian, November 9, 1860; "Remarkable Unanimity," ibid., November 9, 1860; and "The State Convention," The Federal Union, January 8, 1861.

²⁴Barney, The Road to Secession, 135-36.

²⁵McPherson, Battle Cry of Freedom, 243-45.

TABLE 6.2.

ESTIMATED RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN THE 1856 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION
AND SUBSEQUENT VOTING IN THE 1861 SECESSION ELECTIONS IN THE
LOWER SOUTH (with Texas)

	1856-1861				Percent of Electorate
	Dem. 1856	Amer. 1856	Non Voters	Entering Voters	
Secession	18	8	0	6	32
Opposition	13	8	2	0	23
Not Voting 1861	5	9	26	6	45
All Voters	36	25	28	12	100

Note: Actual N = 308.

estimates of the subsequent behavior of Bell and Douglas camps, reveals several trends that were masked when the two opposition political groups were joined together (see Table 6.3). Almost all of the Douglas Democrats in the four states under study remained steadfast in support of the Union. Only thirteen percent of the Douglas men subsequently cast ballots for secession. Douglas supporters also remained acutely interested in the outcome of the secession elections. The estimates suggest that nearly all of the Douglas voters came to the polls in the special elections.

In contrast, Bell voters were decisively split in the secession elections, with about one-third of them casting ballots for cooperationists. Another nineteen percent of them "switched" to secession, while approximately forty-four percent chose not to cast ballots. Indeed, Bell supporters alone accounted for only forty-three percent of the ballots cast for cooperation in Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, and Louisiana. In addition, defections among southern Democrats to cooperationists were much greater in the cotton states when Texas is removed from the analysis. Twenty-one percent of Breckinridge voters subsequently voted against immediate secession. Thus the estimates suggest that former Democrats accounted for well over half of the votes cast for the cooperation in the secession elections. The electorate in the other four states of the lower South exhibited more

TABLE 6.3.

ESTIMATED RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN THE 1860 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION
AND SUBSEQUENT VOTING IN THE 1861 SECESSION ELECTIONS IN THE
LOWER SOUTH (without Texas)

	1860-1861				Percent Of Electorate
	So. Dem. 1860	Dem. 1860	Cons. Union	Non Voters	
Secession	22	1	5	0	28
Opposition	8	7	10	0	23
Not Voting 1861	9	0	12	27	49
All Voters	38	8	27	27	100

Note: Actual N = 275.

volatility without Texas included in the analysis.²⁶

The convention elections/referenda in Georgia and Texas show significant trends that differ from the region as a whole (see Table 6.4). The balloting in Georgia was the most competitive of any of the states in the lower South. Approximately two-thirds of the state's electorate participated in the secession convention balloting.²⁷ Yet party members in Georgia exhibited as much indecision as anywhere in the lower South. Estimates suggest that fifteen percent of the Breckinridge supporters "defected" to the cooperationist camp while another twenty-three percent of them abstained. The Bell camp experienced even more "defections" as twenty-one percent of them moved into the secession camp and twenty-four percent sat out the election. Douglas Democrats appear to have been the most divided: their votes were split almost equally throughout the range of voter choices. In addition, significant numbers of previous nonvoters entered the electorate to vote in the secession convention election. In spite of having sat out of the most

²⁶Compare with the findings presented in McCrary et al., "Class and Party," 442-44; Lipset, Political Man, 377; and Jerry C. Oldshue, "A Study of the Influence of Economic, Social, and Partisan Characteristics on Secession Sentiment in the South, 1860-1861: A Multiple and Partial Correlation Analysis Employing the County as the Unit of Observation." (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, The University of Alabama, 1975), 185.

²⁷Michael P. Johnson, Toward a Patriarchal Republic, 63. Johnson suggests that Georgians were equally divided over the question of secession. See also Ulrich B. Phillips, Georgia and State Rights (Macon, 1984), 201-09.

TABLE 6.4.

ESTIMATED RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN THE 1860 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION
AND SUBSEQUENT VOTING IN THE 1861 SECESSION ELECTIONS IN
GEORGIA

	1860-1861				Percent Of Electorate
	So. Dem. 1860	Dem. 1860	Cons. Union	Non Voters	
Secession	23	2	7	1	33
Opposition	6	3	19	4	31
Not Voting 1861	9	4	8	14	35
All Voters	39	9	33	19	100

Note: Actual N = 131.

important presidential election in their lifetime, about ten percent of the cooperationist strength in the state came from 1860 nonvoters. Georgia secessionist candidates were unable to draw much strength from previous nonvoters. Unlike most of the other cotton states, Union sentiment had remained strong in Georgia reflected the strength of the anti-Breckinridge forces in 1860. Bell and Douglas together garnered forty-two percent of the total vote in 1860 in Georgia or three percent more than Breckinridge. Apparently anti-secessionist forces were able to convince significant numbers of nonvoters of the necessity of at least cooperative action among the cotton states. Almost equally divided on the issue of immediate separation in January of 1861, Georgians eschewing former partisan affiliation, engaged in fierce debates concerning their state's status in the Union.²⁸

²⁸For the Whig viewpoint see, "The Speech of A. H. Stephens given in the Georgia House of Representatives," The Southern Recorder, "B. H. Hill's Speech", ibid., November 27, 1860; "Extremists," ibid., November 27, 1860; "Resistance," ibid., December 4, 1860; "B. H. Hill's Letter of Acceptance," ibid., January 8, 1861; "The Hon. T. Hardeman to the Co-operation Delegates of the 3rd Congressional District," ibid., January 18, 1861. For the Democratic cause see "Retaliatory Legislation," The Federal Union, November 20, 1860; "The True Policy," ibid., November 27, 1860; "What Will Georgia Do?", ibid., November 27, 1860; "The State Convention," ibid., January 8, 1861; and "Co-operation," ibid., January 29, 1861. For a discussion of the secession issue in Georgia see Johnson who refers to it as a "paralyzing indecision," Toward a Patriarchal Republic, 63. Also see N. B. Beck, "The Secession Debate in Georgia, November, 1860-January, 1861," in Auer, Antislavery and Disunion, 331-359.

Political behavior in Texas exhibited a surprising degree of partisan stability between the 1860 presidential election and the 1861 secession referendum, when the Democratic party is regarded, as it ought to be, as "the primary creator" of the Texas secessionist movement (see Table 6.5).²⁹ Breckinridge supporters either turned out and voted for secession or did not vote at all. Virtually all of those who cast their vote for Fusion in 1860 returned ballots for the Union in 1861.³⁰ Texas voters were apparently affected by the sensational reports of slave revolts and abolitionist plots that grew out of costly fires which occurred almost simultaneously in East Texas in the summer of 1860. Charles R. Pryor, pro-Breckinridge editor of the Dallas Herald, spread the alarm of abolitionist plots in a series of letters to other editors of secessionist persuasions in the early fall of 1860. Hysteria spread in the state as vigilance committees formed to prevent the outbreak of further "violence."³¹ The anticipated danger of slave revolts and abolitionist infiltration had apparently forced the polarization of Texas partisans in the fall of 1860, months

²⁹Buenger, Secession and the Union in Texas, 43-44. (quoted phrase on p.44).

