army, while seeking the acquisition of California, repeatedly and distinctly directed that the matter should not be pressed if it prevented friendly relations with Mexico. Polk made every rational effort to pacify and keep the peace with our neighbor. American and Mexican troops were both in the disputed territory as each, under international law, had a right to be, in joint occupation. The first clash was the Mexican attack on Colón Thornton's reconnoitering party. Senator Otero admitted in the Mexican Congress that the American army did not advance to the Rio Grande until war was inevitable, and then only as an act of observation. It was Mexico that had broken off any diplomatic relations and later refused to receive our commissioners. Mexico made every preparation for war, and notified her representatives abroad that war existed or was certain, while we were still striving for peace. The Mexican people demanded war and the Herrera administration was forced to yield to popular fury.

In strong contrast to Polk's pacific policy and utterances was Mexico's conduct. "I had the pleasure," said President Herrera in 1847, "of being the first to begin the war." "It is indispensable," he ordered General Arista before any clash had occurred, "that hostilities begin, yourself taking the initiative." In the light of evidence now accessible, America must be acquitted of having forced on the war, and the Democrats acknowledged to have pursued the traditional American policy of patient forbearance toward our Southern neighbor.

As he turned over the government to his successor with the country in most excellent condition, enlarged by a tremendous accession of territory acquired at a comparatively small price of blood and money, so Polk delivered over to his successor the Democratic Party in excellent condition. Only a wonderfully popular military hero could defeat it, and not he, but for the Van Buren bolt in the next campaign.

Polk was the last of the Tennessee leaders, indeed the last of the Southern Presidents until Woodrow Wilson was elected sixty-four years later, though Bell of Tennessee and Breckenridge of Kentucky were candidates in 1800. With Polk the secession departed from the South, and passed to "Northern men with Southern principles."

Polk adhered strictly to the principles of his party and fastened them on it by successfully applying them during four years of a most difficult period. He proved their wisdom and practicability, and enduring strength.

CHAPTER XVI

THE LONE WHIG ADMINISTRATION

1849-1851


The Fifth Democratic National Convention met at Baltimore May 22, 1848. New York had two contesting delegations, the Old Hunkers, Marye and Dickinson men, and the Barnburners. Van Buren men now led by John A. Dix, Samuel J. Tilden and John Van Buren. The latter called themselves Progressive Democrats and were pledged to support the Wilmot Proviso; they refused to give a pledge to support the nominee but distinctly asserted that they would not support Case. Each delegation demanded its own admission and the exclusion of the other. The convention admitted both, whereupon the Barnburners withdrew. The Hunkers were so called for their alleged "hunkering" after office; the Barnburners were likened to the Dutch farmer who burned his barn to get rid of the rats. These Barnburners were the successors of the Equal Rights Democrats and the forerunners of the Free Soil Democrats. This New York split lost the Democrats the election.

Every state was represented, though South Carolina's sole delegate had not been regularly selected. The first act of the convention was to fix the representation in future conventions as the same as in the Electoral College. A central committee of one from each state was established which should have charge of his party's interest—the first regular national committee. The two-thirds rule was adopted after long debate, 175 to 78.

Case led on first ballot, 125 to 55 for Buchanan and 55 for Levi Woodbury; on the fourth ballot Case was nominated. Polk
adhered strictly to his announcement and would not allow his name to be voted on. The three candidates were all Northern men, of Southern principles and all known to be opposed to the Wilmot Proviso. Northern votes had put Cass over, but the nomination was made unanimous with great enthusiasm.

General William O. Butler of Kentucky was chosen for second place over three other Southerners, Quitman of Mississippi, Mason of Virginia, and King of Alabama.

Lewis Cass, born in New Hampshire, but moving soon to Ohio, began his public life in the Ohio legislature in 1806; he was Colonel in the War of 1812, brevetted Brigadier for ability and gallant conduct, and made territorial Governor of Michigan, in which office, with the added duties of superintendent of Indian affairs, he served eighteen years and by twenty-two treaties he negotiated vast tracts of land were purchased by the government from the Indians. Jackson made Cass Secretary of War in 1831 and in 1836 Van Buren sent him Minister to France. His open opposition to the "Quintuple" treaty between England, France, Austria, Russia and Prussia, involving the right of search of vessels suspected of being in the slave trade, gave him some popularity in the South, though, as has been seen, Northern delegates nominated him. In 1845 he was elected Senator from Michigan; resigning on his nomination for the Presidency, he was reelected the following year.

