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The Anti-Douglas Democrats in Illinois

and the Campaign of 1938

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History
THE
ANTI-DOUGLAS DEMOCRATS IN ILLINOIS
AND THE CAMPAIGN OF 1858

BY
MICHAEL B. LAHTI

THESIS
FOR THE
DEGREE OF BACHELOR OF ARTS
IN LIBERAL ARTS AND SCIENCES

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1980
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M. Lahti
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The Campaign of 1858 in Illinois is best known for the Great Debates between Abraham Lincoln and Stephen A. Douglas, for Douglas' Freeport doctrine and for the emergence of Lincoln as a national figure. But other factors, lesser well known, also played important roles in that campaign. The exploits of local politicians add depth and color without which a portrait of that great canvas is not complete. Illinois politics in the 1850's was a mélange of men fighting for great and lofty principles which always conflicted with the great and lofty principles other men were fighting for, of scheming politicians concerned only with personal advancement and of men falling everywhere in between. These lesser-known participants can not be ignored without distorting the true nature of Illinois politics.

Among them was a band of anti-Douglas Democrats who nearly sent Lincoln to the Senate in Douglas' place in 1858 by dividing the Illinois Democratic party. How the course of events leading up to the Civil War would have been changed had this happened is anybody's guess. The national Democratic party broke up in 1860 largely because of Douglas' candidacy for the Presidency. Would this have happened if he had been defeated in 1858? If Lincoln had been elected to the Senate in 1858, would he still have been elected President in 1860?

The reason these questions are presented here is that most historians, heretofore, have overlooked how near to defeat Douglas actually came. The anti-Douglas Democrats, supported by President James Buchanan, constituted a third party which caused Douglas considerable consternation and gave Lincoln added confidence. Douglas even used the Senate floor as a platform to attack the National Democrats, as the anti-Douglas Demo-
crats were called, something he would not have done if he had believed that they were insignificant. Mid-way through the campaign, Lincoln expressed confidence that the National Democrats would surely bring his victory. Even during the final days of the canvass, the Douglas press felt obliged to use dishonest tactics to try to win back National Democratic votes.

It is true that the voting results do not indicate that the National Democrats played a very significant role in the campaign, but this is misleading. Between April and June, 1858, the National Democrats grew rapidly and seemed destined to divide the party badly enough to defeat Douglas. In June, however, the National Democrats themselves divided, some returning to the Douglas camp. President Buchanan handled affairs in Illinois badly by choosing unclean characters to lead his supporters and then by denying them his full support. Most anti-Douglas leaders were driven primarily by desire for revenge though others opposed Douglas' principles. Those motivated by revenge gained control of the party and were unable to keep their principled brethren within the party ranks. June 9, 1858, the day of the National Democrats' state convention was the turning point, when the party split and the momentum built up during the last two months collapsed. The National Democrat began their slow descent into historical obscurity. These anti-Douglas Democrats, in any case, deserve far more attention, though they existed in a period which is commonly considered exhausted by historical scholarship.
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I

THE VEXED QUESTION OF SLAVERY

In 1850, Illinois politics were dominated by two great political parties. The Democrat, led by Stephen A. Douglas, had reigned supreme since the days of Andrew Jackson but knew found themselves hard pressed. The Republican party, led by Abraham Lincoln, was only four years old but already challenged the Democrat for control of the state. It rode high on the wave of anti-slavery sentiment which had swept across the northern states as state and local politics became increasingly dominated by the issue of slavery. Candidates for offices such as mayor, sheriff and even school boards devoted their campaigns to what should be done about slavery rather than what they planned to do in office if elected. As the storm over slavery grew in intensity, the man who found himself at the storm's eye was Senator Stephen A. Douglas of Illinois.1

As the nation grappled with the vexed question, Douglas played an ever larger role in the search for an answer. He appeared on the national scene after a successful career in state politics in the United States Senate in 1846. Douglas moved to the front of the slavery debate by leading the moderate forces in the forging of the Compromise of 1850. The United States acquired great tracts of land (now New Mexico, Arizona, Utah, Nevada and California) from Mexico following the Mexican War in 1848. Debate over how slavery was to be treated in the new territories nearly tore the Union apart. Anti-slavery forces demanded that slavery be prohibited while southerners demanded that it be protected. Douglas immediately realized that no territorial bill addressing the slavery question in any form could ever pass the divided Senate. This gave
him the opportunity to test the feasibility of his own idea for the peaceful settlement of the slavery question which he called popular sovereignty.

Douglas proposed that the people of the territories be allowed to settle the question for themselves, thus removing the divisive issue from Congress where it threatened the Union itself. Serving as Chairman of the Committee on Territories, Douglas, and other moderates, maneuvered for nine months between radical northerners and southerners to forge an acceptable compromise. Several bills were passed, some to please the south and others the north. One of the bills organized the territory of New Mexico without legislating slavery into it or out of it, thus formally baptizing Douglas' popular sovereignty and thrusting him into the national spotlight.

Unfortunately, southerners remained unsatisfied for they still demanded that slave property in the territories be protected from the territorial legislatures as well as from Congress. Free-state northerners demanded that slavery be prohibited by Congress in all territories prior to statehood. Therein lay the seed of discord which, by 1860, would tear the nation apart.

In 1854, the storm broke again when the Kansas and Nebraska territories were organized. The Missouri Compromise of 1820 banned slavery from the old Louisiana territory above 36° 30'. Free-state northerners considered the line a bulwark against the spread of slavery into the north. Both new territories were above the Missouri Compromise line. If Douglas sought to end slavery agitation by allowing the people of the territories to decide local issues for themselves, he would have to have the Missouri Compromise repealed. The Kansas-Nebraska Act, engineered by Douglas, did just that. The north was engulfed in a wave of anti-
Nebraska protest. Free-staters, including many Democrats, feared the expansion of slavery into the Northwest (now known as the Midwest) which might threaten the livelihood of small family farmers. They also feared the growth of southern political power in Washington which consistently thwarted measures favorable to the Northwest.

In Illinois, the Kansas-Nebraska Act split the Democrats badly. Many rallied to Douglas' side but other powerful party members left the Democracy. Lieutenant-Governor Gustave Koerner, Lyman Trumbull, John N. Palmer and John Wentworth helped form the new Republican party on an anti-Nebraska platform. The coalition of old-line Whigs and discontented Democrats achieved startling success in the state elections of 1854. Trumbull was elected to the Senate and several Congressional seats were won.

Douglas bravely sought to defend the position he had taken. He argued that anti-slavery protests were uncalled for since the climate in the new territories was unsuitable for slavery anyway. He also pointed to popular support given the Compromise of 1850, the principles of which were merely repeated in his Kansas-Nebraska Act. Douglas concluded that removing slavery from the national forum to the territories would save the Union which, he added, was far more important than the whole negro race. In spite of some loss of support in the northern states, Douglas weathered the storm.²

In 1856, Douglas was one of the frontrunners for the Democratic nomination for the Presidency. The delegates met in Cincinnati to make the nomination and to draw up a platform to please everyone. Sufficiently broad on the slavery issue to allow diverse interpretations, the Cincinnati Platform, as it was called, asserted that Congress could not legally interfere with slavery in the territories. It endorsed the
Compromise of 1850 and popular sovereignty as contained in the Kansas-Nebraska Act. In this way, confrontation between the Douglasites and the southerners was postponed until a later date. Choosing a candidate was not so easy as the delegates split between Douglas and James Buchanan of Pennsylvania. Douglas finally withdrew to maintain party unity.

Buchanan was elected to the Presidency but the Democrats did not fare so well in Illinois where the voters elected the entire Republican state ticket. Anti-Nebraska sentiment spurred the growth of the anti-slavery Republican party and if Illinois Democrats could not find a way to halt the flow of free-state Democrats into the opposition's camp, they were sure to lose control of the state.

Senator Douglas sought to win back northern support while keeping the support of the south which he had won with his Kansas-Nebraska Act. The Supreme Court did not make his task any easier. In 1857, the Court delivered its decision in the case of Dred Scott, a slave who had sued for his freedom on the basis of having resided briefly in the free-state of Illinois and in the territory where slavery was prohibited by the Missouri Compromise. Scott lost his case. In Chief Justice Roger B. Taney's opinion, the Court ruled the Missouri Compromise unconstitutional because Congress possessed no power to restrict property rights in slaves in the territories. Therefore, it concluded, the territorial legislatures, being mere creatures of Congress, did not possess that power either. What now became of Douglas' popular sovereignty? After considerable thought, Douglas announced complete concurrence with the Court's decision. He admitted that territorial legislatures could not prohibit slavery but that they could lawfully withhold protection to slave property, thus rendering the right to hold slaves worthless. His
answered satisfied most of the Democratic party, but the Dred Scott decision emphasized the difference between Douglas' and the southerners' interpretation of popular sovereignty. Southerners believed that there was no lawful way for slavery to be prohibited from a territory and that only upon admission to the Union could the people decide whether to exclude it.

Later in 1857, the storm broke for the last time when the territory of Kansas applied for statehood. Kansas had been the scene of a violent struggle between free-staters and pro-slavery men to secure a majority in that territory. Pro-slavery Missourians flocked across the border to swell the southern ranks. Free-state northerners had further to travel but they came in such large numbers that it was soon clear that they constituted the majority. Fighting immediately broke out between the two groups and the territory became known as "Bleeding Kansas." In an effort to end the bloodshed, territorial leaders decided to apply for statehood. In the summer of 1857, elections were held to choose delegates to a constitutional convention. The free-state party boycotted the election believing that it would be conducted in a fraudulent manner. Thus, the delegates who assembled in Lecompton in September were overwhelmingly pro-slavery.

As expected, the delegates drafted a constitution which made Kansas a slave state. According to Douglas' interpretation of popular sovereignty the document should have been submitted to the voters for ratification. The majority of the delegates, knowing full well that it would be rejected, declined to do so. Other delegates desired submission and forced a compromise whereby the voters could choose between "the constitution with slavery" or "the constitution without slavery." Since an additional clause in the document protected all existing slave
property, Kansas would enter the Union as a slave state regardless of the outcome of the voting. The free-state majority viewed this as unfair and again boycotted the polls. The Lecompton constitution was ratified by an overwhelming majority and was sent to Congress with a request for admission to the Union. The constitution obviously did not reflect the wishes of the majority of the voters.

The Buchanan Administration, seeking to placate the south, endorsed the work of the Lecompton convention. Buchanan believed that since the document was the work of fairly elected delegates it fulfilled the requirements of popular sovereignty. If the free-staters refused to vote, then it was their own fault that they lost. The President determined to make admission of the Kansas territory under the Lecompton constitution a test of party loyalty and declared that all who opposed it, opposed his. Douglas was presented with a difficult decision. The Lecompton constitution flagrantly violated his interpretation of popular sovereignty. First of all, he believed that all local issues, not just slavery, must be decided by the people. Full submission was required; otherwise the document was not the voice of the people. However, if Douglas supported the Administration it would earn him the support of the south and the President, virtually assuring him of the Presidency in 1860. He decided to rely upon his definition of popular sovereignty and indicated privately that he would oppose the Administration.  

Douglas had also kept his eye on the situation in Illinois. He journeyed through the state during the fall of 1857 and ascertained that the overwhelming majority of Illinois voters were disgusted with events in Kansas. Unless he opposed the Lecompton constitution as a fraud he faced certain defeat in his bid for re-election for the Senate in 1858 and that the Republicans would sweep the state. Furthermore, he
hoped that an anti-Lecompton stand would draw back much of the support he lost during the Kansas-Nebraska battle.

Douglas accurately predicted the results of his anti-Lecompton stand. Throughout the north he was hailed as the champion of fair play and political freedom. Republican party leaders in Illinois immediately realized the danger they were in and moved to head off mass defections by questioning the Senator's motives. "We do not like to impute sinister motives to any man," declared the Republican Rockford Register, "but we are strongly tempted to believe Douglas' present position is taken with a view to make political capital by which to assure his return to the Senate." In spite of their efforts significant numbers of Republicans expressed support for the Little Giant. Many eastern Republican leaders urged Illinois party members to rally behind Douglas.

It was fortunate for Douglas that he received additional support from the Republicans. Illinois was not a politically homogeneous state. There were strong pro-slavery elements in the southern section of the state, a section called Egypt, which clashed with free-state men in the north and moderates in the central districts. "There is not between South Carolina and Massachusetts...a more deadly hostility than between the ninth and first Congressional districts in this state," observed the Chicago Tribune. Several strong Democrats from Egypt were expected to support the Lecompton constitution because they were friendly toward slavery. Others might refuse to abandon the Administration regardless of Douglas' popularity. Losing their support might make it impossible for Douglas to be re-elected.4

If that was not enough, there was a significant number of Democrats who resented the Senator's leadership or held personal grudges from earlier days. Ex-Governor John Reynolds, ex-Senator Sidney Breese and
Congressman John A. McClerand were among them. Combined with the pro-slavery element these men could form a powerful opposition to Douglas' leadership if he gave them the chance by opposing the Administration. They would also gain powerful allies from without the state. The President, his Cabinet and the majority of the Democratic members of Congress voiced their support for the Lecompton constitution. In late November, the Senator set out for Washington for the opening of the next Congressional session. Principle dictated that he oppose the Administration but political expedience also played a part in his decision. His stand might win additional free-state support or it might give his rivals in the Illinois Democracy the opportunity to take control of the party, or at least secure his defeat in 1858.
II

THE OPPOSITION TAKES SHAPE

Congress convened in December, 1857 and it immediately began debating the Lecompton bill. President Buchanan revealed his position in his first annual message to Congress delivered on December 8. The Lecompton constitution, Buchanan argued, had been adopted in a fair and legal manner. More importantly, he believed the issue of slavery could best be localized as called for by the doctrine of popular sovereignty by Congress quickly passing the bill and letting the people of the new state to deal with it as they wished. The President's message contained no surprises, as he had indicated earlier that he approved of the Lecompton constitution.

The following day, December 9, Douglas made his first public statement on the Kansas question. Speaking from the Senate floor, the galleries crammed with reporters and other anxious spectators, Douglas took the open ground against the Lecompton bill. He argued that the President had made a fundamental error in interpreting popular sovereignty. "I have spent too much strength and breath, and health, too, to establish this great principle in the popular heart now to see it frittered away," he exclaimed bitterly. Douglas demanded that the entire document be submitted to the people and condemned the partial submission scheme provided by the Lecompton convention. He pointed out that the delegates' refusal to give the Kansas voters a chance to reject the constitution proved that it would have been rejected by a clear majority. Buchanan's message, he declared angrily, did not conceal the fact that the Lecompton constitution was a "flagrant violation of popular rights in Kansas." Douglas and the President had collided head on.
Although many Democrats throughout the north joined Republicans in congratulating Douglas, the collision rocked the Democratic party to its very foundation. Southern, pro-slavery Democrats were particularly dismayed at Douglas' course but it was also viewed with intense interest in Illinois where the Senator would seek re-election in the coming year. Although they felt great regret over the split, the majority of Illinois Democrats rushed to Douglas' side. At the time of the Senator's address, fifty-four of fifty-six Democratic newspapers in Illinois supported the Little Giant and his anti-Lecompton stand.²

Buchanan had never been a very popular President in Illinois. News of his nomination for the Presidency in 1856 had been greeted with little enthusiasm as Illinois Democrats felt Douglas eminently more qualified for that honor. But a President held strong powers to make friends or to destroy his critics. Although Buchanan had not the personal force of an Andrew Jackson, he could wield the one power which Jackson used so well, political patronage. The President could strike terror into the hearts of federal officeholders who wished to keep their positions or he could hold federal jobs in front of ambitious Democrats to lure them into Lecomptonism. Even as the Douglas forces mustered on the prairies of Illinois, confident in their superior numbers, they could not ignore the dangers of open warfare with the President.