³⁰In Texas the Democrats more than doubled the opposition in every presidential election beginning with 1848. The anti-Democratic opposition in Texas obtained 23 percent of the total vote in 1856 for their highest vote total of the period.

³¹Reynolds, Editors Make War, 97-100.

TABLE 6.5.

ESTIMATED RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN THE 1860 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION
AND SUBSEQUENT VOTING IN THE 1861 SECESSION ELECTIONS IN
TEXAS

1860-1861

	So. Dem. 1860	Cons. Union	Non Voters	Percent Of Electorate
Secession	43	0	2	45
Opposition	0	15	0	15
Not Voting 1861	4	0	36	40
All Voters	47	15	38	100

Note: Actual N = 116.

before the secession referendum.³²

The secession elections in the lower South marked a significant change in partisan voting patterns. Voters who had continually come to the polls and vacuously cast ballots for their party's presidential candidates during the period 1840 to 1860 now questioned the validity of the Union or the wisdom of secession during the crises winter months of 1860-1861 and redefined their political allegiances.³³ While most voting cotton state southerners accepted the positive good of slavery, they disagreed as to how the institution could best be protected. To vote for the dissolution of the Union was

³²The Democratic press in San Antonio, Alamo Express, suggested that "The only question before the people of Texas is secession, or no secession?" November 5, 1860. The Texas electorate exhibits a great deal more volatility when the 1859 gubernatorial election is included in the analysis. There was a significantly large percentage of the antisecessionist vote cast by men who had not voted either in the 1859 gubernatorial or in the 1860 presidential election. For a discussion of this voter phenomena see Baker and Baum, "The Texas Voter, 395-420; and Buenger, Secession and the Union in Texas, 36-38.

³³John V. Mering suggests in several articles that political affiliation had little or nothing to do with union and secession sentiment in the South. He discounts these secession elections as unrepresentative of political sentiment in the region as few voters turned out to voice their opinions and suggests that there was little difference between secessionists and cooperationists. See Mering, "The Slave-State Constitutional Unionists and the Politics of Consensus," Journal of Southern History, 43 (August 1977), 395-400; idem, "Persistent Whiggery in the Confederate South: A Reconsideration," South Atlantic Quarterly, 69 (Winter 1970), 124-43; and idem, "Allies or Opponents? The Douglas Democrats and the Constitutional Unionists," Southern Studies, 23 (Winter 1984), 376-85. For a discussion more in accord with that presented here see McCrary et al., "Class and Party," 429-57.

not an easy choice for many southerners to make.³⁴ The lower South, led by the pro-Breckinridge forces, chose to accept a "pre-emptive" secessionist counterrevolution to preserve slavery and the status quo in the plantation South by sealing off the South from a Northern president bent on inflicting some future harm to southern interests. As one southerner noted the "Black Republicans" are "obtaining possession of the federal government of the Union to destroy . . . the laws of slavery" and with it the social institutions of the South.³⁵ For many southerners the forming of a new nation through a "pre-emptive" secessionist strike, provided the only means of preserving their status quo.

To what extent did social class and religious beliefs affect voters when they cast their ballots in the crucial secession elections? Were religious factors important in molding the opinion of cotton state southerners? The denominational schisms that had ruptured the three major evangelical churches in the South, Baptists, Methodists, and Presbyterians, heightened tensions between the slave and

³⁴Benjamin Hill of Georgia stated at the time his state was choosing to leave the Union that "I shall dissolve the Union as I would a benefactor in sorrow of heart. For, after all, the Union is not the author of our grievances. . . ." The Southern Recorder, January 8, 1861.

³⁵George Winchester to William Lewis Sharkey, undated letter, William Lewis Sharkey Papers, Natchez Trace Collection, The University of Texas. For the general interpretation of secession as a pre-emptive counterrevolution see McPherson, Battle Cry of Freedom, 243-55.

nonslaveholding regions of the country in the years preceding the Civil War.³⁶ The unwillingness on the leadership level to continue an intra-organizational dialogue furthered the alienation of North and South until sectional differences became acute.³⁷ Nevertheless, prior to the secession elections Baptists, Methodists, and Presbyterians had refused to endorse candidates from the pulpit and criticized brethren who did.³⁸ The proper place of the Church was in converting souls for the kingdom of God.³⁹

³⁶The Cumberland Presbyterians did not rupture prior to the Civil War. One Methodist minister in Kentucky noted of his cotton state brethren that he wanted to "let them hang until the rope rots, and let their dismembered bones fall so deep into the earth that God Almighty can't find them on the day of resurrection." Certainly a far cry from love thy neighbor as thyself. Quoted in Clarence C. Goen, "Broken Churches, Broken Nation: Regional Religion and North-South Alienation in Antebellum America," Church History, 52 (March 1983), 34.

³⁷Goen, "Broken Churches," 30, 34; W. Harrison Daniel, "Protestant Clergy and Union Sentiment in the Confederacy," Tennessee Historical Quarterly, 23 (September 1964), 284; idem, "Southern Protestantism and Secession," The Historian, 29 (May 1967), 391-94; Wesley Norton, "Religious Newspapers in Antebellum Texas," Southwestern Historical Quarterly, 79 (October 1975), 159, 164; and Roger Hawley Crook, "The Ethical Emphases of the Editors of Baptist Journals Published in the Southeastern Region of the United States up to 1865," (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1947), 263.

³⁸"A Pious Overseer," The New Orleans Christian Advocate, November 8, 1856; "Electioneering Folly," The Southwestern Baptist, November 15, 1860; and "Postscript," ibid., November 15, 1860.

³⁹John B. Boles, "Evangelical Protestantism in the Old South: From Religious Dissent to Cultural Dominance," in Charles Reagan Wilson, ed., Religion in the South (Jackson, Ms., 1985), 27.

Shortly after the election of Lincoln, Alabama Baptists gathered for their thirty-eighth annual session to discuss matters concerning the conduct of church affairs. On the last day of the convention they noted that as a religious body they had felt compelled to remain "aloof" from political parties and candidates, but the election of Lincoln now forced their hand. The leaders of the Alabama convention issued the following statement: "From the administration of the Federal Government, as things are--especially with reference to our peculiar property recognized by the Constitution--we can no longer hope for justice, protection, or safety."⁴⁰ Therefore, they chose to recognize and unanimously support Alabama's right to immediately withdraw from the Union.⁴¹ Perceiving their economic interests in slavery threatened, and thus their entire culture, Alabama Baptists broke their unwritten policy of separation of religion and politics and endorsed a specific action on behalf of their state. The Florida Baptist Convention followed almost immediately in the path laid by their Alabama

⁴⁰Minutes of the Thirty-Eighth Annual Session of the Alabama Baptist State Convention (Tuskegee, Ala., 1860), 11.