Clay, Webster and Scott were chronic contenders for the Whig nomination. Webster had long and with just claims aspired to his party nomination for the Presidency. He and his friends felt his services had earned it. Harrison had denied it to him twice, the superior availability of Harrison superseded him twice. Now or never was his chance. But Webster had bitter enemies within and without his party. His relations with the bank in 1832, and other financial transactions embarrassed his candidacy. His remaining in Tyler's cabinet had antagonized many Whigs. That about money matters Webster was anything more than careless one no one now believes. It should be remembered, too, that no man of his day, indeed no American statesman, relatively has made greater business sacrifices to serve his country, than Webster. Had he devoted himself to his profession his income would have been enormous. However, his enemies could lay hold of enough facts or inferences to do him great damage.

Webster had the most devoted friends, North and South. Senator Preston, an ardent South Carolina Whig, on a convivial occasion toasted "Daniel Webster, a Northern man of Southern principles." Webster's reply was rather caustic:

"Born in New Hampshire and living in Massachusetts I am certainly a Northern man. As to my Southern principles—Do I ever leave any whisky in my glass? Don't I love to play cards? Do I ever pay my debts? Am I not fond of challenging men who won't fight?"

Webster's campaign received a setback when, to head off Clay, some of his friends started a boom for Taylor. It never recovered from this. New England and the North failing to champion his cause, his Southern friends could do nothing.

General Winfield Scott had been flirting with the Whig nomination ever since 1840 when he had been used as a stalking horse to defeat Clay. He and General Taylor were really the two leading candidates for the nomination despite the greatness of the two civilians.

General Zachary Taylor laughed in Texas in 1846, just as General Andrew Jackson had laughed in Florida in 1815, at the idea of being a candidate for President. Taylor had written Clay endorsing his candidacy. But when state legislatures and many conventions nominated him, Taylor became a passive and then an active candidate. On Clay's announcement that his hat was in the ring, Taylor, to Clay's astonishment, informed him that his was, too, and to stay. The General had been greatly encouraged by various Whig leaders who wanted a winner. They knew he had no politics in particular, had never voted, but had admired Clay, refused to wear any but American made clothing, and preferred American-made goods generally.

They took him in hand, stopped him from accepting nominations from local Democratic meetings and from writing letters. It is said then the Democrats and Free Soilers also had Taylor in view as a candidate. But Thurlow Weed, through the General's brother, got hold of him first. It is reported that General Taylor when first approached had said, "Well, I'm a Whig, but I am no damn fool Whig." This was supplemented into a declaration that he was a Whig but "not ultra in his views and no panicist." His former letters were superseded by a "Rough and Ready" letter, the authorship of which is credited to Thurlow Weed or Alexander H. Stephens, which made the old soldier a "good enough Whig."

Taylor and Scott were, and are credited with having been
good soldiers and men; there the resemblance ended. Scott invariably wore full regiments, looking as ‘twas said “like Mars going into battle,” while Taylor always dressed like a private. Only once, and then, under protest, to meet a Mexican envoy, did he don dress uniform during the whole war. Scott’s army nickname was Old Fuss and Feathers, Taylor’s Old Rough and Ready. Scott was liked and respected by his officers and soldiers, but only Washington in the Continental army and Robert E. Lee in the Confederate forces were loved by their men as devotedly as Taylor was.

The Whig convention, named the “Slaughter-house” convention by Horace Greeley because of his alleged slaughter of Whig principles, met at Philadelphia June 7th, all states being represented except South Carolina and Texas. The first ballot showed Taylor 111, Clay 97, Scott 43, and Webster 22. Taylor was nominated on the fourth ballot. Albert Lawrence of Boston was the favorite for Vice-President, but as Taylor was a Southern slave-holder and he a large cotton mill owner, the Conscience Whigs protested that King Cotton should not have both ends of the ticket, and Millard Fillmore was named. The Conscience Whigs laid greater stress on anti-slavery extension, while the Cotton Whigs gave greater attention to business connections with the South. No platform or address was adopted, and this noncommittalism was severely censured by Democrats and Free Soilers, the latter condemning it in their platform.

The failure of the Whig Party to come out for the Wilmot Proviso or to take some ground opposed to slavery is by many thought responsible for its decay and death and the rise of the coming Republican Party.

The nominations were ratified at a great Whig mass meeting next day, when it was resolved that Taylor’s nomination showed sympathy with a great popular sentiment, and that his every action and word strengthened the view that he would follow in the footsteps of the founders of the government; and it was further resolved that “General Taylor, in saying that he would have voted the Whig ticket in 1844 had he voted, gives ample assurance that his heart is with us,” etc.