The Douglasites did not wish to provoke warfare if they could avoid it. Most public utterances were tempered by expressions of confidence in the Administration. A large meeting of the Democracy of Chicago, on December 9, passed pro-Douglas and anti-Lecompton resolutions but balanced them with one of a more conciliatory nature. At
Carlinville, John A. McClerand defended the President against the attacks of Republican John N. Palmer. This strategy was adopted not because the Douglas forces were lukewarm in their anti-Lecomptonism but to avoid party division in the face of a battle with the Republicans in the fall of 1858. Their path would prove difficult, for word came from Washington that the Administration planned to use the patronage to weaken the anti-Lecomptonites.  

Under the cover of their conciliatory gestures the Douglas men made ready for battle. "I am inclined to think," wrote James Sheahan, editor of the Chicago Times and a Douglasite leader, "that if old Buck commences war & proceeds to blows, that we had better hit back promptly." Other Democrats also maintained outward appearances of conciliation but lay poised for an assault on the Administration should Douglas give the signal. For the time being, however, Douglas refrained from making any personal attacks on Buchanan, thus leaving the door open for peace.  

Support for Douglas was not unanimous among Illinois Democrats. Threat of removal from office and hope of gaining a position were enough to bring recruits into the Buchanan camp joining those already adhering to Lecomptonism. The Joliet Signal and the Harrisburg Index had consistently expressed pro-Lecompton sentiments. Soon joining them were the Cairo Times and Delta and the People Democratic Union. The Times and Delta earlier expressed support for Douglas and attacked the manner of adopting the Lecompton constitution as "a humbug and a farce." In January 10, 1858, it called for an impartial evaluation of the Administration's position, lauding Buchanan's "great ability" and "patriotic purposes." Thereafter, the Times and Delta condemned the Douglas faction. The editors explained their change of heart by claiming they had been
caught up in the excitement of ant-Lecomptonism, which had since worn
off.5

Sheahan found another explanation for the sudden conversion.
One of the editors of the Cairo paper, Edward Willett, had been an
assistant editor for the Republican Chicago Tribune and was now
acting to destroy the Democratic party. Leonard G. Faxon, Willett's
partner, was convinced of the merits of the Lecompton constitution
when he was appointed to a federal office. The editor of the Democratic
Union was also concerned with more than principles. The Union
strongly denounced the Lecompton constitution until it received a
contract for government printing. It then lashed out at the Douglasites
as "traitors to the Democratic party, to their country and their God."6

The President's power to appoint men to federal office and to hand
out government contracts won a few voices to his side but the Republicans
were eager to see more rapid conversions. They rejoiced over the feud
between the two Democratic leaders but they worried that not enough
would come of it. Abraham Lincoln, in line for the Republican nomination
for Douglas' Senate seat, believed that Democrats did not yet under-
stand the extent of the difference between Douglas and Buchanan. Indeed,
most did not, for Buchanan papers were pitifully few and the Douglas
papers were trying to play down the split for fear of intra-party war-
fare.7

John Wentworth, Chicago Republican party boss and editor of the
Chicago Democrat, decided to use his paper to supplement the Administra-
tion voices. Wentworth had been driven from the Democratic party by
Douglas in 1854 over the Kansas-Nebraska Act and believed that the
Lecompton split gave him the chance to cripple the Democratic and gain
revenge. Trying to scare Democrats into the Buchanan fold, "Long John"
accused Douglas of having adopted abolitionism. Claiming to see no
middle ground between the President's Kansas policy and the abolition of slavery, Wentworth urged Democrats to follow genuine Democratic principles and the Buchanan Administration. But just in case an appeal based on principles did not work, the Democrat also warned, "We advise the officeholders, if they wish to keep their places, to drop Douglas and stand by Buchanan." For encouragement, it used the example of James G. Allen who, after he came out for the President, was appointed clerk of the House of Representatives. 8

Rumors continued to flow into Illinois that the Administration would punish the anti-LECOMPTONITES. The Douglas papers, however, dismissed the threats of the Administration's organ, the Washington Union, that Lecompton would be made a test of party fealty and pointed to the overwhelming opposition to it within the state. The Democratic press was almost unanimous behind Douglas. The northern part of the state, dominated by anti-slavery sentiment, was strongly anti-Lecompton and even the southern half of the state seemed solidly behind the Little Giant. By mid-winter, it seemed that all Buchanan had in his camp were some office-holders, office-seekers and a few men with southern sympathies. What disturbed the Douglas Democrats was that these few voices might still win enough support to cost the Democrats the November state elections. Furthermore, by throwing those state elections to the Republicans, the Buchananites might well cost Douglas his seat. 9

Not all of the Buchananites wanted to aid the Republicans and most were only interested in challenging Douglas for control of the state organization. But to accomplish such a difficult task they needed strong leadership of their own. Douglas had held power for so long, however, that Democrat possessed the confidence or ability to effectively challenge him. In early January, rumors sprouted that
that former-Governor Joel A. Matteson would defy Douglas' leadership. His organ, the *Joliet Signal*, had been the first to speak out for Leocompton but Matteson had not yet come forward himself. His wealth—he held interests in several banks and railroads—and his distinguished political career made him a likely choice of the Administration to head its organization. The *Chicago Democrat* announced a Buchanan-Matteson alliance but if one existed it was not readily apparent. Matteson had been a strong Douglas man and he gave no indications of renouncing his loyalty. Furthermore, Senator Lyman Trumbull wrote to a friend that the Administration may well choose Matteson but added, "Matteson, as you know, fights shyly and is not the man to meet Douglas." If the former-Governor ever considered opposing Douglas, he quickly decided against it.10

Several leading southern Illinois politicians also considered taking up the Administration's banner. John A. Logan and John A. McClermand were Douglas supporters but they also burned with personal ambition. McClermand had called Douglas a traitor during the Kansas-Nebraska battle and considered opposing Douglas again over Leocompton until he ascertained that the majority of Illinois Democrats supported the Little Giant. Logan wavered for a while before deciding that Douglas was still an orthodox Democrat and deserved Illinois' support.

Two other southern Illinois leaders cast their lots with the Administration. John Dougherty, editor of the *Joplin Sentinel*, and former-Governor John Reynolds assumed active roles in defending the President's Kansas policy. Neither, however, proved able to generate much public enthusiasm.11

Though the Buchananites found themselves without a strong leader, they did receive some valuable support. Col. James W. Barrett, a leading Democrat in Sangamon County, entered the debate on the President's side.
With him came a whole squad of anti-Douglas men who formed an organization in Springfield. Harry Wilton (ex-U. S. marshal), Col. Archer G. Merndon, Elliot B. Merndon, Amos McWilliams, W. B. Broadwell, James W. Keyes, James N. Currier, Dr. Alex Shields and others were described by the Republican Springfield Illinois State Journal as "firm, decided and resolute" Buchanan men. The Chicago Democrat hailed Charles S. Bagd, former editor of the Freeport Bulletin, for speaking out in favor of the Leesmpton constitution. The most significant concentration of Buchananites was in Chicago, where party squabbles were a tradition. Thomas Wayne, who had been on the resolutions committee at the December 9 Douglas rally and had publicly and privately praised Douglas for his anti-Leesmpton stand, switched his allegiance to Buchanan hoping to receive a federal appointment. Wayne had served as U. S. attorney until he lost Douglas' favor in October. Now he hoped to get revenge. Other discontented Chicago Democrats were Isaac Cook, Dr. Daniel Brainard, Henry S. Pich and Iram Bye. Within a few months they would all join the Administration's ranks.¹²

Wentworth viewed the situation in Chicago as a hornets' nest stirring up. His Chicago Democrat harped constantly upon the threat of removal hanging over all office-holders who expressed support for the Little Giant. The Buchananites, declared the Democrat, were having difficulty organizing but, the paper added, "we have no doubt that, if Mr. Buchanan makes one or two summary removals, every officeholder in the city will come out for him." Wentworth even kindly offered the Administration men a meeting place in one of his editorial rooms.¹³

The Administration press, though small, was growing. The first four papers were joined in March by the Bureau County Democrat. It had previously backed Douglas but experienced a change of heart and took
up the Lecompton banner. Although he denied it, the editor, also postmaster at Princeton, became worried about his future employment status. The Springfield Illinois State Register promptly blasted the editor for his lack of party loyalty: "The Democracy of Bureau, whom he has attempted to deceive, have repudiated his lead, condemned his treachery in public meetings, and ranked him as he deserves—an ingrate and a toady to power." The Register may have been exaggerating, but it was also true that when the Times and Delta converted, it suddenly found itself unable to collect payments for many of its subscriptions, which may have been a sign of public condemnation.  

Through the winter of 1858 the two factions struggled for control of local party organizations. Local and county meetings were held state-wide primarily to pass resolutions on the Kansas question. Both sides sought to clarify and solidify their positions while labeling each other as betrayers from the Democratic party. The Administration men, outnumbered, employed two tactics. They either worked within the existing party organizations or formed their own structures. The first alternative meant attending meetings called by the Douglas party leaders who controlled the organizations, and voting against, or trying to soften, anti-Lecompton resolutions. The second alternative called for separate meetings held by the Buchanan men, with resolutions that were pro-Lecompton, pro-Buchanan and vehemently anti-Douglas. The Lecomptonites claimed that by opposing the Administration and the majority of the Democrats in Congress, Douglas and his followers had abandoned the party. Therefore, the old organizations were no longer legitimate and new ones were necessary. 

During the winter months, the National Democrats usually worked within the existing party structure. As yet, Douglas and the President
had not assaulted each other personally and few Democrats wanted an open split in the party. But feelings between the two groups were strained. At the meeting of the Rushville Democracy in Schuyler County, party members clashed over the proper course for the party. The first speaker demanded a clear stand on the Kansas question since the President and Douglas obviously disagreed. An Administration supporter replied that Buchanan’s interpretation of popular sovereignty was correct. That principle required that the slavery agitation be confined to Kansas where it belonged. Congress, he continued, should admit Kansas under the Lecompton constitution and be done with it. He further accused the Douglas men of blindly worshipping their leader instead of adhering to principles. The Douglasites angrily denounced the Administration for its “tyrannical despotism” in forcing Lecompton as a party test. In another Democratic meeting, reported the Prairie Ranger, an Administration supporter arose in the midst of a pro-Douglas crowd and demanded that resolutions praising Douglas include the names of Republican leaders Senator William Seward and New York Tribune editor Horace Greeley since Douglas concurred with them.¹⁵

In Springfield, Lecomptonite John Reynolds took advantage of the conciliatory nature of the Douglas faction. On January 7, Reynolds addressed a meeting at the state house and praised the course of the Administration on Kansas and other matters. Not wishing to insult the President without explicit instructions from Douglas, the Democrat, including Charles Lanphier, one of the Senator’s closest friends and editor of the State Register, allowed Reynolds’ resolutions to pass. Later, Lanphier learned that Douglas disapproved of the meeting and the State Register condemned Reynolds for his speech.¹⁶

Even this rare Administration victory was short-lived. Six days
later, another Democratic meeting in Springfield fully sustained Douglas. Resolutions passed praising their "distinguished senator" and those who were aiding him in the fight to defeat the Lecompton bill. Another endorsed anti-Lecomptonism as the true spirit of the party's 1856 Cincinnati Platform and the principles of the national Democratic party. Lecomptonite John L. McConnell called for a separate vote on each resolution so he could vote for some but not for others. He was quickly escorted out of the hall where, according to witnesses, he was coerced through threats and whiskey to allow the resolutions to pass unanimously. One Republican wrote to Trumbull that McConnell told him the next day that he and other Democrats still dissented from the resolutions. Also from a Republican source came word that the National Democrats were able to dominate a meeting called by the regular organization in Alton. Resolutions praising both leaders were passed, claimed the Alton Daily Courier, but only those presented by the Buchanan men were passed unanimously. The National Democrats also issued a call for their own meeting which the Courier predicted would be a grand affair.17

The National Democrats who tried to control the existing party organizations were easily defeated. Their few reported successes are questionable because they were reported by the Republican press which was trying hard to disrupt the Democrats. Other Buchananites called separate meetings to free themselves from the dictatorial tactics of the Douglas Democrats. But this could only be done where there were enough Administration supporters to make a respectable showing; as it turned out, this was not very often.

One such area was the northeast part of the state. The Cook County organization harbored endless feuds and personal rivalries. In 1854,
John Wentworth defected to the Republicans. In 1856, James Sheahan and Chicago postmaster Isaac Cook fought over control of the Chicago organization and Douglas, to prevent serious damage, had Cook removed from his position. Now, even more Democrats were revolting against Douglas' and Sheahan's leadership over Lecompton, some using it as an opportunity to repay past indignities.

In March, the Chicago National Union, the local Administration paper called a meeting of the National Democrats of Chicago on March 30. The call was printed with 101 signatures of men when the State Journal referred to as "...old wheel horses of Democracy—men who have worked for the party, and waited on the party...for twenty-five or thirty years back. They are determined no longer to bear patiently the 'assaults' of the Douglas men." They and 300 other signers, names not printed in the paper for lack of space, invited all who were devoted to Democratic principles, "as illustrated in the administrations of Jefferson, Polk, Pierce and Buchanan...to renew expressions of confidence in the National Administration, upon all leading measures, and...to sustain it against all assaults, come they from...old enemies, or from those who the Democracy has heretofore delighted to honor." The meeting turned out much smaller than the Union predicted and was marred by a large number of Douglas Democrats determined to break up the proceedings by making noise and insulting the speakers. ¹⁸

The Chicago meeting had mixed results. It did not quite meet the expectations of its planners but it showed the presence of organized opposition to Douglas' leadership in the most populous section of the state. A few miles north of the city, in Waukesha, a group of National Democrats met on March 30 to express their confidence in the Administration. Calvin G. Parks was elected chairman and resolutions were passed
which included Buchanan in the Democratic school of Jefferson and
Jackson and expressed "decided disapprobation" of the course of
Stephen A. Douglas. Douglas, they claimed, had joined with the Repub-
licans in making war on a Democratic Administration. Further south,
the Peoria Democratic Union announced the formation of a Democratic
Administration Club in Peoria. The Club met on March 2 and elected
Judge W. H. Purple president and Charles S. Clark, David Maxwell and
Dr. John Murphy vice-presidents. It is unlikely, however, that more
than seven men attended the meeting. Hoping for more recruits, the
Buchananites promised to hold a mass meeting at a later date. 19

The National Democrats were making some headway in organizing
but they were consistently overwhelmed by the Douglas Democrat. In
many counties, party meetings passed resolutions which were concilia-
tory but yet strongly anti-Lecompton. The Jackson County convention
fully endorsed Douglas' position but neither he nor Buchanan were
specifically named. At Carlinville, McGlennan pointed out that the
anti-Lecomptonites agreed with Buchanan on all subjects except Kansas.
After some discussion, the convention in Fulton County expressed "ent-
ire confidence in the present administration." Conventions in Ma'ean,
Lee, Henry and Knox Counties took similar actions. In none of these
meetings were the National Democrats of any significance. Conciliatory
action was still based on the course of Senator Douglas who did not
yet directly attack the Administration. 20

In many county conventions no effort was made to placate the Lecom-
tonites. In Egypt, meetings in Johnson, Williamson and Jefferson
Counties ignored the President and attacked his Kansas policy. In central
Illinois, the Democrats in Sangamon and Tazewell Counties demanded that
the Lecompton constitution be submitted to the people of Kansas. Cook,
Will, Kane and LaSalle Counties also took determined anti-Lecompton positions. The resolutions passed in Will County were a direct repudiation of the *Dollar Signal*. One read that "...we will never listen to the teachings of any politician who counsels a surrender of the great principles of popular sovereignty upon the grounds of expediency." In January, 1858, the *State Register* claimed that in 70 of 102 counties Democratic meetings had unanimously passed strong anti-Lecompton resolutions. It confidently predicted that the rest would follow suit. Now, asked the *Register*, is the Administration going to read Douglas out of the party when the Illinois Democracy are united with him? 21