⁴¹In addition to the minutes of the convention which were printed, the story of the Alabama Convention's action was carried by prominent state papers in the cotton states. See "The Alabama Baptist on the Side of the South," The Federal Union, November 20, 1860; and "Alabama Baptist State Convention all for Secession," The Mississippian, November 20, 1860.

brethren.⁴²

The religious press and periodicals of the lower South continued to advise their congregants on the proper decisions to make during the crisis period following the November presidential election. For many religious editors Lincoln's election forced the slaveholding states to choose separation from and dissolution of the Union. The Methodist newspaper in New Orleans suggested that no true "Southern man has ever become willing to bow the neck in submission to the fanatical majority."⁴³ The Southwestern Baptist agreed, noting that Lincoln was "not the President of the South" and they had "no hand in nominating him, nor in his election, and will leave him to preside over the fanatical minions who elected him."⁴⁴ The evangelical southern Christian leadership showed a keen interest in the outcome of the secession convention elections, and many believed that God had foreordained the separation of the two regions.⁴⁵ Benjamin M. Palmer, pastor

⁴²John Lee Eighmy, Churches in Cultural Captivity: A History of the Social Attitudes of Southern Baptists (Knoxville, 1972), 23.

⁴³"The Southern Movement," The New Orleans Christian Advocate, November 21, 1860. See also "Special Correspondence," the Louisiana Baptist, January 10, 1861; "Postscript," The Southwestern Baptist, November 15, 1860; and "The Great Political Crisis," ibid., November 29, 1860.

⁴⁴"Needless Advice," The Southwestern Baptist, November 22, 1860.

⁴⁵"No God in the Constitution," The Christian Index, January 23, 1861; and "The Crisis, and the duty of Christians," ibid., January 30, 1861.

of the First Presbyterian Church in New Orleans, noted that the division of the American people came as no surprise as "it has roots deep down in the different nationalities, of which our eclectic population is composed."⁴⁶

Yet the reasons behind their desires for secession were perhaps as much economic as theological. Newspaper editorials continued to suggest that they were unwilling to place their particular species of property in peril. The system of slavery, including the slaves's barter and sale, they argued, was an institution ordained by God and the destruction of this system of social and economic relationships would bring an end to a culture dominated by southern whites.⁴⁷ The commitment of these evangelical groups to the South and its institutions was reflected in the extreme as some leaders called for the formation of vigilance committees to insure that Union sentiment was completely

⁴⁶From the pamphlet, National Responsibility Before God: A Discourse, Delivered on the Day of Fasting, Humiliation and Prayer, Appointed by the President of the Confederate States of America, June 13, 1861 (New Orleans, 1861), 26-27, Southern Pamphlet Collection, The Natchez Trace Collection, The University of Texas.

⁴⁷"The Great Political Crisis," The Southwestern Baptist, November 29, 1860; "The Great Political Crisis: Loss and Gain," ibid., December 13, 1860; "The Crisis, and the duty of Christians, The Christian Index, January 30, 1861; "The Crisis," The Texas Christian Advocate, November 15, 1860; "Note on the Crisis," ibid., December 13, 1860; and "The Raid of John Brown, and the Progress of Abolition," The Southern Presbyterian Review, 12 (January 1860), 797, 811.

crushed in the cotton states.⁴⁸

Were the opinions of the leaders of the evangelical groups in the South necessarily those of their parishioners? Apparently not (see Table 6.6). The individual estimates of religious affiliation and voting in the secession referenda reveals little polarization among the evangelical voters. Although Baptists, Methodists, and Presbyterians accounted for almost all of the votes cast for secession, the estimates suggest that only fifty percent of each group voted for secessionist positions. Substantial numbers of Baptists (thirty-six percent) and Methodists (twenty-nine percent) cast ballots opposing immediate action on separation from the Union. In contrast to the 1860 presidential election in which almost all the evangelicals went to the polls, these same groups experienced significant declines in voter turnout in the secession elections. In spite of the fact that the vocal leaders of the evangelicals counseled immediate action against Lincoln, there was significant support for the Union among these parishioners and among other evangelicals who, convinced of a secessionist victory, perhaps found little reason to come to the polls.

The moderate nature of the evangelical vote in the cotton states is even more apparent when Texas is excluded from the

⁴⁸"What is Before Us--Duty of Southern Men," The Christian Index, April 24, 1861; and "The Circular of the Peace Society," The Texas Christian Advocate, February 21, 1861.

TABLE 6.6

ESTIMATED RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION
AND VOTING IN THE 1861 SECESSION REFERENDUM
LOWER SOUTH (With Texas)

Denomination	Percent for Secession	Percent Against Secession	Percent Not Voting
Nonchurchgoers	0	0	100
Catholic	0	0	100
Episcopalian	0	0	100
Lutheran	0	0	100
Disciples of Christ	100	0	0
Baptist	48	36	16
Methodist	54	29	17
Presbyterian	50	13	37
All Other Churches	50	0	100
All Voters	32	23	45

Note: Actual N = 354. The use of church seating accommodations is, admittedly, a crude measure of the percentage of adult white males who were formally affiliated with a specific church. Catholics, moreover, are underrepresented by just counting "seats." Catholic masses probably served three or four groups of parishioners in the same church building, whereas there was relatively less duplication among Protestant denominations. Systematic undercounting of Catholics, however, would make no difference in the above estimates from what they would be if, for example, Catholic seats were doubled or tripled and all other church seatings were left unchanged. Note that because of the very small number of Disciples of Christ congregants in the lower South it was difficult to obtain an accurate statistical voting estimate for the group.

The estimates of the political affiliation of religious congregants in the lower and upper South were analyzed by multiple "ecological" regression, taking the percentage of religious church seating accommodations as the dependent variables. The independent variables, analyzed separately for each choice, were the proportions of the electorate voting for Douglas, Bell or Opposition, and Breckinridge. To avoid multicollinearity, the 1860 nonvoting percentages were not used. The estimates presented above are individual voting choices derived from aggregate data. All variables used in the regression equations were weighted by the adult white male population.

TABLE 6.7.