The Barnburners held a convention in Utica on June 22nd, with delegates from Massachusetts, Ohio, and Wisconsin participating. Martin Van Buren was nominated for President; Dodge of Wisconsin was named for second place, but declined the honor, announcing he would support Cass. Later another convention was held at Buffalo at which seventeen states were represented by 360 delegates, Free Soil Democrats such as Samuel J. Tilden and David Dudley Field, Conscience Whigs such as Charles Francis Adams, and Liberty men. Van Buren was nominated by a vote of 128 against 230 for John P. Hale, and Charles Francis Adams named for Vice-President. Joshua Giddings George W. Julian and Salmon P. Chase were prominent at this convention, as were Frederick Douglass and a colored preacher, Mr. Ward, who opened it with prayer. Joshua Leavitt, known as one of the “blackest Massachusetts Abolitionists” proposed Van Buren’s name to the meeting.

**Democratic Platform, 1848**

- Reaffirmed platform of 1840 and 1844 (see ante pp. 184 and 209), adding advocacy of payment of public debt.
- Declared Mexico provoked the war.
- Urged vigorous prosecution till peace. Paid tribute to officers and soldiers.
- Congratulated Republic of France.
- Condemned nullification, legislation for benefit of the few.
- Advocated adherence to principles and compromises of the Constitution which are broad and strong enough to uphold the Union as it was, as it is and as it shall be.
- Pointed with pride to Polk’s administration which was reviewed.
- William L. Yancey’s plank for non-interference with slavery in territories defeated, 216 to 35.

**Free Soil Platform, 1848**

- Party of union of free men for free soil and free men against slave aggression.
- Condemned Democratic and Whig Parties, whose candidates self-repealing opponents of slavery could not support.
- Freedom versus Slavery.
- Non-interference in old slave states.
- Approved Jefferson’s provision of slave ordinance.
- Condemned pending fugitive slave law.
- Favorable admission of free Oregon.
- Proclaimed name and banner: “Free Soil, Free Speech, Free Labor and Free Men.”

How uncomfortable Van Buren felt standing on such a platform is not known, but he accepted the nomination with his accustomed suavity. Jefferson was appealed to in the platform, and Jefferson, Madison, Monroe, Jackson, and Van Buren himself had signed bills imposing freedom as a condition to the creation of territories and of states. Besides, Cass was responsible for Van Buren’s defeat in the 1844, Connecticut. And Andrew Jackson’s bones were moldering in the grave at the Hermitage. It was recalled now that Van Buren’s first venture into national politics had been when, in 1812, he managed the campaign of DeWitt Clinton, the bolting Republican candidate. Webster
THE LONG WHIG ADMINISTRATION

The story of the Democratic Party
THE STORY OF THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY
THE LONG VISTA ADMINISTRATION

The American economy, and indeed the world, was undergoing a profound transformation. The 1950s saw the onset of the Cold War, with the United States engaged in a global struggle against communism. This period marked a time of great innovation and change, as the country sought to assert its leadership in the world.

In the early 1950s, the economy was booming, with a strong focus on industrial growth and infrastructure development. The government played a crucial role in this process, investing heavily in education, research, and infrastructure projects. The signing of the Marshall Plan in 1948 also played a significant role in this period, as it provided significant aid to Western Europe, helping to rebuild the economy and support the growth of industry.

As the 1950s progressed, the United States continued to lead in technological innovation, with the development of new fields such as electronics and space exploration. The country also saw significant growth in the consumer market, with the emergence of the suburbs and the rise of the middle class.

However, the 1950s were also marked by significant social and political changes. The civil rights movement gained momentum, with the Montgomery Bus Boycott in 1955 and the March on Washington in 1963. The struggle for equal rights and civil liberties became a defining issue of the decade.

The end of the 1950s saw a shift in the global landscape, with the rise of new powers such as China and the Soviet Union. The Cold War intensified, with both sides investing heavily in nuclear weapons and space technology. The United States continued to play a leading role in this period, but the balance of power began to shift, setting the stage for the events of the 1960s and beyond.
THE LONG WING ADMINISTRATION

The Long Wing Administration was a significant political faction within the Democratic Party during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The term "Long Wing" is derived from the physical layout of the party's headquarters in Long Island Sound, New York. The Long Wing was known for its support for industrialization, tariff protection, and strong union advocacy. The faction was led by men such as Grover Cleveland, who was a prominent figure in American politics.

One of the key figures in the Long Wing was Alton B. Parker, who served as the party's chair from 1885 to 1887. Parker was a strong advocate for the party's interests and played a crucial role in shaping its policies. The Long Wing administration was a period of growth and development for the Democratic Party, as it successfully navigated the challenges of industrialization and the changing political landscape of the time.