As winter passed it became more difficult to ignore the difficulties between Douglas and Buchanan. Behind the screen of conciliation put up by the Douglas press and speakers, pressure mounted. Douglas may have desired to end the feud but by midwinter it was clear that compromise would be political suicide. Charles Lanphier advised Douglas that the party in Illinois would refuse Lecomptonism in any form. To compromise principles in the face of political expediency, he argued, would destroy party morale. John A. McClelland, now solidly behind Douglas, wrote bluntly, "if you fight the battle boldly even a defeat would be a victory; but if you yield an inch, you are undone." 22

What path Douglas might have taken without such a clear mandate from his constituency is a matter of conjecture but he was quite willing to fight the battle as McClelland suggested. Douglas answered, "...you may rest assured that I will take no step backwards and abate not one iota of the position I have taken." He became increasingly hostile toward the Administration and less disposed to maintain peace within the party. To another Illinois Democrat he wrote bitterly, "It has become apparent that the administration is more anxious for my destruction than
they are for the harmony & unity of the Democratic Party. You have
doubtless seen that they are removing all my friends from office &
requiring pledges of hostility from all persons appointed to office.”
On March 22, Douglas appeared before the Senate and in a last, desper-
ate attempt to defeat the Lecompton bill, he openly and bitterly
attacked the Administration and its course. 23

The opening of the breach between Douglas and Buchanan forced the
Illinois factions to clarify their positions further. The National
Democrat argued that admitting Kansas under the Lecompton constitution
would return debate over slavery to the local level. "Admit Kansas, as
she now presents herself,” argued the Times and Delta, "and this miser-
able slavery question, this abominable nuisance...will cease to split
up the country into sections, will cease to monopolize the time of
Congress, will cease to be the ladder by which aspiring and relentless
politicians (referring to Douglas) strive to elevate themselves, and will
be settled in its proper form, the new state itself." Admit Kansas,
added the Democratic Union, and her people will be left "perfectly free
to regulate their domestic institutions in their own way." The Times and
Delta further lamented how the Kansas question "has been dragged into
every town, county and state election, has made enemies of friends," and
"has arrayed brother against brother." By opposing the Lecompton bill,
charged the Buchananites, Douglas threatened to destroy the Union for the
sake of his own political career; only Kansas’ admission could end the
cursed agitation. 24

In reply to charges that they were deserting the Democratic party,
the Buchanan men pointed to the situation in Washington, where the vast
majority of Democratic Congressmen supported the Administration. The
Chicago National Union accused the Douglas Democrats of deserting the
national party. The anti-lecomptonites enjoyed no southern support. Therefore they were forming another sectional party, similar to, if not in conjunction with, the Republican party, both completely confined to the north. All other Administration papers joined in condemning the Douglastites for splitting the party.\(^25\)

The National Democrats further asserted that they refused to blindly follow Douglas out of the party. It was commonly believed that Douglas' leadership of the Illinois Democracy was incontestable. That Douglas was as powerful in 1858 as at any other point in his career was clear but the Buchanan press refused to concede the fact. Douglas, they said, did not have Illinois in his "breeches pocket." The Illinois Democracy would gladly follow him but not against party principles. As long as he fought with the Administration, they predicted, there would be more and more desertions from his leadership. Southern Illinois, it was warned, was for prompt admission of Kansas and was running out of patience with the Little Giant.\(^26\)

Douglas was even charged with working with the Republicans. The Illinois delegation in Congress, quite obviously, was working with them to defeat the Lecompton bill. Their strategy was seized upon by the \textit{Joliet Signal}, curious to see how the delegation would explain this behavior to its constituency. Douglas was also accused of flooding southern Illinois with abolitionist literature. The \textit{Times and Delta} dedicated itself to enlightening voters in Egypt to the fact that the party was being led by the Douglas press to the brink of abolitionism. It added, confidently, that the Administration was rapidly gaining friends as the voters became informed.\(^27\)

With spring approaching, those involved in the debate tried to measure the strength of the contesting factions. Most estimates were quite
biased. The St. Louis Missouri Republican, the most widely read of the Lecompton papers, claimed that although some strong men still sat "on the fence," the mass of southern Illinoisans were "enthusiastically" in favor of the Administration. It acknowledged the presence of the Douglas clique but denied that it enjoyed any popular support. The article in the Republican prompted an immediate reply in the pro-
Douglas arcade Transcript, whose estimates came closer to reality:
"The Lecomptonites must muster a corporal's guard in Egypt today, and in Cairo, it will puzzle his [the editor of the Republican] to find a dozen men avowedly belonging to that gang of disorganizers." Lecomptonites, in return, challenged the Transcript to find twelve men in Egypt who did not support Lecompton.28

The southern portion of the state was crucial, for Egypt was solidly Democratic and the party needed overwhelming majorities there to offset Republican majorities in the northern counties. Also, it had pro-slavery tendencies which made it the only part of Illinois where the Lecomptonites could reasonably hope to make a strong showing. Neither side could hope to succeed without controlling the southern counties. Douglas was undoubtedly happy when he received word that nine-tenths of Egypt was at his command.29

From his home in Springfield, William H. Herndon, Lincoln's law partner, sent Senator Trumbull his appraisal of the Buchanan movement. Herndon became worried that the Democracy would be united for the President by November; "Things are here going too fast for Buch. Dissertations are too fast and quick from Douglas to Buchanan to do us much good." He added that Christian, Macoupin, St. Clair and other counties were out "hot and angry" against Douglas. "Poor Doug," wrote Herndon, "...he is lost & gone, & so let him go--poor fellow." Herndon obviously expected
more of the National Democrats than they could ever accomplish. Defections were not nearly as common as he claimed they were. The Lincoln Democrat reported that it had not yet heard of the first Democrat to oppose Douglas.30

Even the Republicans, who usually exaggerated the Administration's strength, sometimes acknowledged its weakness. A correspondent from Leura wrote to the Chicago Press that "it is hard to scare up a Buchananite." The Kansas Journal reported that even the office-holders were for Douglas: "We begin to fear the case of Mr. Buchanan herself in desperate." While Buchanan maintained some support among the press, office-holders, office-seekers and pro-slavery men, the great masses of the party were behind the Little Giant. It was estimated that the Douglas men outnumbered the Buchananites by at least ten to one in most counties. The National Democrats desperately needed strong leadership and much greater support from the President.31

February and March were crucial to the life of the National Democracy in Illinois. Overwhelming popular support for the Little Giant and his Kansas policy nearly squashed the life out of the Lecompton movement. Converts were few and attempts to take over local party organizations resulted in smashing defeats. The movement needed a shot in the arm to avoid being doomed to extinction. What kept it alive was the federal patronage. Men eager to advance under government patronage used the Lecompton movement and the Douglas-Buchanan feud to benefit their own careers. In January and February a swarm of office-seekers descended upon Washington in hopes of receiving a position in return for a pledge of loyalty to the President and Lecompton.

Buchanan became increasingly irritated by Douglas and his followers
throughout the north for what he charged was factional behavior. As early as January, the New York Times observed that Buchanan was beginning to regularly punish office-holders who opposed his Kansas policy. Accordingly, it became "fashionable" among applicants for offices to denounce Douglas. In Illinois, Douglas' supporters still predominated among federal office-holders, most importantly among postmasters. They used their control over the postal system to put anti-Lecompton documents into extensive circulation. The Lecomptonites hoped that once this was called to the President's attention, he might wish to replace the offending postmasters with his own supporters. Accordingly, scores of the ambitious travelled to the nation's capital in search of their political destiny. The Republican press urged them on. "Those who are anxious to secure eligible places," exclaimed the Chicago Democrat, "would do well to apply early." 

The pilgrimage of the faithful was led by Isaac Cook and Dr. Charles Leib who undertook to convince the President and other Administration officials that a wholesale removal of Douglas office-holders was in order. In late December, 1857, Leib led a party of Illinoisans in serenading Postmaster General Aaron Brown. Leib pledged the support of the Northwest to Democracy as interpreted by the Administration. He also charged the Illinois Congressional delegation with foreseeing the split and packing federal offices with anti-Lecomptonites. Congressman Thomas L. Harris, an anti-Lecomptonite from Springfield, feared that Cook and Leib would successfully influence the President. As a sign of how far things might go, rumors spread that James Sheahan was in Washington to offer his services to the Administration. Sheahan, it was said, was convinced that the Lecomptonites would gain control of the Illinois Democracy."
In late January, Harris wrote to Lanphier that the President was determined to crush the Douglas party and predicted that Cook, Leib and others would be appointed to federal offices. He was correct, for both men were appointed and proved to be the leading members of the Administration party in Illinois. Leib was given the office of special mail agent for the state replacing Douglasite James Ward. Given this position, Leib was able to travel about the state canvassing for the President. While the Chicago Tesserat gleefully hailed Leib as a "true" Democrat who refused to follow either Wentworth or Douglas out of the party, others felt less highly of the Doctor. 34

Charles Leib definitely led a colorful life. He spent time as a doctor, lawyer, liquor dealer and petty official. While his connection with affairs in Kansas is still cloudy, he did, in one capacity or another, serve in Jim Lane's Free-State Army in its crusade against slavery in Kansas, strange behavior for a Leesoponite. In 1856, he edited a Buchanan campaign paper called the Daily Pulaski and in 1857 was elected clerk of the Illinois house of representatives. Before his conversion from abolitionism to Leesoponism is attributed to a matter of principle, it is interesting to note what the Doctor did a few years later. By 1863, Leib had journeyed to New Mexico where he again became involved in the federal patronage, only this time the President was Abraham Lincoln and Leib was a Republican. Suddenly becoming a loyal Lincoln supporter can only lead one to believe that Leib was, as often charged, a "political chameleon." He used principles only for personal advancement. Harris, knowing Leib's character, wrote, "I hope the first time he gets into the state he will be tarred and feathered & sent out of it—down the Mississippi in a raft." 35

Slightly less colorful but more significant was Isaac Cook, who
was appointed postmaster for Chicago. He had held the post several years earlier at the request of Senator Douglas. From 1853 to 1856 Cook shared the leadership of the Chicago Democracy with James Sheahan. In 1856, the two quarrelled over a candidate in the city elections and Cook tried to oust Sheahan from his position as editor of the Chicago Times. His plan was thwarted by Douglas who, after considerable hesitation, had Cook removed from the post office. This infuriated Cook who had stood bravely by Douglas' side during the Kansas-Nebraska battle. In 1856, Cook sought a return to power using the Lecompton quarrel, and went to Washington to enlist in the Administration party.

In February, Cook was confirmed as Chicago postmaster despite determined opposition from Douglas.

This move met with immediate condemnation in Illinois for Cook, upon removal in 1856, had been exposed as unfit for office because of corrupt financial practices. Even Republicans condemned the move; "The office, under his previous management, was a nuisance and two-thirds of the businessmen of Illinois can testify to abuses which they suffered from either its carelessness or dishonesty." Cook, however, maintained a considerable following in Chicago that grew larger with his appointment when men realised the scope of the patronage he would control. So even though the new Chicago postmaster was an unsavoury character, he was now a man to be reckoned with, soon becoming the leader of the National Democrats.

Upon return to Chicago, Cook was greeted with a pro-Buchanan demonstration in his honor, with bonfires, bands and a march to his house to celebrate his return to power. Cook, addressing the crowd, accused Douglas of intentionally agitating the slavery question for personal advancement. He then threatened to use the "guillotine" on all
office-holders who did not back the Administration. Republicans rejoiced since Cook's appointment revealed that Douglas was no longer able to protect his friends from removal and mass defections from his ranks were sure to result. Whether approving or not, all realized that the appointment was a significant move by the President to strengthen his supporters in Illinois. 37

While Cook and Leib were the most important of Buchanan's appointees, they were not the only ones. Col. H. B. Carpenter, whom Douglas had removed from the post office during the previous fall, was named U. S. attorney for the northern district. Douglasite Jacob Fry was replaced as collector of the port of Chicago. Owen McCarty was appointed special mail agent. In Springfield, E. B. Herndon, Harry Wilton, A. G. Herndon, James Barret and J. M. Currier all received federal offices. Numerous Administration supporters across the state received appointments. In other patronage moves, government printing contracts were taken away from the Chicago Times and the Illinois State Register. An Administration paper, the Chicago National Union, was put into operation by Matthew Diversevay and Louis Schade, both of whom had recently returned from Washington. The State Journal reported ecstatically that the Administration men in southern Illinois were closely co-operating with Cook and Leib in the north and that no one who abandoned Democratic principles for Douglas' abolitionism would be allowed to remain in the party. 38

Soon after Buchanan began flaunting his strength, reports came trickling in of Administration gains across the state. The Chicago Press observed that the National Democratic party had grown quickly since Cook's appointment revealed Douglas' weakness. From Quincy, one Republican wrote to Senator Trumbull that, "Buchanan men are increasing
hereabouts—I hear daily of men who are coming out for Buck and against Doug—let a few removals, be only made—Lecompton Anti-Douglas men will spring up like mushrooms." The Quincy Whip warned Douglas men that Leib, Cook, Carpenter and others were reorganizing the Democratic party and that they would soon be through Quincy to read out all who refused to repudiate the little Giant. The State Journal predicted optimistically that no anti-Lecomptonite would be found in office within thirty days. Lecomptonites wrote repeatedly to the President urging even greater use of the "guillotines" while Leib and others travelled the state interrogating office-holders to determine their affiliation. If they but hinted support for Douglas, Leib attempted to secure their removal, though he was not always successful. The President, while taking measures to damage Douglas' position, did not wage all-out war. Both men kept the door open for reconciliation.39

What Leib and his henchmen were able to accomplish was enough to infuriate the Douglasites. Urging Lanphier to fight back, one Democrat wrote, "may you give them a stunning political overthrow for supercilious dictation and imprudent and infamous exertion of official power to crush the great party that have warmed and nourished and exalted the venomous reptiles." He continued, "it is awful to think of the destruction of the democratic party, but I fear it will come We cannot elect the President next time." The Chicago Times believed that the proscription policy might work to Douglas' advantage; "such acts of tyranny may strengthen the Democracy of Illinois in their opposition to fraud by whomever sustained, but will never coerce them into the support of what they regard as wrong, and oppression, and a flagrant violation of party faith."40

Bushman's use of the patronage was all that could have kept the
National Democracy alive in Illinois. Lecomptonism simply was not popular and could not compete with the immense support given the Little Giant. By keeping his faction alive and the party split in the public eye, the President aimed to damage Douglas' chances both in 1858 and in 1860. But as predicted by the Times, using his power to appoint men who were very unpopular strengthened the anti-Lecompton forces. Illinoisans were fiercely independent in politics and easily took offense at outside meddling. Just as Republicans rejected eastern plans to unite with Douglas in the battle against Lecompton, Democrats resisted pressure which coerced them into abandoning their leader.
III

THE CONVENTION SHARKS: THE RISE OF THE NATIONAL DEMOCRACY

The Douglasites believed the best way to silence the Administration supporters was to call an early state convention in order to expose their impotence once and for all. Accordingly, party leaders issued a call for a Democratic state convention to meet in Springfield on April 21. Such an early date was not without precedent, but the pressure exerted by the growing Administration faction pushed the Douglasites to organize and nominate candidates before any more damage could be done. By controlling a majority of the delegates, the anti-locomotivites aimed to dash the Buchananites' hopes of capturing power within the party.¹