ESTIMATED RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION
AND VOTING IN THE 1861 SECESSION REFERENDUM
LOWER SOUTH (Without Texas)

Denomination	Percent for Secession	Percent Against Secession	Percent Not Voting
Nonchurchgoers	0	9	91
Catholic	0	0	100
Episcopalian	33	0	66
Lutheran	0	0	100
Disciples of Christ	0	100	0
Baptist	39	29	32
Methodist	33	33	33
Presbyterian	38	24	38
All Other Churches	0	0	100
All Voters	28	23	49

Note: Actual N = 354. For a note on methodology see Table 6.6.

analysis (see Table 6.7). The support for secession among the Baptists, Methodists, and Presbyterians in the other four states of the lower South was less than forty percent in each group.⁴⁹ Texas was again the only state in the region where the evangelical vote was polarized for secession (see Table 6.8). The estimates suggest that all the Texas Baptist and Methodists and almost ninety percent of the state's Presbyterians in the state supported action for immediate separation. This was a reflection of the nature of politics in Texas as well as the acknowledged separation of the state into two distinct economic regions, one reflecting the plantation system and the lower South and the other the wheat-growing farmers of Tennessee and Kentucky. The religious polarization in voting in Texas, however, was an anomaly in the lower South.⁵⁰ Evangelicals in this state reflected the peculiar social and economic sentiments of their particular areas.

The polarization among religious groups in the South occurred among the numerically smaller faiths which included

⁴⁹William L. Barney, The Secessionist Impulse, 223-24; Rainwater, Mississippi, 166; and Daniel, "Southern Protestantism," 408. Each of these historians suggests that opinion among evangelicals in the lower South was in favor of secession, although Daniel does qualify his analysis by suggesting that the religious groups were consistently behind their political brothers in the movement for secession. The estimates presented here, although admittedly rough, present a more moderate picture of southern evangelicals which have too often been viewed just through the eyes of clerical and lay leaders.

⁵⁰For an explanation of Texas religious patterns see Baker and Baum, "The Texas Voter," 412-17.

TABLE 6.8.

ESTIMATED RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION
AND VOTING IN THE 1861 SECESSION REFERENDUM
TEXAS

Denomination	Percent for Secession	Percent Against Secession	Percent Not Voting
Nonchurchgoers	34	23	42
Catholic	2-35	0	65-98
Episcopalian	35	11	53
Lutheran	0	81-100	0-19
Disciples of Christ	0	66-71	29-34
Baptist	51	6	43
Methodist	52	7	41
Presbyterian	48	12	40
All Other Churches	92-100	0	0-8
All Voters	45	15	40

Note: Actual N = 95. For a note on methodology see Table 6.6.

the Episcopalians, Lutherans, Catholics, as well as the unchurched. The Lutherans and Catholics concentrated their efforts in religious instruction and social aid among the foreign-born immigrants new to the region. Dominated by church organizations which remained unified before the war, Lutherans and Catholics tried to avoid as much as possible the issue of slavery and secession. This was reflected politically as their parishioners chose to sit out the balloting in the secession elections.⁵¹ Episcopal churches were primarily located in the few metropolitan areas of the lower South. In the midst of the secession crisis, the Episcopal bishop of the Diocese of Texas pleaded for moderation in the "perilous" times that loomed ahead and noted that the true Christian mission must be "a peaceful and highly exalted one."⁵² In general the Protestant Episcopal church reflected the concerns of its wealthy, urban parishioners throughout the South when even in the height of the crisis their ministers concentrated on more practical

⁵¹Carlos E. Castaneda, Our Catholic Heritage in Texas, 1519-1936 (7 vols.: Austin, 1936-1958), 7, 216-18; Anthony B. Lalli and Thomas H. O'Conner, "Roman Views on the American Civil War," Catholic Historical Review, 57 (April 1971), 21-41; Roger Baudier, The Catholic Church in Louisiana (New Orleans, 1939), 425-26; Thomas T. McAvoy, "The Formation of the Catholic Minority in the United States, 1820-1860," in John M. Mulder and John F. Wilson, eds., Religion in American History: Interpretative Essays (Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1978), 254-69; and L. Richard Bradley, "The Lutheran Church and Slavery," Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly, 44 (February 1971), 32-41.

⁵²Alexander Gregg, Dallas Herald, January 23, 1861.

matters rather than the political questions of the day.⁵³

The Disciples of Christ congregants were the only one of the minor religions groups to remain politically active in the secession elections, although they accounted for only one percent of the church seating accommodations in the lower South. It is most likely that their political behavior reflected the particular pattern of slaveholding within each congregation.⁵⁴ Religious groups no matter what their theological persuasion tended to mirror the patterns of social and economic conditions of their congregants.⁵⁵ The unchurched of the lower South sat out the secession balloting. In a culture dominated by church organizations of one type or another, nonchurchgoers represented an anti-community group that avoided both political and social contact. Only in Texas, with a spattering of churches in its vast frontier, did nonchurchgoers participate in any significant numbers in the secession referendum.

The most striking change in political behavior in the lower South between the presidential election in 1860 and the

⁵³Leonard I. Sweet, "The Reaction of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Virginia to the Secession Crisis: October 1859 to May, 1861," Historical Magazine of the Protestant Episcopal Church, 41 (June 1972), 149.

⁵⁴David T. Bailey, Shadow on the Church: Southwestern Evangelical Religion and the Issue of Slavery, 1783-1860 (Ithaca, N.Y., and London, 1985), 171-77.

⁵⁵Elizabeth Fox-Genovese and Eugene D. Genovese, "The Old South Considered as a Religious Society," National Humanities Center Newsletter, 6 (Summer 1985), 1-6.

subsequent secession elections occurred among the slaveholding classes (see Tables 6.9 and 6.10). In 1860 in the cotton states, slaveholders accounted for about one-half of the total vote cast for Bell and Douglas with seventy percent of slaveholders who owned 10 or more slaves casting ballots for either of the two men (see Tables 5.8 and 5.9). Slaveholders also turned out to vote at rates much higher than nonslaveholders during that critical presidential election as less than four percent of the slaveholding class sat out the balloting. In the secession referenda the trend was reversed (see Table 6.9). The slaveholding classes became a driving force behind the secession movement, as approximately one-half of the votes cast for separation came from slaveholders. In contrast to the presidential contest, six out of every ten slaveholders who owned more than ten slaves voted for the secessionist cause and only one in ten remained in the opposition camp. Nonslaveholders cast more than seventy-eight percent of all the ballots obtained by the opponents of secession.⁵⁶ In addition, the slaveholding

⁵⁶This trend is even more apparent when Texas is excluded from the analysis (see Table 6.10). In the other four cotton states the slaveholding classes cast 64 percent of the votes for secession and 80 percent of the slaveholders owning more than 10 slaves voted separation. This data suggests a different picture of secession support in the lower South than that suggested by Ralph Wooster in his study of the secession conventions of the lower South. Wooster showed that the leadership cooperation forces in Mississippi and Louisiana came from the planter class. Ralph A. Wooster, "An Analysis of the Membership of the Secession Conventions of the Lower South," Journal of Southern History, 24 (August 1958), 368.