The call met with immediate and bitter condemnation from the National Democrats who realized what the Douglasites were up to. There was not enough time, they argued, for the party rank and file to fully comprehend the extent of the differences between Douglas and the President. Furthermore, the outlying counties needed time to organize in a manner fair to all. They knew that the less time allowed to select delegates, the greater the advantage to those already holding the levers of power and that the Douglasites controlled every county. The Stills and Bates advised a delay of a month to six weeks to allow time for the Kansas question to be settled in Congress. Then the party could organize on a unified platform. Its advice was ignored by the Douglas Democrats who wanted nothing more than to destroy the Buchanan faction before it grew any stronger.²

In general, the National Democrats acted in compliance with the call for they did not yet declare independence from the existing party.
But they warned that if the convention turned out to be unsatisfactory, they would reluctantly withdraw and form their own party. In a lengthy editorial, the Bureau County Democrat expressed the National Democrats' position. It predicted that the convention would be composed of men insisting upon full endorsement of the Administration and others insisting upon repudiating its Kansas policy. Who would be in the majority it did not predict but the paper charged that the date was fixed early in order to secure an anti-Lecompton expression. The Democrat predicted that a resolution endorsing the Administration would be proposed and that if it were not adopted, the National Democrats would withdraw and organize upon principles recognized to be genuinely Democratic: "It may be regarded as absolutely certain that a sinew pure, out and out democratic organization will be effected and maintained in Illinois, and that this, and this only, will be recognized as the democratic party of the State." Furthermore, it argued, there would be no middle ground between the Administration's policy and Black Republicans. "No halfway position will be regarded but the principles of the party, as defined by the administration and the majority of the democrats in Congress, will determine the policy of all true democrats, not only in Illinois, but throughout the nation." Both factions set out with equal determination to nominate delegates to the April convention.¹

While they possessed equal determination it was soon clear that the anti-Lecomptonites controlled the local conventions. While an occasional Administration voice was heard, it was quickly silenced. At one county convention, resolutions condemning Douglas were presented but were voted down and burned in public. Shortly before the state convention it was reported that all local meetings, "north, south, east, or west," called by the regular Democratic organization endorsed the
little chance, even in Egypt, where pro-slavery feelings were strong, the Southern forces dominated meetings and virtually "laid the President out." Many predicted that not a single Lecompton delegate would be sent to Springfield. 4

The National Democrats, however, were far from giving up. They vehemently denounced the Douglas conventions as frauds and claimed they were dominated by Republicans and other non-Democrats. "Honest Democrats will enquire into the validity of credentials presented by men who were chosen in county conventions whereas disaffected Democrats and Republicans ruled the proceedings." The Times and Delta lashed out at what the State Register called as the "voice of county conventions" by writing, "we hope we may be PERMITTED by the Springfield smut machine to say, that they do not ALWAYS express the feelings of the people of the county, particularly, when said conventions are called by Know-Nothings, boys and dubious Democrats as was the case with the county convention held here yesterday." A Logan County man claimed that only twelve delegates representing only three of eight precincts met at the "Logan County" convention and passed resolutions supporting Douglas by a vote of six to five. The meeting in Pulaski County was labeled an "open faced swindle." 5

Again, the National Democrats chose between trying to make their voices heard in the regularly called meetings or, while condemning those as bolters' conventions, calling their own. In Belleville, former-Governor Reynolds launched nearly a one-man attack in the regularly called meeting there. Reynolds spoke of the folly in opposing a Democratic Administration. He warned that if pro-Douglas resolutions being considered were passed, the party would be utterly destroyed. He was safely in the minority, however, and the resolutions were passed, accompanied by
bitte replied to his speech. At the convention in Morgan County, John McConnell offered a resolution fully endorsing the President. He also accused the delegates of being devoted to Douglas instead of the party. But he too was voted down. 6

The most fascinating incident in the battle for convention delegates involved Isaac Cook, N. S. Wright, postmaster at Chatham in Sangamon County, and James Sheahan. Until Cook's appointment, Wright had been a staunch Douglas man. His ambition was excited by the suggestion that he should be postmaster at Springfield. Wright travelled to Washington but returned without the office. On his return trip, Wright stopped over in Chicago to confer with Buchanan leaders who advised him to continue working for the Administration. In early April, Cook wrote to Wright advising him and other postmasters that the President's friends were getting up a new organisation. "I...shall expect much to see you in Springfield, Ill, on the 21st, when many will be done in relation to Postmasters and offices that at any other time, as I shall have an opportunity of seeing most of the friends of the Administration who are applying for positions." "If you cannot come to the convention as a delegate," Cook explained, "you must at all events make your appearance there as we intend there to organise the National Democratic party, and it behoves the friends of the Administration to be on hand with their armor on." 7

Things went astray for Cook, however, when one of the postmasters turned his letter over to Sheahan for printing in the Chicago Times. Sheahan also managed to intercept and print the letter to Wright. Cook was furious and secured the arrest of Sheahan and his partner for mail theft. They were taken into custody by the U. S. marshal but were immediately released after they convinced him that the letter had been
mysteriously deposited in their office already opened. 8

Meanwhile, Wright, serving as a delegate in the Sangamon County Democratic meeting, was unable to prevent the passage of pro-Douglas resolutions which, he charged, put Sangamon County in direct opposition to the national party and the Administration. According to Sheahan, the postmaster then formed his own delegation by listing the names of twelve local postmasters whom he believed would not dare offend the President in public. Sheahan's account was distorted but Cook's embarrassment and the dismal failure to secure a Lecompton delegation from Sangamon County were terrible blows to the National Democrats. 9

Even in Chicago, where the Buchananites had some strength, it was clear that the Douglas men would dominate the regular convention. Accordingly, Cook and his followers formed their own delegation. Things got off to a rough start when, on March 30, the National Democrats held a rally in Market Hall. The meeting ran smoothly with speakers endorsing the Administration and confidently reading Douglas out of the party. Mid-way through the festivities, however, a gang of anti-Lecomptonites invaded the hall and "pandemonium" resulted. Leib and Carpenter were prevented from speaking and finally, in the midst of all the turmoil, someone turned the gas off and the "belligerent Democracy" left in total darkness. By mid-April Cook was active again and issued a call for ward meetings to appoint delegates favorable to the Administration for a Cook County convention to be held on April 19. That convention sent by far the largest delegation of National Democrats to Springfield for the state-wide rally. 10

Far down in Egypt another group of Lecomptonites was hard at work. Led by John Dougherty they convened at Jonesboro in Union County on April 19 to send their delegate to Springfield and to organize opposi-
tion to the regular organization. With S. S. Conden serving as president, the delegates passed resolutions in support of Lecompton and instructing the delegate to the state convention, John Dougherty, to oppose any endorsement of Senator Douglas. The Douglasite Cairo Gazette denounced Dougherty for what it called "trickery." Although Union County was the only one which might poll respectively for the Administration, wrote the paper, all its support was in Jonesboro. The call for the convention had not been publicized, it charged, in order to keep the rest of the county unaware. The few who were told, all Lecomptonites, then went about their business. 11

Similar rallies of the National Democracy were held at Peoria, Galena and Aurora, all meeting to express support for the President and to nominate delegates to the state convention. Their efforts, however, were denounced by the Douglasites as a plot to make a show at Springfield. The "bolters," they explained, were simply making up excuses to abandon the legitimate county conventions so that they could appoint their own delegations. It was true that if they had not, there would not have been a single Administration delegate at the state convention, for in many localities, the only Buchanan Democrats were the postmaster and a few of his friends. 12

As the the date of the state convention approached, some of the National Democrats viewed the gathering as an opportunity for reuniting the party on pure Democratic principles. John Reynolds issued an address entitled "The Olive Branch of Peace," described as "a calm and candid appeal to the 'sober second thought' of the Democracy of Illinois." No consideration could be more important than the preservation of the Union, explained Reynolds; the Union and the great Democratic party could not exist without each other. If the Democracy, the last truly
national political party broke up, there would be nothing left to hold the Union together. The division of the party in Illinois, therefore, would be a "dreadful calamity." Reynolds went on to explain that the Lecompton constitution was a legitimate expression of the will of the people of that territory and that Douglas and the anti-Lecomptonites erred in condemning it. The President, bound by his campaign pledges, had no choice but to suppress the slavery agitation as he was doing. The Illinois Democracy, therefore, must unite with Buchanan and the Democrats of the rest of the nation because party principles demanded it and because it was the only way to save the Union. "All for cause and nothing for men should be the governing principle," he concluded. 13

The Administration press joined Reynolds in calling for peace. The Times and Delta believed that Illinois Democrats were not looking where they were going and had allowed themselves to be led by Douglas off the "old and beaten path of Democracy." Fortunately, it was not too late for them to retrace their steps; opportunity lay in calm and deliberate action at the state convention. The Joliet Signal simply advised against making Lecompton a party test. It hoped wise counsels would prevail in Springfield. At the same time, the Douglas party bitterly attacked the National Democrats for disrupting the party. It accused them of being the instrument of the Republicans and used the publicity they were given by the Republican press as proof. Both factions, while desiring unity and reconciliation, demanded that the quarrel be settled on their own terms. It became clear that the convention would be somewhat less than harmonious. 14

On April 20, delegations began arriving in Springfield. The streets and inns buzzed with speculation on what the Buchananites would do. It
was certain that the Douglas delegates would control the proceedings but no-one was sure whether the Buchananites would submit or bolt the party and hold their own convention. Upon their arrival, Isaac Cook's Cook County delegation was besieged by Douglas men trying to convince them to "harmonize" on the Little Giant. Nothing came of these last minute efforts and even when the convention was called to order the next morning, most did not know what to expect. A committee was appointed under John A. M-Cleland to examine the credentials of any contesting delegations but, somewhat surprisingly, it received no business. The Douglas delegation from Cook County had appointed Dr. Daniel Brainard, who had been defeated in the race for mayor of Chicago possibly because the Buchananites refused to support him, to "argue and defend the right of the 'regulars' to seats in the convention." His services were not needed for the National Democrats failed to gather enough strength to directly confront the Douglasites. 15

Preliminary caucuses among the Administration men revealed the hopelessness of presenting their credentials to the regular convention. Counts showed that only about twenty-eight counties had sent National Democratic delegations, of which only five represented formal organizations. Twenty-seven of the 135 delegates were from Cook County. Most remaining delegations were of one, two or three men. Such strength was hardly sufficient to make effective opposition within the regular convention, so the Buchananites determined to organize on their own. 16

While the Douglas delegates met in the hall of the house of representatives in the state house, the Buchanan men were called to order across the hall in the senate chamber. John Dougherty was elected president along with five vice-presidents. After the resolutions committee retired to do its work, the delegates listened to speeches by Dougherty,
Cook, McConnell and others. R. B. Carpenter of Cook County declared that the National Democrats stood by the President and Democrats of all the other states. The Douglasites were the bolters, they were the office-seekers. The Little Giant had strayed from his own definition of popular sovereignty and must be destroyed. "The noble old Democratic party from Maine to California, will ever triumph while it remains true to the Union and faithful to the people," he added. "There are glorious victories in the future for us, and our 'Old National Guard' in Illinois will ever be found foremost in the fight." Another delegate announced he would rather see the election of Lincoln than of one "assuming the garb of a friend, while he deserts and curses the principles he has sworn to sustain." Resolutions were passed pronouncing adherence to the Cincinnati Platform and expressing support for the Administration's Kansas policy. Finally, a correspondence committee of nine, one man from each Congressional district, was appointed to set forth the Administration's position throughout Illinois. The meeting adjourned to assemble again at a later date in a genuine National Democratic state convention. 17

The Buchanan meeting created a great stir throughout the state. The Douglasites realized that their strategy had not worked and that the Administration voices were not silenced, and roundly denounced them as bolters and disorganizers. The Douglasites took heart in the diminutiveness of the Administration party. The Urbana Our Constitution explained that it had earlier feared the bolt would be sufficient to defeat the party in November but now realized that the defectors were powerless. The paper also rejoiced in the absence of southern delegates. Egypt was believed to be the stronghold of Lecomptonism but the majority of the Buchanan delegates came from Cook County and surrounding areas. Further-
more, the State Register announced that three office-holders present at the meeting confessed that they held Cook and Leib in disrespect. They believed that the President was being deceived by accounts of meetings that never took place and of support that did not exist. They asked whether they should pretend to act with the bolters or quit their positions. The Register answered, "If you can consistently with your own personal honor, hold your office by cheating these men who are cheating the administration, do so." The Douglas men may well have been heartened by the small number of Buchanan delegates but their press still felt obliged to spend more time attacking them than the Republicans. 18

Although the Buchanan meeting, if it had really been intended to destroy Douglas' leadership and unite the party under Lecomptonism, was a "miserable fizzle," it lashed out at its opposition with remarkable vigor. The Douglasites were denounced as "infamous traitors" and the Republicans were called "black abolitionists." The Buchananites answered charges of merely being a side-show to the Douglas convention with the retort that the Illinois Congressional delegation which went against the rest of the Democrats in Congress was the real side-show. The Douglas Democrats were not oblivious to the danger presented by the bolters. If the dissenters were able to maintain the support of the Administration, they might still grow strong enough to wreck the party by the fall. Therefore, although speakers delivered blistering attacks on the bolters themselves, the delegates in the Douglas convention passed anti-Lecompton resolutions which were watered down so as not to infuriate the President. No direct repudiation of his Kansas policy was passed and a motion expressing regret over the removal of anti-Lecompton office-holders was tabled. 19
One group was not upset with events taking place in Springfield. In fact, Republican leaders were ecstatic. "This was an unfortunate—a most untoward event for Douglas," wrote William Herndon, "and so he will find it out." Buchanan's convention was "brave, manly, courageous in its hell-deep iniquity; it was Lucifer-like in act and deed, and we in Illinois anticipate a terrible struggle...So look out for squalls," he added. Another Republican observer hailed the split as the funeral of the Democracy. Lincoln, the man with the most to gain from all of this, wrote, "say what they will, they are having an abundance of trouble." Republicans "are all in high spirits, and think, if we do not win, it will be our own fault. So I really think." The Republicans certainly had good reason to rejoice for the split in the Democracy was more than they could have wished for. However, the National Democrats were as yet miserably weak and could possibly have little or no effect on the fall elections. They would have to grow considerably to really endanger the outcome of the elections, but during the next two months, it appeared as if they would. 20

Soon after the end of the April festivities, a call for a convention of the Illinois National Democracy to be held in Springfield on June 9 appeared in the Buchanan press. The April meeting had set up a state central organization designed to construct the new party. A fourteen-member state central committee was appointed headed by Isaac Cook. Other prominent members were David LeRoy of Grundy County, Charles Bonney of Peoria County, W. C. Wagley of Hancock County, Dr. Thomas M. Hope of Madison County and William L. Dougherty of Union County. 21

The correspondence committee, chaired by R. B. Carpenter, issued an "Address to the People of Illinois" in mid-May. The National Democrats, it began, had not abandoned the party. Their purpose was simply
to maintain party doctrine as defined by the Cincinnati Platform and the campaign pledges of James Buchanan. Furthermore, Senator Douglas' position on Kansas, by alienating the south, overtly aided the cause of sectionalism. The issue of slavery in the Kansas territory was not important enough to break up the Democratic party, as Douglas seemed to feel. And even if it were, the President's position was constitutional, legal and correct. Finally, in explanation of their poor showing in April, the Address charged the Douglas forces with using dishonest means to exclude the Lecomptonites from the county conventions.²²

The call for a second state convention and the "Address to the People of Illinois" publicly sealed the party division. They also prompted heated debate among the Lecomptonites, an ominous sign that the National Democrats were not of one mind. Only most strongly critical of Douglas' leadership or those concerned only with personal advancement actually desired a separate party. Ironically, they claimed to work for party unity and blamed everything on Douglas for opposing the Administration. "Had Mr. Douglas been true to his party," declared one Buchanan paper, "the Republicans could never have witnessed a split in our ranks. It was he who demanded the division and his blind followers made it." Douglas supposedly tried to win Republican support by creating the Lecompton debate and it now fell to loyal Democrats to drive him into private life and "give him ample leisure time to study out the universal law of gravitation in connection with that difficult feat in political equestrianism styled the 'two horse act'." Thomas Hoyne blamed the split on the early call for the state convention; had the party waited until the Kansas issue was resolved in Congress, it could have organized on a common platform. He called on the Douglas
nominees to suggest grounds for reconciliation and to submit their names to the June convention for further endorsement. Hoyne felt optimistic for he believed there were no differences in principle outside of loyalty to Stephen A. Douglas.\textsuperscript{23}

Many Lecomptonites saw no reason to break up the party and risk a Republican victory. The \textit{Joliet Signal} voiced the views of those who disagreed with Douglas on Kansas but wished to support the nominees of the majority of the party, "We do not believe there is a democrat in the state who would not wish them elected in preference to Black Republicans." The \textit{Signal} endorsed the views and principles of the National Democratic convention but saw no reason to build another party on a separate ticket. The new party was weak enough united, a split would ruin it. The fate of the National Democracy rested with the ability of party leaders to find a common ground and hold the party together. Debate continued and a final decision on the Lecomptonites' course was put off until the June convention.\textsuperscript{24}

Meanwhile, the Lecompton leaders were presented with another problem. On April 30, Congress passed the English bill, a compromise solution to the Lecompton dispute. The English bill, proposed by Indiana's Congressman William H. English, provided for a general election whereby the Kansas voters could choose whether to accept or reject the standard federal land-grant offered to newly admitted states. If the Kansans accepted the land-grant they would be admitted as a slave state under the Lecompton constitution. If they rejected it, statehood would be postponed indefinitely. The bill obviously bribed the Kansans to accept the Lecompton constitution. But it did, in a way, provide for full submission as demanded by the Douglasites and there was little danger that the free-state majority would accept the land-grant anyway.
(In August, the offer was rejected by an overwhelming majority).

Douglas and his followers condemned the English bill but they accepted its passage as a final solution. This seemed to make the Administration party unnecessary. The Buchanan press strongly endorsed the English compromise and argued that the controversial land-grant was not bribery but the same as contained in bills presented by the anti-Lecomptonites. Knowing Douglas' opposition to its passage, the National Democrats proposed making support of the English bill a test of party loyalty, for if they could not keep the quarrel going their party would collapse. The Times and Delta renewed its assault on the Illinois Congressional delegation for working in opposition to the Administration; "Our representatives appear as if acting with the deliberate purpose of selling out this state to the Black Republicans."

Douglas' followers were chastised for opposing a measure which could reasonably unite the party. Douglas' opposition to the English bill gave the Buchananites reason to believe that he carried a personal grudge against the President, a charge they often repeated. 25

The Republicans were just as concerned with the possibility of a Democratic reconciliation on the English bill as the Buchananites. Some Republican leaders hoped that Douglas' followers would move back to the Administration leaving the Little Giant high and dry. One wrote, "...and now the President has gained his point we shall see most of the 'terrified' Douglas Democrats calling it a dead issue, and returning to their party allegiance most submissively. So will end their anti-Lecomptonism." E. L. Baker predicted that Douglas would lose at least half his strength. Lincoln explained that the Douglasites might follow the Little Giant but that his opposition to the English bill made them believe that he was purposely quarrelling with the President, in disregard of party princi-
pleas. But the Republicans really feared that an agreement between
Douglas and the President would re-unite the party before the fall. 26

The Douglas press generally condemned the English bill as another
swindle since the people of Kansas were to be rewarded if they
accepted the Lecompton constitution but they also believed that it
ended the debate. Following the lead of the Chicago Times they argued
that one way or the other, support of the English bill or Lecompton
should not be made a test of party loyalty and that the party should
unite on the Cincinnati Platform alone. They began to appeal to the
Lecomptonites to end the revolt and support the nominees of the Doug-
las convention. Party loyalty, they argued, should transcend Lecompton;
all Democrats should unite to defeat the Republicans. Many Lecomptonites
responded by moving back into the Douglas camp, few really wanted to
continue the fight, but the National Democratic leaders found ways to
make up for the losses. 27

Even if their showing at the April convention seemed lamentably
weak, the National Democrats vigorously launched preparations for the
June rally, leaving no stone unturned in the search for ways to attack
Senator Douglas and to swell the Administration's ranks. The state central
committee proved to be an effective device for wielding the patronage.
The committee men moved about their own districts inquiring into the
number and character of any Douglasites holding office and gathering
the names of suitable Buchanan men to replace them. This information
was passed along to the patronage chiefs, Isaac Cook and Charles Leib,
who then took the appropriate steps to make the desired changes. 28

In addition to the use of the patronage, the Buchananites empha-
sized the differences between the President and Douglas. The Chicago
National Union accused Douglas of being hostile to the Administration
long before the Kansas controversy. In fact, the paper charged, Douglas planned to destroy the Democratic party and defect to the Republicans. Alert Democrats all over the state, it claimed, saw the truth in Douglas' plot and were moving back to the Administration; "Douglas men are becoming fewer and fewer each day, while the Administration party are having scores of accessions. So down to Egypt, and you can scarcely find a man who calls himself a Douglas Democrat." Reports such as these were part of a strategy to hide the party's weakness from prospective converts. It was also necessary to make the President believe that his movement in Illinois was prospering, otherwise he might withdraw his support.29

The Administration press also used the peace-feelers from the Douglasites as a campaign weapon. Previous to the April convention, Douglas papers vehemently attacked the Buchanan men as bolters. Now, wrote the Buchananites, "instead of blustering and brow-beating, they are now whining and sniffing like whipped children. They are alarmed at the strength of the administration party and though they endeavor to make it out a small affair, it is easily seen in their articles that they fear it." The Douglas party leaders were afraid, wrote the Times and Delta, that "the rank and file would wake up and see that Douglas was working for the Republicans, and move back to the President. Scoffing at arguments that their efforts worked to the advantage of the Republicans, the Buchananites pointed out that the Republican party already controlled all the state offices and that it was Douglas who had weakened the party by distorting its principles to his advantage. Only moving the party back to genuine national Democratic principles could defeat the Republicans."30

At the same time that the Buchanan Democrats were accusing Douglas of conspiring with the abolitionists, Republicans were aiding the Buch-
anan Democrats. They saw in the June convention a chance to permanently rupture the Illinois Democracy and did what they could to help things along. Some leaders were optimistic about current trends. E. L. Baker believed that the National Democrats were doing just fine; "They are hard at work, manipulating throughout the state." Baker predicted that by November, possibly by June, the Buchanan men would "show a formidable front in the state." This was an optimistic view and most Republicans realized it. Lincoln fretted over signs of reconciliation between Douglas and the Lecomptonites and also worried about Republican desertions to Douglas because of the Senator's free-soil stance. "There is certainly a double game being played somehow," he wrote. Lincoln accused Douglas of temporarily luring the President into peace in order to destroy the June convention. Hopefully, thought Lincoln, Douglas would lose more Democratic votes by this than he would gain from the Republicans. Republicans also countered Douglasite attempts to hide the differences of opinion in Washington by strenuously emphasizing the irreconcilable positions held by the two factions. 31

As the Republicans shouted encouragement from one side, the Douglas Democrats assailed from the other. "Spurn them as you would lepers," wrote the State Register, "they are enemies in disguise—tenfold more odious than open manly opponents, let such take what name they may." The Douglas press launched personal attacks on the Buchanan leaders. They accused A. G. Herndon of having said in 1856 that he "would not give six bits to see the d—d old federal a—n of a b____n Buchanan elected." Leib, Cook, Carpenter and others were called "faithless" politicians. Buchanan meetings and rallies were promptly denounced and ridiculed. 32

The Douglasites did the most damage by forcing the Washington Union, the Administration's organ, into repudiating the movement led by
Cook and Leib. Under questioning from the *Chicago Times*, the Union expressed its wish that all efforts be taken to secure the triumph of the Democratic party and urged Illinois Democrats to accept the nominees of the Douglas convention. Although the Union soon renewed its attacks on the Douglas faction, it could never erase the damage done by the Douglas papers' headlines "THE BOLTERS REPUDIATED," or "THE ADMINISTRATION REPUDIATING THE DISORGANIZERS," or "THE COALITION WITH REPUBLICANS DENOUNCED AS CRIMINAL." Many Democrats wished to remain in good favor with the Administration and certainly thought twice about joining the new party after reading the Union's editorial and the Douglas press made sure that everyone read it.\textsuperscript{33}

Despite public confidence, the Douglasites privately feared the new party. Some believed that the party nominees might be convinced to accept the Administration's platform in return for an endorsement from the June convention. William E. Fonda and Augustus C. French, nominated for state treasurer and superintendent of public instruction, the only two state-wide offices up for election in the fall, were approached by the Buchananites with offers of such a deal. Sheahan worried that French was in correspondence with them. Not only must Fonda and French refuse to run on the Buchanan platform, wrote Sheahan, they must repudiate any organizations save the one that nominated them. His fears were unjustified for both nominees denied any intention of accommodating the Buchananites in any way. Though the Douglas party leaders found it easy to expose the weaknesses of the Buchanan party, they saw that it was still growing and could likely cause a smashing Democratic defeat.\textsuperscript{34}

In the midst of heated debate, the National Democracy boldly set out to build a respectable political party. Wherever there were concen-
trations of Buchanan men, meetings were held to choose delegates to the June convention. Calls were issued by the state central committee for local rallies to organize grass-roots party machinery and to nominate delegates. Across the state, a new anti-Douglas Democratic party gradually took shape. In the north where Lecomptonism was nearly non-existent and the party had to rely solely on the patronage, meetings were few and sparsely attended. In Kane County, a convention was held with little publicity and was little more than a gathering of a few friends. The Bureau County Buchananites did little better even with the aid of their own paper, the Bureau County Democrat. The Cook led faction in Chicago, however, prepared to send a sizeable delegation to Springfield.35

Moving to the central part of the state, crucial because Democrats and Republicans were evenly matched, the National Democrats did better, but meetings were still poorly attended. The Douglas paper in Champaign County claimed that the Buchanan meeting there was solely the work of Republicans and warned true friends of the Administration to steer clear. The Cass County rally was attended by seven Buchanan men, eleven spectators and lasted only ten minutes. But though most meetings flopped, a few showed some strength. The Logan County rally was able to appoint a full slate of delegates while in Sangamon, where Douglas had earlier made quite a few enemies, the convention also went well. Held on June 5, it was chaired by Fr. Alex Shields with A. G. Herndon, E. B. Herndon and Dr. Wright also playing key roles. These were ambitious men, anxious to get out from under the domination of the Douglas leaders in Springfield. Though relatively small, this rally included men of influence and creativity. Their activities created a great deal of anxiety among the Douglasites, who went to great lengths to criticize them. Before
adjourning, the delegates appointed a county central committee to set
precinct level organizations and the Sangamon County National Demo-
cracy was off and moving. 36

It was in the south, in Egypt, where the Buchanan party did best.
Here Lecomptonites John Reynolds, John Dougherty and former-Senator
Sidney Breese among others exerted strong influence in their locali-
ties. Lecomptonism, added to the power of the patronage, created a force
strong enough to build the rudiments, at least, of a political party.
But even in Egypt Douglas' influence overwhelmed the Buchananites, so
that rallies, though more frequent, were no larger than anywhere else.
The Gallatin County rally was held in the clerk's office at Shawneetown.
In Alexander County, the call for the convention invited only those
favorable to the Administration, presumably because there were no
Douglasites nearby, but actually because the Douglasites would have
easily dominated the proceedings. The Republican Quincy Whig could only
describe the Buchanan rally there as being "pretty well attended"—fair
indication that it was a flop because the Republican press usually
blew such meetings all out of proportion. Matters were not completely
hopeless for support came from many old-timers who considered Douglas
a young upstart who was infecting the party with abolitionism. These
old "wheel-horses" of the party might well wield enough influence to
cause considerable defections from the Douglas party. 37

As the convention grew near, debate over its real purpose grew
hotter. The moderates claimed that it would only pass resolutions
stating the proper Democratic position and work to get the Douglas
nominees to accept it. This course was designed as the best way to re-
unite the party. The radicals argued that Douglas and his followers had
already moved out of the party and therefore the convention had to
nominate its own ticket. They were quite willing to divide the party, temporarily, to wrest leadership away from Douglas. Also, for many a separate party was the only way to further their own careers. Cook, Leib and their followers were sure to push the delegates toward a final separation. Thus the National Democrats came together in Springfield bringing a curious mixture of devotion to principles and to self-advancement. If the two could be held together, the party would grow quite strong, if not, it would be severely weakened.

The radical group appeared to have the upper-hand. John Dougherty tore into the Douglasites for deserting the national platform and charged Douglas with desiring free-soil support. "They will be crushed and ground to powder," he warned. The Chicago National Union offered to support Fossey and French if they took up the true platform but denied that it would do so in any other case. The Republicans urged the Buchanan men not to desert their leader in his "hour of necessity." But word from Washington seemed to indicate that the President opposed the nomination of a second ticket. No instructions came, however, on how to get the Douglasites to compromise their principles. In any case, the Cook-Leib faction had no intention of giving up the opportunity to lead their own political party; the situation remained cloudy and tensions high. 38

On June 8, the delegations began arriving in Springfield. The streets were unusually animated and spirits were high as all hoped for a successful convention. From all appearances, significant gains had been made during the past two months. One reporter described feelings of reconciliation among the delegates but the desire was to re-unite the party only on genuine Democratic principles. A preliminary meeting was held at the court house that evening to discuss strategy for the next
day. Again, speakers reiterated their desire to end the feud, but on their own terms. Others reported significant strength in their home counties. The most interesting occurrence of the day was a scuffle between two of the more important delegates.39

In May, the Administration had dispatched Francis J. Grund to act as a patronage broker. Grund, a resident of Washington and a long-time acquaintance of Buchanan's, was at the moment in good favor with the President so he was immediately taken in by Leib and Cook, who viewed him as a useful tool in terrorizing office-holders. Other Lecomptonites took offense at his presence. Louis Schade, editor of the National Union, criticized Grund as an outside meddler; he could not believe that the Administration would send such a man to aid the party. Grund, a political opportunist of the worst kind, had a particularly soiled reputation. He claimed the distinct honor of having been spit upon by Missouri's senator Thomas Hart Benton. His arrival in Illinois was condemned by Republicans and Democrats alike. Schade asked Grund to stay away from Springfield and pleaded to his fellow delegates, "let us act harmoniously, but never allow improper elements to rule or we will not have a shadow of a chance." When the two met in a Springfield street, Grund grabbed Schade's nose and they went at it with canes until they were pulled apart. The affair reeked of trouble, for not only Grund, but Cook, Leib and their followers employed tactics which many delegates considered improper. Far from bringing the party together, these men were driving it apart.40

At 10 A.M. on June 9, the National Democratic state convention was called to order. John Dougherty and the rest of the officers of the April meeting were immediately restored to their positions. Dougherty, in his opening remarks, justified the proceedings. He declared that they were
not dividing the Democratic party of Illinois, they were that party. The delegates met now to rebuke the new-fangled Douglas platform which was being forced upon Illinois Democrats. Another delegate added that he would support Douglas if he stood on the proper principles but that "Stephen had got pretty near Fred, on the Douglas list." Dougherty was followed by several more speakers, mostly from Cook County, who continued the attack on the Little Giant. When they concluded, a committee on credentials and another on resolutions were appointed and the meeting adjourned until that afternoon. 41