TABLE 6.9.

SLAVEHOLDER VOTING PROBABILITIES IN THE
SECESSION ELECTION OF 1861
LOWER SOUTH (With Texas)

	Small Slh.	Medium Slh.	Large Slh.	Plantation Slh.	Non Slh.	All Voters
Secession	5	5	3	3	16	32
Opposition	2	2	1	0	18	23
Nonvoters	3	2	1	1	38	45
All Voters	10	8	5	5	71	100

Note: Actual N = 349. The estimates of the political affiliation of slaveholders in the lower and upper South were analyzed by multiple "ecological" regression, taking the percentage of the various categories of slaveholders as the dependent variables. The independent variables, analyzed separately for each choice, were the proportions of the electorate voting for Douglas, Bell or Opposition, and Breckinridge. To avoid multicollinearity the 1860 nonvoting percentages were not used. The estimates presented above are individual voting choices derived from aggregate data. All variables used in the regression equations were weighted by the adult white male population.

TABLE 6.10.

SLAVEHOLDER VOTING PROBABILITIES IN THE
SECESSION ELECTION OF 1861
LOWER SOUTH (Without Texas)

	Small Slh.	Medium Slh.	Large Slh.	Plantation Slh.	Non Slh.	All Voters
Secession	5	5	4	4	10	28
Opposition	2	1	0	0	19	23
Nonvoters	4	2	1	1	42	49
All Voters	11	9	5	5	71	100

Note: Actual N = 272. For a note on methodology see Table 6.9.

classes experienced high rates of non-participation in the secession convention elections especially among slaveholders owning fewer than 10 slaves as approximately one-third of these citizens remained on the sidelines.

Slaveholders apparently followed the dictates of previous party commitments in the 1860 presidential election but subsequently altered their positions in the secession elections. As a class, the slaveholders viewed the social and economic benefits of slavery much differently than did their nonslaveholding counterparts. The question they now addressed was foremost one of economics.⁵⁷ The success of Lincoln in the presidential race convinced many slaveholders that property would not be protected during his administration and as a result they wanted to leave before their property in slaves became worthless.⁵⁸ The economic

⁵⁷George Winchester to William Sharkey, undated letter 1860, Sharkey Papers. Winchester noted that the "most dangerous of these social reformers are those who attack the social evil and nature of inequalities of Capitalists and labourers in the Slave States, because they are founded in the domestic relations of master and slave, . . ."

⁵⁸Alexander Stephens noted that he was willing to "disrupt every tie which binds the states together" in order to assure that his rights would be protected. "The Speech of A. H. Stephens given in the Georgia House of Representatives," The Southern Recorder, November 20, 1860. Howard Morris in a letter to his sister noted that things "can't be patched up so as to secure our persons and property against wrong--and I know neither have been safe in some of the States and territories during Mr. Buchanan's administration--the Union had better be dissolved it is no longer worth contending for." Howard Morris to his sister, no date, Crutcher-Shannon Family Papers, Natchez Trace Collection, The University of Texas.

institution of slavery separated the slaveholders from the rest of southerners on the basis of wealth and power as well as framed the South's system of social and cultural values that differentiated it from the northern manufacturing states. Some slaveholders supported the opposition camps in the months following Lincoln's victory,⁵⁹ but as a group they were, more than nonslaveholders, willing to dissolve the Union rather than risk the loss of their property and power.⁶⁰ In addition, smaller slaveholders were less adamant in their support of secession. Of the slaveholders who owned less than 9 slaves over twenty percent supported the opposition in the secession elections and one-third sat out the balloting. For some small slaveholders and a slim majority of nonslaveholders the hopes of maintaining ties

⁵⁹In writing to his father in Louisiana from Mississippi J. A. Gould noted his desire to remain in the Union. He also notes the secessionist spirit is high in his area and he tells his father that "A Lincoln man would stand a poor chance, I would advise all such to stay away." J. A. L. Gould to J. A. Gould, December 26, 1860, Chamberlain-Hyland-Gould Family Papers, Natchez Trace Collection, The University of Texas. See also J. A. L. Gould to J. A. Gould, February 27, 1861, Chamberlain-Hyland-Gould Family Papers; and William Whitnell Hill Pugh to his sister, December 1860, Pugh Papers.

⁶⁰For a discussion of the role of slaveholders in the secession crisis in the lower South see Dumond, The Secession Movement, 195-97; Oldshue, "A Study of the Influence," 185; Phillips, Georgia and State Rights, 201; Lipset, Political Man, 377; McCrary et al., "Class and Party," 447-55; Baker and Baum, "The Texas Voter," 408-10; Eric Foner, "The Causes of the Civil War," Civil War History, 20 (September 1974), 201; Barney, The Secessionist Impulse, 270-73; Johnson, Toward a Patriarchal Republic, 66-68; and Thomas B. Alexander and Peggy J. Duckworth, "Alabama Black Belt Whigs During Secession: A New Viewpoint," Alabama Review, 17 (July 1964), 182-84.

with the Union outweighed their economic interest in the slave system.⁶¹

In order to assess the relative impact of the social, economic, and ethnocultural attributes of counties in the lower South variable indicators of these measurements were entered into a series of multiple regression equations. In contrast to the preceding tables, voting returns in the multiple regression analysis are treated as community-level data. The independent variables entered into the regression equations are economic and demographic characteristics of counties taken from the federal decennial census and are therefore not measured in comparable units. In order to account for this two measures are relied upon. The standardized regression coefficients, referred to as "beta weights," represent to some extent for each variable a measure of their respective influence on the distribution of the vote for each party, while controlling for the remaining

⁶¹Gavin Wright argues that slaveholders owned extremely valuable property and were enjoying prosperity and expected that good fortune to continue. The only serious threat to their power was northern Federal interference with slavery and slaveholders believed one safeguard against such interference was peaceable secession. See Gavin Wright, The Political Economy of the Cotton South (New York, 1978), 147, 149-50. Also see Haywood Fleisig, "Slavery, the Supply of Agricultural Labor, and the Industrialization of the South," Journal of Economic History, 36 (September 1976), 592; Eugene D. Genovese, "The Significance of the Slave Plantation for Southern Economic Development," Journal of Southern History, 28 (November 1962), 435; and Robert E. Shalhope, "Race, Class, Slavery, and the Antebellum Southern Mind," Journal of Southern History, 37 (November 1971), 562, 563, 568.

variables in the equation.⁶² The measure which will be relied on most heavily, the level-importance statistic, captures the actual importance of each variable entered into the equation.⁶³

The results of the multiple regression analysis affirm the argument made on the basis of individual level voter estimates. In the 1861 convention elections the best single predictor of secessionists strength was the percentage of slaveholders in the electorate (see Table 6.11). Secessionists tended to be strongest in plantation areas that also had significant numbers of evangelicals. Yet when compared to all the other indicators of social and demographic characteristics of counties, the number of slaveholders in the electorate had a positive impact on the secession vote three times more than any other variable. The amount of wheat crop production and the percentage of evangelical seating accommodations were the two most important predictors of opposition strength in the secession referenda. Unionist sentiment prevailed in counties that escaped the dominating influence of the plantation system.