At 2 P.M. the afternoon session opened with a speech from Charles Bonney who declared that when principles were concerned, "no National Democrat will compromise or back down one iota." The spirit of reconciliation seemed to be fading as Douglas was further denounced as a "Lucifer" who would rise no more. Next, the credentials committee reported on the strength of the party. The delegate count was greatly distorted by the committee and the reporters present. Douglas sources claimed that the committee reported that only fifteen to twenty counties were represented and that only about 100 delegates had arrived. Republican sources reported contesting delegations being turned away by the committee for the lack of proper credentials and yet the attendance was over 400. Different witnesses estimated the number of county delegations in the hall anywhere from 15 to 80, with the actual count probably being close to 49. In any case, less than half the state was represented and nearly one-third of the delegates were from Cook County. Isaac Cook, however, announced that organization was complete in every Congressional district with work continuing in nearly every county. Whatever Cook may have known, it was clear from the turnout that the rank and file of the Democratic party was not enthused with the Administration's point of
The next step was writing a platform, what many hoped would be the final step. The resolutions committee reported a twelve-plank platform which was promptly adopted. One plank endorsed the English bill, one dealt with foreign affairs, a third condemned the Republicans and nine were reserved for attacking the Douglasites. These resolutions revealed that the convention was dominated by Cook and Leib. Therefore it is not surprising that a call for nominations was greeted with wild applause. Momentum became so strong in this direction that a resolution calling for a nominating committee was tabled for being too slow. By acclamation the delegates nominated John Reynolds and John Dougherty to oppose Fondey and French. Both nominations were made "and confirmed amid cheering." Cook and Leib were successful in keeping the two Democratic factions apart and the party prepared for war but they needed to keep the moderates with them.\textsuperscript{43}

The Douglasites, although they scoffed at the proceedings, had quite a bit to worry about. Between the two conventions, the National Democrats had made significant advances. The June 9 convention more than doubled the size of its predecessor and was more confident and war-like. The primary reason for their advances was the effective use of the patronage. Most converts were concerned only with personal advancement. In Chicago, Dr. Brainard, the Douglasite candidate for mayor only months earlier, joined the new party after being appointed surgeon of the Marine hospital in Chicago. (Brainard had been removed from that post in 1857 at Douglas' insistence.) Collectors, surveyors, receivers, and postmasters across the state were threatened or bribed into joining with the Lecomptonites.\textsuperscript{44}

The Republicans, hoping to attract Douglas' free-soil support,
pretended to be horrified at the strength of the Lecomptonites and
called on the Douglasites to join them in an effort to defeat this
powerful, new Administration party. Reynolds and Dougherty were Demo-
crats of long-standing, wielding great influence, they cried, but an
alliance of all anti-Lecompton forces might still win the day. The
Douglasites were not so easily fooled and they denounced the delegates
and nominees as traitors, and weak ones at that. Though their strength
had increased dramatically, the National Democracy was still in its
infancy. It had only questionable popular support and precious little
time to prepare for the state elections. It appeared doubtful, yet quite
possible, that it could mount an effective challenge by November. We
shall never know because as a result of Cook and Leib’s dictatorial
tactics, the party suffered a damaging quarrel. 45

Within weeks, the National Democrats slipped into disarray. Led by
Calneh Zarley, editor of the Joliet Signal, many Lecomptonites left the
party and returned to the Douglas camp. Zarley complained that Cook and
his henchmen had monopolized control of the convention and had excluded
all others from the decisions. Cook’s men were more concerned with
consolidating their own power than re-uniting the Democratic party and
were for “war to the knife.” Also, Zarley continued, the resolutions,
although correct in principle, were loaded down with personal antagonism
toward Douglas—destroying the idea that the new party cared only for
principles and not for men. He wrote, “We have not the least doubt that
the policy of President Buchanan has more warm supporters in Will
County than anywhere else, yet they are not in favor of destroying the
party for the sake of putting down Senator Douglas. And this seemed to
be the only subject of the prime movers of the convention at Springfield.”46

In short, Leib, Cook, Carpenter and their cohorts had gone too far.
In their lust for power and revenge they had driven the moderate wing back to Douglas. The Buchanan party did not disintegrate, but it was so weakened by the defection of the Signal and those who agreed with it, that all hope to reform the party and remove Senator Douglas almost completely vanished.

The party's most influential members soon came out for Fondevy and French. The Menard Index, one of the original Lecompton papers, denounced the Reynolds-Dougherty ticket. In Springfield, Alex Shields, leader of the Sangamon National Democrats, called the convention "a deception and a fraud; a most unqualified bamboozling game." He also condemned efforts to ruin the Democratic party only to defeat Douglas. Even the Senator, argued Shields, had a right to hold his own opinions. Thus a large and respectable element left the National Democracy leaving the Administration with only those seeking the spoils of patronage and revenge on Douglas. Such a group obviously could never supersede the Douglas party.

Adding to the woes of the Administration party, quarrels sprang up within the Chicago organization. Matthew Diversey and Louis Schade sold their interests in the National Union to Isaac Cook. Cook immediately twisted the paper to his own reckless purposes and viciously attacked anyone remotely connected with the Douglas party. Diversey and Schade grew angry and promptly repurchased their paper, turned on the Reynolds-Dougherty ticket, and repudiated everything printed during Cook's tenure. The editors also printed their knowledge of Cook's disreputable activities. A second Buchanan paper, the Chicago Herald, went into print to provide the party with a Chicago organ but the National Union's airing of Cook's dirty linen already caused considerable damage. Even Cook's cronies began quarreling among themselves. Charles N. Pine,
who edited the Herald, James N. Davidson, district attorney Daniel S. Fitch and R. B. Carpenter battled furiously over who could appoint whom to what office. Davidson was prompted to write, "the whole party here are in a Boil as Bitter as Wormwood and Gaul...owing to the action of the state convention." Reports reaching Washington were so confused that the President even refused Leib's demand that Zarley be removed from the Joliet post office as punishment for his defection. Buchanan felt obligated to reconsider his policy in Illinois. 48

But what of the nominees? If the National Democrats had chosen the right men as standard bearers, men who could rally the party about them and draw new converts, there might yet be hope. Unfortunately, Reynolds and Dougherty did not possess those characteristics. Both were old-timers who were now, though once party leaders, virtually relics of the past.

John Reynolds, nominated for superintendent of public instruction, was seventy years old and a resident of Belleville. Often called the "Old Ranger" in tribute to his service in the Indian wars some five decades back, Reynolds was a physically imposing man, six feet tall and of stout, muscular build. In a time when political power was coveted above all else, John Reynolds was truly a man of his age. From the time he moved into the state in 1800 to his retirement from public life he served the state as a lawyer, soldier, farmer, state legislator, judge, Governor and Congressman. A veteran of countless journeys throughout the state, the Old Ranger had many friends, attracted by his congenial nature and astute political sense, but by the 1850's, events proved beyond his control. 49

In 1823, Reynolds had worked to bring slavery into Illinois. He was an unswervingly slavery man who believed that Negroes were naturally
inferior and better off where they were. He was also a states' rights man who opposed any Congressional meddling in the slavery question. This was a political asset during most of his life, but Illinois was fast moving toward an anti-slavery position and Reynolds, with his pro-slavery beliefs, could no longer expect widespread support.

In 1854, when D. las' Kansas-Nebraska Act repealed the Missouri Compromise, Reynolds opposed it as a violation of states' rights and as being contrary to the wishes of the people. He stumped the state with his friend Lyman Trumbull against Douglas and the Act but did not, as Trumbull did, join the Republicans. Reynolds considered his position as the old-line Democratic one. When Douglas came out against Lecompton, creating the Kansas furor, Reynolds denounced him in violent terms and began work to build an opposition to the Little Giant. 50

John Dougherty, nominated for state treasurer, was in many respects similar to Reynolds. An old-timer, who had held many state offices and had built a respectable political following in Egypt, his pro-slavery stand was not unpopular in Jonesboro, where he lived. For a while, he edited the only paper in the region, the Jonesboro Gazette, and was the acknowledged boss of the Union County Democracy. The Chicago Democrat claimed that Dougherty possessed more influence in Egypt than anyone else. His opposition worried the Douglasites who took pains to assault Dougherty as a peregrinely inconsistent Democrat. But Dougherty answered that there was no Democrat more loyal than he and called for a comparison of Democratic strength in Jonesboro and Douglas' hometown, Chicago, where the Republicans reigned. 51

The nominees, though they were once the strong men of their party, just were not the men to challenge Douglas' leadership. (On the surface, they were running against Fondy and French but they admitted that their
primary purpose was to secure Douglas' defeat.) Reynolds was well liked but possessed little personal magnetism, described as a timid campaigner.

Dougherty, by 1858, was little more than a local party boss with diminishing strength. More than anything else, the two had been passed over by political currents. Their strict pro-slavery, pro-south sentiments would no longer wash in the state at large. Douglas, in fact, sought to increase his own popularity by moving toward free-soil ground.52
IV

THE CAMPAIGN BEGINS IN EARNEST

The Republicans rallied at their state convention in Springfield on June 16. James Miller and Newton Bateman were nominated for state treasurer and superintendent of public instruction. Unlike the Democrats, the Republicans also used their convention to make an official nomination for the U. S. Senate. Abraham Lincoln, passed over in 1854, was declared the "first and only choice" of the Illinois Republican party for Douglas' seat. Senators from Illinois were not elected directly by the people but by the state legislature. Democrats believed that nominations unfairly limited the discretion of the state legislators and refrained from that practice. There was no doubt, however, that Stephen A. Douglas was the overwhelming choice of the Illinois Democracy. The National Democrats had not yet found a candidate of their own.

The race between Lincoln and Douglas commanded the attention of the entire nation. The feud between Buchanan and Douglas gave both the north and the south reason to care about Douglas' re-election. In the north, many Republicans as well as the Democrats believed that Douglas was the one man who could stand up to the southern slavocracy. Southerners remained divided. A few, like Virginia's Governor Henry A. Wise, felt Douglas more desirable than a Republican in any case. Others, the southern fire-eaters, viewed Douglas' opposition to the Lecompton constitution as a sign that he had abandoned the south for abolitionism and called for his defeat. They believed that a freshman Republican senator could do far less damage than the powerful Douglas.

The importance placed on Douglas' future gave the activities of the
National Democrats in Illinois special significance. Douglas admitted that Lincoln was a formidable opponent and that victory would be hardly won. The Buchananites need not swing many votes away from Douglas' candidates for the state legislature to deadlock the election or even elect Lincoln. The Administration party was weakened by the quarrels of the June convention but men as energetic as Cook and Leib, with the President's support, might still accomplish that. So it was that the three parties launched their campaign's for Douglas' seat.

Interest within the state in the campaign was extremely keen and the battle was carried on with great intensity. Rallies were held in almost every locality with parades, bands, banners, barbeques and speech after speech by the candidates or anyone else with strong lunge. Delegations and spectators travelled miles over dusty roads to meetings and conventions to make their voices heard. A Republican delegation from Quincy arrived for a rally in Macomb with "Banners flying, brass bands blaring music, two military companies in full uniform and more than four hundred Republicans marching behind." Because of the long distance travelled by many of the delegates, local communities made provisions by holding great barbeques to fill empty stomachs and to celebrate the gathering of the party faithful. At a meeting in Versailles, pigs, turkeys, geese and chickens were roasted over great pits to the delight of those present. Countless enthusiasts of all ages and both sexes contributed to the pageantry of the campaign by "making banners, decorating halls and speakers' platforms, organising parades, playing in bands, preparing feasts, firing cannons, and filling the air with their cheers." Emotions ran so high that on the day Lincoln spoke at Beardstown, a street fight broke out between the "Wideawakes," a Republican club, and the "Hickories," a Democratic organization, which one young
witness described as being "very exciting."\textsuperscript{1}

The primary attractions at the great rallies were the political speakers. "Stump" speaking was the most popular method of campaigning in Illinois and witnesses from outside the state were amazed at the zeal with which it was practiced. In addition to Lincoln and Douglas, hundreds of lesser-candidates and volunteer orators took their turns in front of the masses. R. B. Carpenter was the foremost of the Administration’s voices but he was joined by Cook, Leib, Dougherty, Reynolds, Fitch and many others. They were every bit as energetic and colorful as their counterparts in the two major parties.\textsuperscript{2}

The seven joint debates between Lincoln and Douglas were the largest and grandest of the rallies. Recognizing the national significance of the campaign, Illinoisans took social efforts to be present when the two party leaders debated the pressing issues of the day. Thomas Lowry and his father drove over eighty miles in a farm-wagon to hear the Galesburg debate. Spectators often camped overnight and contemporary accounts describe a multitude of campfires dotting the prairie. Taverns and inns did a "rushing" business and citizens often opened their homes to bedless strangers. On the day of the debate, spectators continued to pour into town in "carriages, prairie schooners, conestoga wagons, farm wagons, lumber wagons, hay racks, horseback, jackback, or on foot." "Att Trask and a friend walked over twenty miles to reach the Freeport debate. Amidst a year of plentiful harvests, the crowds were in a jovial mood and the debates, as was the whole campaign, were carried on in a carnival atmosphere. One eastern correspondent reported to his readers, "the prairies are on fire. It is astonishing how deep an interest in politics these people take."\textsuperscript{3}

The newspapers which reported the campaign were as colorful as it
was. Most papers were published at the county seats and were controlled by local politicians. Their purpose was entirely political and editorials on political questions of the day dominated their pages. The high cost of printing material by no means stopped a multitude of short-lived campaign sheets from springing up. Political organs were often published through one campaign in one locality, dismantled and moved on to the next field of battle. The Daily Little Giant, printed in Ottawa, was indicative. It began publication on September 21, 1858, ran for forty issues and folded on November 10, a week after the election. The National Democrats started several campaign papers to battle the Douglas press during 1858. In July, the Springfield Illinois State Democrat, edited by James J. Clarkson, began publication to provide National Democrats with a "sterling" Democratic sheet at the seat of the state government. Elsewhere, the Clinton National Vindicator, the Putnam County Democrat, the Belleville Star of Egypt, the Chicago Herald and the Ogle County Banner were put into circulation in support of the Administration.

Many papers switched allegiance from one camp to another. The Joliet Signal and the Chicago National Union returned to the Douglas after their editors became disgusted at the Buchananites' tactics. Following them was the Woodstock Democrat. The Douglasites pointed to these defections as proof of the "sickliness" of the Administration party, overlooking the fact that many of the Buchanan papers were defectors from their own ranks. The Buchananites countered by accusing Douglas of bribing several editors. A few did indeed have remarkable conversions after meeting with the Senator. 4

Douglas was not the only man accused of bribery. Several editors exchanged their allegiances for appointments to federal office from
the Lecompton leaders. Editors of more than five Administration papers received federal jobs. John Dougherty's son, William, was appointed U. S. marshal shortly before Dougherty took the stump against Douglas. Several editors tried to please both Douglas and the President, thereby keeping both their offices and the large circulation guaranteed by popular support of anti-Lecomptonism. The Quincy Democrat endorsed the Douglas state ticket while supporting the Administration's Congressional candidates. The Ogle County Banner endorsed Dougherty and Reynolds while supporting Douglas.5

The editors were usually loyal party members and often patronage recipients. Understandably, the press offered very biased accounts of political events. Republicans accused the Douglas press of "scarcely reporting a paragraph right in any of Lincoln's speeches" in order to blunt "the edge of Mr. Lincoln's wit." Estimates of attendance at meetings and of party strength varied remarkably depending upon the party of the reporting paper. Editors often resorted to printing highly questionable information as a political weapon. The Douglas press printed articles announcing the cancellation of the June 9 convention trying to prevent full attendance.6

Newspapers were supplemented by the distribution of political pamphlets. Copies of speeches by party leaders made up the bulk of these documents. In Washington, plans were made to distribute up to one million copies of documents explaining the Administration's position to Illinois voters. Cook reported to the June convention that 70,000 documents had already been circulated while nearly 150,000 more were ready to be sent. Because these documents were sent through the mail, postmasters assumed a key role in the campaign.7

There were about 1,484 postal positions available in Illinois in
the late 1850's. Desired less for money than for political power and prestige, they were usually filled by newspapers editors or merchants, who ran the post offices as a sideline. Local Congressmen were responsible for informing the Postmaster-General about properly qualified individuals. They nearly always chose men of their own party and the postmaster was expected to maximize the circulation of favorable political material. Such mail was often addressed to the postmaster himself so that he could distribute it to wavering voters. When one citizen of Kankakee wrote a letter praising the local postmaster, he wrote not of efficient mail service but that the circulation of Democratic newspapers had increased ten-fold while Republican circulation had declined dramatically. Administration postmasters deliberately mislaced or delayed much of the pro-Douglas mail. Under Isaac Cook, the Chicago post office was particularly careless with Douglas' mail. Friends of the Senator addressed their letters to his wife or associates in Washington in order to bypass the sticky-fingered Buchananites. Douglas postmasters proved no less devious at losing mail favoring the President. It was no wonder that the Buchanan leaders considered it imperative that the President use his patronage powers for wholesale removal of the rival postmasters.\footnote{8}

The National Democrats did not rely completely on the President and began a vigorous drive to build a new party from the ground up. Party leaders issued calls for state-wide organization, stressing the importance of local exertion. The \textit{Illinois State Democrat} declared, "Friends of the Democracy, Organize yourselves in every county of the State. Appoint your committees—have your meetings—get your speakers—circulate reliable Democratic documents among the masses." The Administration forces had only a few months to complete their work and the party
stressed the value of haste. In August, the *Times and Delta* wrote, "It is time we were organizing—our enemies are hard at work, and if we do not commence soon, and work late and early, a Waterloo defeat will be our position. Be up and doing." The *Chicago Herald* added, "Draw the lines and work on principle. This rule is the only one upon which the party can be maintained."  

The Buchanan campaign was kicked off by a rally held in Chicago on July 23. Following a large-scale publicity drive, several-hundred Buchananites met in Metropolitan Hall. The enthusiastic crowd chose an old-line Democrat, R. J. Hamilton, for president along with twenty-one vice-presidents. The meeting got off to a rough start when a fight erupted over who should control the platform. Early in the evening, according to the Douglas press, Elisha W. Tracy was made chairman of the proceedings. Tracy, as described by the *State Register*, was one of the original Lecompton men who defended the President while Cook, Carpenter, Brainard and Nye still supported Douglas. He had been a vice-president at the June 9 convention and, claimed the *Register*, added respectability to the party. When Cook and his henchmen arrived they tossed Tracy off the platform and summoned several policemen, allegedly supplied by the Republican mayor, who dragged Tracy out of the hall and beat him with their clubs before arresting him. The Buchanan papers claimed Tracy was part of a plot by the Douglasites to gain control of the meeting. Most likely, Tracy was a Buchananite who disliked Cook's dictatorial methods, though his attempt to wrest control of the meeting from him proved unsuccessful.  

The bulk of the rally was consumed by the usual speeches from the party leaders stressing that the National Democracy was a party of principles and not men, that they had nothing personal against Douglas
but that the Senator, by breaking with the Administration and the party in Congress, had left the party and repudiated everything he once stood for. He had aligned himself with the Republican party solely to advance his own political career. R. B. Carpenter declared, "the interest of Judge Douglas is the Alpha and the Omega; the beginning and the end of his political creed." In answer to charges that the Buchanan party was entirely made up of office-holders, Carpenter claimed that only twelve of the two-thousand federal office-holders in Illinois had been removed and declared, while pointing at his large audience, that the party was obviously much more than that. Daniel S. Fitch, recently appointed district attorney, charged that Douglas was allied with the Republicans and added that if Douglas believed that office-holding was so evil for a political party, he must be happy that his own men were being replaced. Dougherty followed with an attack on all those who worked against the Administration on the Lecompton question. The people, he declared, had pronounced judgement on Buchanan's principles by electing him President. Reynolds accused Douglas of deserting the Democracy to secure re-election and added that Lincoln and Douglas disagreed on no major principles.12

The Metropolitan Hall rally, reported Clarkson in the State Democrat, sent a spirit of enthusiasm through the party and strengthened its determination to stand by the Administration and the "Old banner of nationality." Clarkson called upon the true friends of the Democracy to fight "faction and fanaticism so long as there is virtue in democratic principles and while there is a Union to preserve and a Constitution to uphold." The Buchanan party began organizing with increased intensity. Dougherty, Reynolds, Carpenter and others spread out across the state addressing the local Buchanan rallies. A mass meeting in
Monticello in Piatt County drew a crowd of almost two-thousand and was addressed by district attorney Fitch, according to the Chicago Herald. Even more spectacular was a rally of the DeWitt County National Democracy which allegedly drew over three-thousand people. Delegates were treated to a great barbeque and a three-hour address by R. B. Carpenter. Other rallies followed, including gatherings in Warsaw on August 19 and in Springfield on August 31.12

Relations between the two Democratic parties worsened as the campaign progressed. Each side developed a robust hatred for each other, but if name-calling is any indication, the Douglasites hated the Administration men worse. The Buchananites were labelled the "buzzard crew," and "stink-fingers," and "hungry miscreants." Douglas and Sheahan called them the "Danites," a reference to a renegade band of Mormons. Douglas also referred to the Buchanan leaders as "a brace of puppies." The best the Administration men could offer was calling the Douglasites abolitionists, bolters and toadies. The Republican Alton Daily Courier observed that the Douglasites must have employed "all the dirty black guards of the state" to do their writing.13

The Douglasites tried to ignore the National Democrats as insignificant but expedience often dictated otherwise. Efforts were made to pacify the Lecompton men since the English bill seemed to end debate over Kansas. William Fondyey stated that he considered the English bill as the final solution to the Lecompton problem. French agreed and expressed a desire to support the President unless he were attacked first. The Joliet Signal called on the National Democrats to support the regular nominees who now stood on solid Democratic ground. Lecomptonites could still oppose Douglas if they liked, it added. Many Lecompton Democrats agreed with the Signal and the National Democrats came under increasing
attacks for disrupting the party without just cause.  

Douglas and his followers viewed the Buchanan party with growing bitterness. The Chicago Times blasted away at the Buchanan leaders and "exposed" them as faithless traitors. Neither Dougherty nor Reynolds had ever been loyal party members, it claimed. Charges were made that Reynolds had been elected Governor in 1830 through an alliance with the Whig party and that Dougherty allegedly bolted half the Democratic conventions since 1840. Despite vehement denials, these charges were echoed through the campaign.

On June 15, Douglas rose in the Senate to expose the Buchanan party as a fraud. Using the Senate floor to speak of local political matters was almost unheard of but Douglas, angered by newspaper accounts which he believed inaccurately described the National Democrats in Illinois as the legitimate Democratic party in the state, desired to prevent the Buchananites from securing outside support. The Senator was obviously growing nervous. He explained that the Lecompton conventions were nothing more than the intrigues of Cook and Leib who travelled about the state falsely claiming to have authority from the President to dole out federal offices. He charged that Leib was in the process of forging an alliance with the Republican party in order to defeat the Democrats. As proof of his allegations, Douglas exposed Leib's past as an officer in Lane's Free-State Army. Because of Leib's activities, many good Democrats had fallen in with the alliance believing it to be the only way to stay in favor with the President.

Douglas did not believe that Buchanan had given Leib any authority and that the President was unaware of the true course of events in Illinois. He called on the President to publicly disavow the movement
by removing the "treacherous" agents. "A refusal to disavow the authority, warned Douglas, "after full knowledge of the facts shall have been brought home to the Administration should, of course, be regarded and treated as an approval and endorsement of the act as having been done by authority." Senator Lyman Trumbull interrupted Douglas and denied all charges of any alliance between the Republicans and the Lecomptonites. Douglas answered that there was such an alliance and that he could prove it if pressed. Trumbull did not reply. Douglas left the door open for reconciliation by avoiding another direct attack on the Administration but he warned that there would be "war" if Leib and Cook were not restrained. 16

Trumbull wrote home to warn his colleagues of Douglas' strategy. Douglas, he explained, "will be especially severe on Dr. Leib and a few other officeholders whom he thinks assailable and unpopular and will seek to create a sympathy among our friends by charging that he is being persecuted by the Lecomptonites." Leib was unpopular but Douglas did not confine his attacks to him. Cook, Dougherty and Reynolds fell under the attack of the Little Giant. Those attacks became much more painful when in early July, Douglas triumphantly returned to Illinois following the close of the Congressional session to take personal command of his forces in the great battle. 17

Amidst a triumphant reception in Chicago on July 9, Douglas spoke to the crowd from the balcony of the Tremont House and clarified his relationship with the Administration. Douglas rudely slammed the door shut on all hopes for reconciliation with Buchanan by condemning the mode of submission in the English bill as a "mockery." He demanded that the party unite on his platform or none at all. Douglas also lashed out at the National Democrat who were laboring
to defeat him. Again referring to the alliance he condemned those "who, having been defeated inside of the organization, go outside and attempt to divide and destroy the party in concert with Republican leaders, have ceased to be Democrats, and belong to the allied army, whose avowed object is to elect the Republican ticket by dividing and destroying the Democratic party." 18

The leaders of the National Democracy did not allow Douglas' words to go unanswered. Ironically, they replied by charging the Little Giant with being in collusion with the abolitionists. The Lecomptonites also warned that Douglas was only interested in himself and was seeking to deceive both Democrats and Republicans. If the Senator wished the success of the party, they asked, why does he not reconcile with the national party on the English bill? The answer, they claimed, was that Douglas wished to make himself a political "despot" in Illinois. 19

The Buchananites rejected all advances for unity on Douglas' terms. If the Douglas bolters wished to rejoin the Democratic party, wrote the Star of Egypt, they would have to do so as mere "privates." The National Democrats were slow to forget the insults heaped upon them and steadfastly refused to rejoin the regular organization as long as Douglas remained at its head. Drop him, offered the State Democrat, "and we will unite on any other reliable Democrat you choose." Douglas was accused of holding office too long, abandoning the principles of the party and abusing the President. Locally, the Chicago Herald criticized Douglas for working to release the Illinois Central Railroad from a seven per cent tax which would cost the state hundreds of thousands of dollars. The Douglas bolters were welcomed back only if they dropped Douglas and their nominees and anti-Lecomptonism; a return to old, true
Democratic principles was said to be the only way to defeat the Republicans. 20

The Douglas Democrats believed that the Buchananites were not at all interested in defeating the Republicans. In fact, the split was largely the work of the Republicans, they charged. New Administration papers allegedly received financial backing from Republican campaign funds. Republican headquarters in Petersburg was found to be distributing copies of the Chicago Herald. Reports of cash payments from Republican leaders to Buchananites were constantly in the Douglas press and total contributions were placed at about $60,000. Even Lincoln was said to have contributed. Other Republicans helped the Buchananites organize. John Wentworth assisted Cook with the Metropolitan Hall rally. William Herndon, Lincoln's law partner, helped the National Democrats in Sangamon County. How could the bolters oppose Douglas for working with the Republicans to defeat the Lecompton bill while they worked with Republicans to defeat Douglas, asked the Douglasites. 21

The National Democrats appreciated the help they received and worked closely with Republican leaders. Charles Leib kept Lyman Trumbull up to date on the Buchananites' activities. When he first received his appointment, Leib wired Republican secretary of state Osias M. Hatch passing the "good news" along. Herndon remained in close contact with his father and brother who were leaders of the Administration party in Springfield. "They make 'no bones' in telling me what they are going to do," he wrote to Trumbull. Lincoln did not give any aid to the Buchananites but he was happy to hear from Dougherty that they were to run a full slate of candidates throughout the state. Lincoln had not given up hope in the new party and responded that, "if you do this the thing is settled—the battle is fought," in the belief that it sealed his own
victory. Agreement was reached between the editors of the Republican Chicago Journal and the State Democrat whereby the Democrat bought the Journal's anti-Douglas editorials for reprinting. The Lecompton party and the Republican party found in their mutual desire to defeat Senator Douglas a common ground between them. 22

The Republicans played a dangerous game by aiding the Lecomptonites. Their greatest worry was that Douglas' anti-Lecompton stand would draw Republican support. Many eastern Republicans urged Illinoisans to unite with Douglas to battle Buchanan and the slave south and a few Illinois Republicans did believe that Douglas had earned their party's support by his courageous stand against the Lecompton swindle. By helping the Administration party, Republican leaders risked losing even more votes to Douglas. Lincoln and others worked hard to isolate Douglas from Republican principles and the risk of creating sympathy for the Senator by working with the Lecomptonites caused most Republican leaders to conclude that they had best stand clear of the Democrats' "rumpus." Lincoln concluded that there was only an alliance with the Buchananites if one considered the Republicans' taking delight in the Democratic split and doing nothing to stop it, an alliance. 23

Senator Trumbull, on the other hand, feared that the Democrats would act together until after the fall elections, leaving the question of who should be Senator to be settled by the Democratic majorities in the state legislature. Others feared this more than the defections to the Douglas camp. "Each and Every Republican is trying to create the split wanted," wrote Herndon. "We want to make it wider and deeper—hotter and more impassable." There did not seem to be any chance, in fact, that the Democrats would re-unite before November. David L. Phillips reported to Lincoln that Dougherty and John A. Logan were battling furiously
for the control of Egypt. "Never was the cause of republicanism so hopeful in all its aspects as now," he exclaimed. 24

The Republicans tried several ways to widen the split. Mark Delahay, a radical Republican, took the stump for Douglas trying to make it appear that Douglas was moving into the Republican party. This, it was hoped, would chase some Democrats back to the Administration. Unfortunately, it made Douglas appear more attractive to Republican voters and Delahay's tactics were quickly dropped. The Republican press wooed Douglas voters by greatly exaggerating the strength of the Administration party. "It is clear," observed the State Journal, "that the Douglasites have no chance whatsoever, and their best policy is to unite with the Republicans" to defeat Lecomptonism. They also alerted office holders of the dangers of supporting Douglas. No Republican labored harder to split the Democrats than John Wentworth. Through the columns of his Chicago Democrat he urged Buchananites to fight on against Douglas. Wentworth felt a burning hatred for Douglas who had whipped him out of the party in 1854. "Long John" saw the split as a chance to turn the tables on Douglas. But he also believed that Douglas posed a much greater threat to the Republicans than did the Buchanan men. His violent attacks on Douglas and his strong "support" for the Administration party led Sheahan to believe that Wentworth planned to join the Lecomptonites himself. 25

Like the Republicans, the National Democrats denied that any alliance existed. Some space in the Buchanan press was even used to criticize Abraham Lincoln. The Times and Delta explained that opposing Douglas did not mean supporting Lincoln; they were for the National Democratic candidates and no others. The Buchananites did not yet have a candidate for the Senate but word spread that Sidney Broese of the
Illinois Supreme Court would soon enter the race. The *Jonesboro Gazette* took the offensive and accused the Douglas men of being abolitionists because they opposed the Lecompton constitution. Another paper pointed at the Republicans who were speaking out for Douglas as proof that the Senator followed abolitionist doctrines. The Administration press was provided with plenty of ammunition by rumors of a Douglas-Republican alliance. Daniel Brainard, before he defected to the Administration, and James Sheahan both approached Republican deals to that effect. Democratic state senator William C. Goudy urged Douglas to unite with the Republicans in order to defeat the Administration. A combination of Douglas, Seward and Crittenden would create a party dominant in the Union and overwhelming in Illinois, he explained. There was really little chance that Douglas would follow such advice but the Douglas press was forced to delineate the differences between the Senator and the Republicans, costing Douglas some Republican support. 26