⁶²For an explanation and critique of standardized regression coefficients see Christopher H. Achen, Interpreting and Using Regression, Sage University Paper series on Quantitative Applications in the Social Sciences, Series No. 07-029 (Beverly Hills, Ca., and London, 1982), 76-77.

⁶³Achen, Interpreting and Using Regression, 71-73. For a complete explanation of multiple regression analysis see Hubert M. Blalock, Social Statistics (New York, 1972), 429-33.

TABLE 6.11.

THE INFLUENCE OF EXPLANATORY VARIABLES ON VOTING PATTERNS' IN
THE 1861 SECESSION ELECTIONS IN THE LOWER SOUTH
(With Texas)

Dependent Variable	Explanatory Variables	Reg. Coef.	Beta Coef.	Standard Errors Reg. Coef.	T Score	Cha. in R ²	Level of Imp.
Secession [R ² =.18] σ ² =.12	Slaveholders	.31	.30	.06	2.78	.13	.09
	Religion2	-.14	-.10	.09	-1.29	.03	-.01
	Religion1	.05	.11	.03	-.89	.01	.03
	Cotton Man.	-.00	-.06	.00	-1.71	-----	.00
	Wheat	.29	.05	.37	-.65	-----	.01
	Constant	.14					
Opposition [R ² =.23] σ ² =.15	Wheat	2.56	.36	.37	6.97	.18	.05
	Religion1	.12	.24	.03	3.51	.03	.08
	Slaveholders	-.16	-.14	.06	-2.69	.01	-.04
	Cotton Man.	.00	.12	.00	2.74	.01	.00
	Religion2	-.01	-.01	.09	1.33	-----	-.01
Constant	.18						
Not Voting 1861 [R ² =.38] σ ² =.15	Religion1	-.17	-.30	.03	-2.76	.24	-.11
	Wheat	-2.78	-.35	.36	-6.53	.13	-.06
	Slaveholders	-.15	-.12	.06	-.04	.01	-.03
	Religion2	.16	.09	.09	-.04	-----	.01
	Cotton Man.	-.00	-.06	.00	-1.14	-----	.00
Constant	.67						

Note: Actual N = 350. Here and elsewhere the voting units are weighted by voting population to ensure that smaller counties are not overrepresented in the analysis. Standard errors, however, are computed according to the original, unweighted number of counties and are thus essentially the standard deviations of actual voting percentages from voting percentages predicted by the regression lines. The regression coefficients, when written in additive equation form, describe the relationship of the independent variables to a voting decision as a mathematical function. The procedure used was the SPSSX regression program in which the variables were entered into the equation on the basis of their partial correlation coefficients.

Notably, slaveholders influenced opposition areas in a negative manner almost equal to the positive impact of the level of wheat production. None of the indicators entered into the equation to predict not voting levels in 1861 had an important positive impact on keeping voters at home. The presence of slaveholders, large numbers of evangelicals, and large scale wheat production all produced an increase in voting in the referenda.⁶⁴

The number of slaveholders in the electorate within a county also forced a positive impact on the decline in voter turnout between the presidential election in 1860 and the secession referenda (see Table 6.12). Apparently voters who stayed away from the polls during the secession balloting found themselves in areas of heavy slave concentrations where they considered the question of the maintenance of the Union hopeless or the dissolution of the same a foregone

⁶⁴McCrary and his students conducted a similar analysis of the lower South although they confined their study to three states. They concluded from their regression analysis on the basis of low R^2 scores that they could not conclusively produce any equations which showed class cleavages in the secession referenda. Yet R^2 is primarily a measure of variance not of causal strength. Thus, a variable or an equation which produces high R^2 values is not necessarily a good predictor of the dependent variable in question. In addition, McCrary and his students entered into their equations variables which actually describe the same social and economic milieu of counties in the lower South. Their equations are less reliable than the ones presented here. The authors should have placed more confidence in their findings than they show in their article. Once the variables in the equations are pared down the analysis does reveal significant class cleavages. McCrary et al., "Class and Party," 451-54; and Baker and Baum, "The Texas Voter," 409-12.

TABLE 6.12.

THE INFLUENCE OF EXPLANATORY VARIABLES ON VOTING PATTERNS IN
THE 1861 SECESSION ELECTIONS IN THE LOWER SOUTH
(With Texas)

Dependent Variable	Explanatory Variables	Reg. Coef.	Beta Coef.	Standard Errors Reg. Coef.	T Score	Cha. in R ²	Level of Imp.
Turnout Decline 1861 [R ² =.22]	Slaveholders	.39	.39	.06	6.29	.18	.11
	Wheat	-1.03	-.17	.38	-2.39	.01	-.02
	Religion2	-.21	-.16	.09	-2.58	.02	-.02
	Cotton Man.	-.00	-.02	.00	-.33	-----	-.00
	Religion1	.01	.01	.03	.20	-----	.01
David Index 1861 [R ² =.09]	Slaveholders	-.55	-.25	.12	-1.52	.07	-.15
	Wheat	1.90	.14	.74	3.07	.01	.04
	Religion2	.17	.06	.17	-.94	-----	.01
	Cotton Man.	.00	.02	.00	.57	-----	.00
	Religion1	-.02	-.02	.06	.99	-----	-.01

Note: for "Turnout Decline" Actual N = 296; for "David Index" Actual N = 350. Turnout Decline was calculated by subtracting the turnout in the 1861 secession balloting from the average rate of voter turnout in the 1856 and 1860 presidential elections.

conclusion. J. A. Gould, writing to his father from Mississippi in December of 1860, noted that the secessionists had formed vigilante committees which prevented Union men from expressing their opinions.⁶⁵ Given the sentiment of slaveholding counties in the secession convention elections it is certainly possible that the cooperationists suffered most from the drop in voter turnout. In addition, the percentages of slaveholders in the electorate also had a significant negative impact on the competitiveness of the political race in the secession elections (see Table 6.12). Yet, it appears more likely that citizens in slaveholding counties, having considerable ties to the plantation system, felt overwhelming support for secession in their region and found little reason to come to the polls. In contrast, counties where wheat production was high the turnout in the referenda remained fairly consistent and the competition close.⁶⁶ Class certainly had an significant impact on the level of voter participation in the secession elections as

⁶⁵J. A. L. Gould to J. A. Gould, December 26, 1860, Chamberlain-Hyland-Gould Family Papers. David Potter argues the point that there was a large number of southerners who were opposed to immediate secession in the lower South but were prevented from coming to the polls by the secessionists. David M. Potter, Lincoln and His Party, 213-17.

⁶⁶Donald Schaefer suggests that yeoman farmers and small slaveholders had difficulty in advancing economically and therefore developed attitudes that often put them at odds with plantation slaveholders. Donald F. Schaefer, "Yeoman Farmers and Economic Democracy: A Study of Wealth and Economic Mobility in the Western Tobacco Region, 1850-1860," Explorations in Economic History, 15 (October 1978), 435-36.

slaveholding counties experienced little competition in the convention balloting and strong support for the secessionist cause.⁶⁷

Results of the analysis remain the same when Texas is excluded from the equations (see Table 6.13). Slaveholders aroused the secession vote more than any other variable, although evangelical strength of counties becomes almost equally significant. Evangelical counties and wheat growing areas again asserted a strong positive influence on the opposition forces in the other four cotton states of the lower South. The positive influence of evangelical counties on both the secessionist and opposition camps suggests that factors other than religion played a decisive role in their political decisions. Perhaps more important than the number of congregants of the Baptist, Methodist, or Presbyterian churches in the lower South were the economic characteristics of the area.⁶⁸ The absence or presence of the plantation

⁶⁷Michael P. Johnson also alludes to this phenomena in his study of Georgia secession when he concludes that in counties where the turnout was less than 60 percent of the previous presidential election, secession was supported by an emphatic 80 percent, Toward a Patriarchal Republic, 76; and Ralph A. Wooster, Secession Conventions of the South, 101, 264-66.

⁶⁸Maddex, "'The Southern Apostasy,'" 132-41. Edward Riley Crowther suggests that this was not the case as evangelicals expressed a remarkable degree of unanimity in regards to secession, reflecting the interests and political aspirations of their region. Edward Riley Crowther, "Southern Protestants, Slavery and Secession: A Study in Religious Ideology, 1830-1861," (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Auburn University, 1986), 307, 319.

TABLE 6.13.

THE INFLUENCE OF EXPLANATORY VARIABLES ON VOTING PATTERNS IN
THE 1861 SECESSION ELECTIONS IN THE LOWER SOUTH
(Without Texas)

Dependent Variable	Explanatory Variables	Reg. Coef.	Beta Coef.	Standard Errors Reg. Coef.	T Score	Cha. in R ²	Level of Imp.
Secession [R ² =.29] σ ² =.12	Slaveholders	.31	.34	.06	3.37	.20	.09
	Religion1	.11	.25	.04	1.04	.08	.08
	Religion2	-.09	-.07	.10	-.19	-----	-.01
	Cotton Man.	-.00	-.04	.00	-1.23	-----	.00
	Wheat	.01	.02	.04	-.37	-----	.00
	Constant	.14					
Opposition [R ² =.38] σ ² =.15	Wheat	.35	.40	.05	6.53	.23	.02
	Religion1	.10	.19	.05	.83	.01	.07
	Slaveholders	-.18	-.16	.06	-4.42	.02	-.05
	Cotton Man.	.00	.12	.00	2.12	.01	.00
	Religion2	-.02	-.01	.12	1.16	-----	.00
	Constant	.18					
Not Voting 1861 [R ² =.44] σ ² =.15	Religion1	-.21	-.34	.04	-1.81	.33	-.14
	Wheat	-.34	-.34	.05	-6.10	.09	-.02
	Slaveholders	-.13	-.10	.06	1.51	.01	-.04
	Cotton Man.	-.00	-.08	.00	-1.10	.01	.00
	Religion2	.12	.06	.12	-.97	-----	.01
	Constant	.69					

Note: Actual N = 272. For a note on methodology see Table 6.11.

system tended to be the deciding factor as to whether a county voted for secession or the opposition.

Texas provided a distinctive pattern in terms of the social, economic, and religious bases of secession when compared to the rest of the cotton belt states (see Table 6.14). A new variable, citizens born in the states of Tennessee, North Carolina, and Virginia, added to the secession referendum equations for Texas proved of significance in explaining voting behavior in the secession election in the state.⁶⁹ In Texas, two distinct social-cultural regions divided in their support and opposition to secession. Similar to the rest of the lower South, areas with large numbers of slaveholders and evangelical parishioners strongly supported the secessionists. The antisecessionist coalition was molded by wheat farmers who were born in the upper South and living in northern and west-central counties of the state and who often relied on the federal government for protection from Indians. Few of them had any ties to the Deep South. The primarily Tennessee-born agrarians held distinctive cultural, religious, and social attitudes that encouraged them to cling to the Union of states, as they reflected the cautious attitudes of the

⁶⁹The upper South variable proved of little importance in any of the regression equations tested for the rest of the lower South as well as equations tested for each state separately.

TABLE 6.14.

THE INFLUENCE OF EXPLANATORY VARIABLES ON VOTING PATTERNS IN
THE 1861 SECESSION REFERENDUM IN TEXAS

Dependent Variable	Explanatory Variables	Reg. Coef.	Beta Coef.	Standard Errors		T Score	Cha. in R ²	Level of Imp.
				Reg. Coef.	Coef.			
Secession [R ² =.46] σ ² =.12	Slaveholders	.81	.53	.21		3.51	.42	.18
	Religion1	.08	.15	.07		.89	.01	.04
	Cotton Man.	-.02	-.12	.02		-1.57	.01	.00
	Religion2	-.09	-.07	.13		-1.46	.00	-.01
	Upper South	-.14	-.07	.26		-.03	.00	-.02
	Wheat	.08	.02	.63		-.04	.00	.00
	Constant	.25						
Opposition [R ² =.43] σ ² =.11	Wheat	.71	.18	.50		2.90	.23	.01
	Religion1	-.12	-.24	.06		-.94	.08	-.06
	Upper South	.87	.45	.21		2.62	.09	.10
	Religion2	.19	.16	.10		2.02	.02	.02
	Cotton Man.	.01	.09	.01		1.14	.01	.00
	Slaveholders	-.13	-.09	.17		-.89	.00	-.03
Not Voting 1861 [R ² =.42] σ ² =.12	Upper South	-.72	-.36	.26		-2.24	.29	-.09
	Slaveholders	-.69	-.47	.20		-3.05	.11	-.15
	Wheat	-.79	-.19	.62		-1.95	.02	-.02
	Religion2	-.10	-.08	.12		-.34	.01	-.01
	Religion1	.04	.08	.07		.08	.00	.02
	Cotton Man.	.01	.04	.02		.62	.00	.00
Constant	.68							

Note: Actual N = 90. For a note on methodology see Table 6.11.

citizens of their home states.⁷⁰

Previous political affiliations also played a significant role in determining whether a county would support or reject secession. In Table 6.15 the previous political affiliations of counties were entered into the equations to determine whether party continued to be an effective instrument of mobilizing voters during the secession crisis. The vote for Breckinridge was entered into the equation for secession, Bell and Douglas counties in the equation representing opposition, and nonvoters in 1860 were placed in the equation for nonvoters in 1861. Significantly, the partisan affiliation of a county in 1860 tended to shape the vote in 1861 more than the social and economic characteristics of the counties.⁷¹ Breckinridge counties more than doubled the impact of all the other indicators on the secession vote. Likewise Bell and Douglas areas tended to produce a much higher positive impact on the opposition vote than did the social and economic indicators. Similarly, nonvoters in 1860 continued the trend as they had a significant positive

⁷⁰Baker and Baum, "The Texas Voter," 417-19. The addition of the upper South variable makes a considerable difference in the interpretation of our previous article. Knowing the birthplace, in this case primarily Tennessee, is more significant in explaining the antisecessionist vote in Texas than religion, i.e. the Disciples of Christ. It is more likely that all three variables describe a particular cultural pattern in the state.

⁷¹See Thomas B. Alexander, "The Civil War as Institutional Fulfillment," Journal of Southern History, 47 (February 1981), 20, 23.

relation to the nonvoters in the referenda. Previous party relations thus continued to be an active force in the secession winter of 1860 and 1861, molding and shaping the opinions of the electorate.⁷²

Nevertheless, the impact of social and economic changes on the political realignment between the November election and the subsequent secession elections is still significant. Evangelical counties that had a strong impact on the Breckinridge vote in 1860 and little impact on the Bell camp exhibited important shifts into both the opposition and secession camps in the referenda (see Tables 5.11 and 5.12). More importantly, slaveholding counties posited a decided shift away from previous support for John Bell (see Tables 5.11 and 5.12) to the secession forces during the referenda. Indeed, even when the political data of the counties were entered into the equations for the opposition, counties with large numbers of slaveholders in the electorate still had a very significant negative impact (-.12) on the vote opposing secession (see Tables 6.15 and 6.16). Plantation counties experienced a complete reversal. They shifted from support for a former Whig candidate in 1860 to overwhelming identification with the secessionist forces in the referenda.

⁷²John V. Mering argues than political affiliation had no relevance during the secession crisis. He argues that previous political affiliations are an important biographical datum but an unreliable index of future political choices. For his argument see, Mering, "Persistent Whiggery, 124-43; idem, "The Slave-State Constitutional Unionists," 395-410.

TABLE 6.15.

THE INFLUENCE OF EXPLANATORY VARIABLES ON VOTING PATTERNS IN
THE 1861 SECESSION ELECTIONS IN THE LOWER SOUTH
(With Texas)

Dependent Variable	Explanatory Variables	Reg. Coef.	Beta Coef.	Standard Errors		T Score	Cha. in R ²	Level of Imp.
				Reg. Coef.	Coef.			
Secession [R ² =.52] σ ² =.11	Breckinridge	.64	.69	.05		14.93	.47	.18
	Slaveholders	.22	.22	.05		4.65	.04	.06
	Religion2	.16	.12	.07		.99	.01	.01
	Wheat	.25	.04	.29		1.32	-----	.01
	Cotton Man.	-.00	-.03	.00		-1.35	-----	.00
	Religion1	-.01	-.03	.03		-1.95	-----	-.01
	Constant	.00						
Opposition [R ² =.43] σ ² =.13	Bell and Douglas	.61	.55	.05		12.29	.24	.19
	Wheat	1.76	.25	.33		4.26	.10	.04
	Slaveholders	-.43	-.37	.06		-8.64	.07	-.12
	Religion1	.07	.13	.03		2.20	.02	.05
	Cotton Man.	.00	.05	.00		1.77	-----	.00
	Religion2	-.07	-.05	.07		1.31	-----	-.01
Constant	.09							
Not Voting 1861 [R ² =.56] σ ² =.13	Nonvoters '60	.66	.70	.06		8.97	.48	.20
	Wheat	-1.84	-.23	.33		-5.23	.06	-.04
	Slaveholders	.22	.17	.06		4.00	.02	.06
	Religion1	-.05	-.08	.03		-.68	-----	-.03
	Religion2	-.08	-.05	.08		-1.51	-----	-.01
	Cotton Man.	-.00	-.02	.00		-.57	-----	.00
Constant	.26							

Note: Actual N = 349. For a note on methodology see Table 6.11.

TABLE 6.16.

THE INFLUENCE OF EXPLANATORY VARIABLES ON VOTING PATTERNS IN
THE 1861 SECESSION ELECTIONS IN THE LOWER SOUTH
(Without Texas)

Dependent Variable	Explanatory Variables	Reg. Coef.	Beta Coef.	Standard Errors		T Score	Cha. in R ²	Level of Imp.
				Reg. Coef.	Coef.			
Secession [R ² =.54] σ ² =.10	Breckinridge	.52	.63	.05		11.02	.46	.19
	Slaveholders	.24	.27	.05		5.42	.07	.07
	Wheat	.07	.09	.04		2.44	.00	.01
	Religion2	.17	.13	.09		.57	.01	.01
	Religion1	.02	.04	.03		-.63	-----	.01
	Cotton Man.	.00	-.02	.00		-1.01	-----	.00
	Constant	.00						
Opposition [R ² =.43] σ ² =.13	Bell & Douglas	.61	.55	.05		12.92	.24	.19
	Wheat	.18	.25	.03		4.26	.10	.03
	Slaveholders	-.43	-.37	.06		-8.64	.07	-.13
	Religion1	.07	.13	.03		2.20	.02	.05
	Cotton Man.	.00	.05	.00		1.77	-----	.00
	Religion2	-.07	-.05	.07		1.31	-----	-.01
Constant	.09							
Not Voting 1861 [R ² =.62] σ ² =.13	Nonvoters '60	.70	.71	.08		6.40	.53	.20
	Wheat	-.24	-.24	.05		-4.98	.07	-.04
	Slaveholders	.25	.19	.06		4.04	.02	.08
	Religion1	-.06	-.10	.04		-.67	-----	-.04
	Religion2	-.15	-.08	.11		-1.31	-----	-.01
	Cotton Man.	-.00	-.03	.00		-.81	-----	.00
Constant	.28							

Note: Actual N = 259. For a note on methodology see Table 6.11.

Slaveholders apparently considered their property and their social power far above their love for the Union. Voter choices in the lower South were partially framed by their former political allegiances. But when these allegiances sharply conflicted with particular economic and social circumstances, voting citizens pried away from their political frameworks and voiced opinions that reflected their economic situation.⁷³

⁷³Lipset, Political Man, 377.