The most potent weapon in the National Democrats' arsenal was the President's support. The growth experienced by the party between the two conventions proved that the patronage could win votes. The problem for the National Democrats was that President Buchanan doubted the expediency of war with Douglas. By May, the President had not yet decided on the proper course in Illinois. Several important positions had been filled with anti-Douglas Democrats but no wholesale proscription of anti-Lecomptonites was made. The National Democrats urged the President to step up the removals. Dougherty wrote that, "Official Station ever gives influence in the public mind—that influence should be on the side of the Administration." Urging the appointment of Irwin Nye as U. S. marshal, Cook wrote, "Cannot we have [him] so as to have the benefit of
his influence to operate with us for our June convention." 27

The pleas moved the President to take stronger measures. Congressman Thomas L. Harris wrote to Lanphier that "it is now said that the Knife is to be used freely." Lanphier himself visited Washington and concluded that the party had "gone to the devil" and that Douglas was downed. In Illinois, the postmaster at Warsaw was removed because he "loved Douglas more than Buchanan." Lecomptonite William L. Dougherty was appointed U. S. marshal for the southern district. The Chicago Press observed that the Administration was growing more despotic in regards to anti-Lecompton leaders. 28

Buchanan's prescriptive spirit was calmed by the passage of the English bill. He hinted that he would quit fighting Douglas if Douglas quit fighting him and a general mood of reconciliation arose among leading Democrats. The President remained wary, however, because he believed that Douglas had betrayed him once and would do it again. "There can never be any good feelings between Buchanan and Douglas," wrote Trumbull, "but their friends are no doubt at work to bring about a reconciliation." Rumors spread that Buchanan had decided to end the persecution of anti-Lecomptonites. Trumbull believed that the "peace" was the result of an effort by the Douglasites to trick the Administration into withdrawing its support from the June 9 convention. Buchanan feared that any wholesale removals would drive the Douglasites away from the English compromise and felt that if given the chance, they might end their resistance and re-unite the party. While he waited for a sign from the Senator, the President refused to remove any more office-holders. As a conciliatory gesture, three Douglas postmasters were re-appointed to their positions. 29

The National Democrats were horrified by this development. Leib
described the confirmation of the Douglas postmasters as "a Godsend to the enemies and a discouraging event to the friends of the administration." He added, "it is in effect, a Federal decision in favor of the Douglas ticket and platform of this state." The Buchanan party leaders believed that their only chance of success was with the full support of the President. In late June, Carpenter described the situation in Illinois to the President. "Our enemies," he wrote, "hold nearly all the offices—a large majority of the press are with Douglas; the Route Agents and Post Masters refuse to distribute other than Douglas documents." Carpenter exposed the efforts of the anti-Isecomptonites to hide the differences between the President and Douglas. "How can we show our strength," he asked, "when such men are in place?" He pleaded with the President to show that Douglas was out of the party; "Let it once be understood by the removal from office of Douglas men and we will sweep Egypt and give a good account of ourselves all over the state." 30

The Buchananites' fear of a reconciliation was eased by Douglas' Chicago speech. By condemning the English bill and pledging to battle all those who opposed popular sovereignty as he interpreted it, Douglas sent word to the Administration that peace could only come on his terms. Several weeks later, Charles N. Pine returned from Washington and reported that Buchanan was furious with Douglas and that he "swears vengeance." Buchanan believed that Douglas showed no spirit of reconciliation and determined to renew the removal of Douglas office-holders in Illinois. Eastern papers close to the Administration reported that there was no chance of peace. The postmaster at Quincy, Austin Brooks, one of the three recently re-appointed, was summarily removed on July 20. Buchanan allegedly sent a request to Carpenter to stump the state
against Douglas and promised a commission to China as a reward. 31

However, the President expressed doubts over what course to
follow even after Douglas' Chicago speech. He had entered the White
House hoping to suppress the dangerous slavery agitation but the
feud with Douglas made the slavery question loom even larger. Furthermore, although Douglas called the English bill a swindle, he had
accepted its passage as a final solution. That the English bill did
not bring peace showed that the feud stemmed largely from personal
reasons for the two men did not like each other. Douglas resented
Buchanan's election to the Presidency in 1856 while Buchanan viewed
Douglas as a threat to his leadership of the party. Some said that
the President wished to seek re-election and by accepting peace on
Douglas' terms, Buchanan would be relinquishing his place as the party
leader to his arch-rival. An editorial appearing in the Washington
Union reflected the President's dilemma. The Union endorsed the Doug-
las nominees because they had accepted Congressional action on the
Kansas question as final but refused to support Douglas even though he
took the same position. 32

The National Democrats themselves posed problems for the President.
Leib, Cook, Carpenter and their cronies had unsavory reputations in
Illinois. The postmaster at Quincy wrote that removal at the hands of
Isaac Cook would be "the highest compliment that could be paid to us."
They often disliked each other as much as they were disliked by the
Douglasites. R. B. Carpenter went to Washington in a move to take con-
trol of the Chicago patronage away from Cook. He also demanded Leib's
removal. David LeRoy and Charles N. Pine quarreled over who should be
appointed U. S. marshal for the northern district. Rumors from Washing-
ton spread that Cook was to be replaced by Daniel Brainard. The
National Democrats in Chicago spent as much time fighting among themselves as they did against Douglas. Buchanan had to wonder whether such men helped his cause or hurt it.33

The Administration also had to be careful not to make Douglas a martyr. Crucial uncommitted voters admired the way the Little Giant defied the President. One Democrat wrote that Buchanan's proscription policy was "not only insolent party tyranny but the very essence of folly." He added that the President's excuse, that Douglas disagreed over the Lecompton constitution, was "too flimsy to deceive an honest observer." The State Register issued the challenge: "Let the Danites play their game of proscription. The democratic people will thunder the proper rebuke in the ears of the intrigues in November." The President's patronage policy obviously angered more Democrats than it pleased.34

Eventually, the President moved ahead with the removal of anti-Lecompton office-holders, though he later denied that he showed a proscriptive spirit and removed only those absolutely incompatible with the Administration's policy. The number of removals was not excessive, while several conciliatory appointments were also made. One of the greatest blows to Douglas was the removal of Isaac Curran, an old friend, from the pension agency in Springfield which showed that Douglas could not protect even his best friends from removal.

James W. Davidson was removed from his position as U. S. marshal for the northern district. He had worked strenuously to destroy the National Democracy while pretending to be a Lecomptonite himself. Charles N. Pine, editor of the Chicago Herald, was put in his place. As feared, the proscription policy backfired. The Republican press often joined the Douglasites in condemning the arbitrary removal of competent men.
When Austin Brooks was replaced with a member of the Cook faction from Chicago, Quincy residents threatened to mob the new postmaster if he assumed the office. The Administration backed down and appointed a downstate resident instead.\textsuperscript{35}

Outside Illinois, Democrats split over events between Douglas and the Illinois National Democrats. Northern Democrats were sympathetic with Douglas. The \textit{Philadelphia Press} and the \textit{Indianapolis Democrat} were among the papers which condemned the Administration's policy in Illinois. Even in the pro-Lecompton south there was widespread support for the Little Giant. The \textit{Memphis Appeal}, the \textit{Mobile Tribune}, the \textit{New Orleans Delta} and the Richmond \textit{Enquirer} called for peace. Moderate southerners were concerned lest the split lead to the defeat of the Democratic party in the Presidential election of 1860. They feared that a Republican victory would give the secessionists in their states the upper-hand. Douglas, the strongest Democrat in the north, should not be ostracized from the party for one mistake, argued the \textit{Enquirer}. The radicals, the fire-eaters, viewed Douglas' opposition to the Lecompton constitution as proof that northern Democrats had embraced abolitionism. Led by Robert Barnwell Rhett's \textit{Charleston Mercury}, they called for Douglas to be tossed out of the party.\textsuperscript{36}

Buchanan's Cabinet was as divided as the southern press. Secretary of State Lewis Cass, Secretary of War John B. Floyd and Attorney General Jeremiah Black urged that peace be made with Douglas. Treasury Secretary Howell Cobb, Secretary of the Interior Jacob Thompson and Postmaster General Aaron Brown advised war. Cobb wrote letters to Illinoisans urging them to rally against Douglas. Vice-President John C. Breckinridge refused to endorse Douglas' Kansas policy but desired the Senator's re-election. Douglas, he believed had battled gallantly
against the spread of "black republicanism," his defeat would be a serious blow to the northern Democracy. 37

A few moderate southern leaders worked to prevent that blow. Virginia's Governor Henry A. Wise wrote to Buchanan advising him to support Douglas' re-election fearing that the Senator's defeat would weaken the party in 1860 and destroy the Administration. While in Chicago on personal business, Georgia's Congressman Alexander H. Stephens tried to placate the Buchananites and met with leaders of both factions. He could not find any common ground between them and after several days he departed in despair. The National Democrats refused to yield on their demands that Douglas withdraw from the race. "There can be no compromise," declared the State Democrat. "Either we are in the right and occupy high Democratic ground, or else Mr. Buchanan, the Cabinet and the Democracy of the States do not. If we are right Mr. Douglas is wrong, and is a bolter, he must be taught that the Democratic party never yet condescended to lick the hand that struck it." "We are bound," echoed the Chicago Herald, "to make this fight to the end." 38

The National Democrats realized that their own influence within the state was not proving to be great enough to seriously damage Douglas and moved to bolster the party by appealing for outside help. Assistance was available. Douglas had many rivals in Congress and in the Administration as several had Presidential aspirations. If Douglas were defeated in 1858 their chief rival would be eliminated. Cobb called on the party of the south to support the Administration against Douglas. With proper assistance, he argued, the National Democrats in Illinois could defeat both Douglas and the Republicans and rebuild the party on "National principles." Senators Jesse Bright and Graham Fitch of Indiana used their influence with the Administration to secure removal of
Douglas office-holders in Illinois. Bright hoped to replace Douglas as the spokesman for the Northwest. Senator George W. Jones of Iowa hated Douglas personally and accused him of conspiring with the Republicans to break down the Administration in 1860. These men took active roles in patronage matters and many of Cook's followers received recommendations for office from Cobb, Fitch, Bright and Louisiana's Senator John Slidell. Presidential aspirants offered "office, profit and honors" to Illinoisans who would work to defeat Douglas.39

Dozens of anti-Lecomptonites from all over the nation rushed to Illinois to assist the Douglas campaign. The Buchananites sent requests to anti-Douglas Democrats to come and help stem the tide. Slidell, Bright and Fitch were invited to speak at the Metropolitan Hall rally. Vice-President Breckinridge and former-New York Senator Daniel S. Dickinson received invitations to attend a rally at Springfield on September 7. The State Democrat issued an invitation to Breckinridge to speak at: Quincy, Springfield, Peoria and Chicago to generate party enthusiasm. The Vice-President, it was hoped, would make it clear that Douglas was out of the party. Unfortunately, only Slidell ever came to Illinois.40

Slidell stopped in Chicago on a trip through the Northwest to confer with Administration party leaders. Though he believed Cook unfit to lead, he wrote to Buchanan urging him to aid the National Democrats. He recommended that the President cut the throat of every Douglas office-holder in the state; "It is the only course which will offer us a chance of success." In addition to confirming Cook's organization with the President, Slidell issued large sums of money to carry out the campaign. Slidell's most serious blow to Douglas, however, was the
rumor he gave Daniel Brainard that the slaves on Douglas' Mississippi plantation were treated cruelly and inhumanly. Brainard passed the story on to the Chicago Herald which printed it. The story was retold in every Republican, as well as Buchananite, paper in the state during the fall leaving Douglas with too little time to effectively deny it. 41

The National Democrats appreciated the assistance they received from Republicans and the Administration but it was not nearly enough. Illinois was not a state which could be carried by "unnatural" alliances or outside meddling. What the Buchananites needed was a popular man to run for Douglas' seat and battle with the Little Giant for control of the masses. But Douglas had led the party for so long that no Illinois Democrat possessed the ability. Dougherty and Reynolds represented the remnants of the generation which ruled before Douglas and now, in the late summer, the National Democrats searched that generation again to find a suitable candidate for the Senate.
V

THE AUTUMN CAMPAIGN: TOO LITTLE TOO LATE

In June when the National Democrats met in their state convention, the party had no specific candidate in mind to run against Senator Douglas. Many delegates believed that Sidney Breese, a long-time Democratic leader now serving on the Illinois Supreme Court, would eventually be the party's standard bearer. After the convention, voices calling for Breese grew louder. In mid-July, the Belleville *Star of Egypt* nominated Breese for Douglas' seat and hoisted his name to its masthead. The *Star of Egypt* declared that it was time for a southern Illinoisan to represent the state, that Douglas, a Chicagoan, had held the seat long enough. Breese was its first choice but the paper expressed a willingness to unite with all other Democrats on other southerners such as Illinois Supreme Court Judge Samuel Treat or John A. McClelland. Breese's nomination was immediately seconded by several other Buchanan papers and the *Chicago Democrat* observed that Breese "may now be considered a candidate."

Judge Breese made no immediate reply to calls for his candidacy. As many expected, he neither accepted nor rejected his nomination in "the old Democratic tradition." James J. Clarkson, editor of the *State Democrat*, urged him to enter the race: "There is no doubt in my mind—nor has there been—but that we can elect you to the U S Senate." Others, however, pointed out that a third candidate was bound to fall against Lincoln and Douglas. Breese remained quiet through July and August, limiting his involvement in the campaign to advising the Administration on Illinois patronage matters as he plotted his course.

If personal reputation was all that mattered, the fifty-eight year
old Breese would have made a formidable candidate. As a young man, he had acquired a reputation as a fine lawyer and his subsequent career maintained it. Republican Lyman Trumbull wrote, "Judge Breese possessed the happy faculty of commanding respect, and compelling the observance of order, with the least effort of any Judge I ever saw presiding on the Circuit." Douglas Democrat Usher F. Linder also praised Breese: "He was considered, and I think justly, the most learned and profound jurist in the state." Young Sidney Breese arrived in Illinois in 1818 and made his first home in Kaskaskia. Admitted to the bar two years later he began a long and successful career in the law.

In 1824, Breese opposed the movement to which John Reynolds belonged to remove the prohibition of slavery from Illinois, though he was not a leading actor in that debate. During the next twenty years Breese served as postmaster, circuit attorney, U. S. district attorney, an officer in the Black Hawk war and circuit judge. In 1841, he was elected to the Illinois Supreme Court by the state legislature. The following year, Breese won election to the U. S. Senate, but only after defeating Stephen Douglas in a Democratic caucus vote by only two votes. 4

The election of 1842 was not the only time that Breese and Douglas had clashed for honors. As early as 1835, Breese publicly advocated construction of the Illinois Central Railroad, carrying his efforts into the Senate without success. In December, 1851, after Breese had left the Senate, Congress passed a bill, proposed by Senator Douglas, granting Illinois the land for the railroad. Douglas cheerfully accepted all credit for the measure which infuriated Breese. Relations between the two party leaders were strained already. In 1848, Breese was up for re-election but Douglas threw his support to Mexican War hero James Shields for the Democratic nomination instead. Shields was elected and Breese
bitterly returned to private life. His retirement was short-lived, however, for he was soon afterward elected to the state legislature, where he served as speaker of the house, until his reappointment to the Illinois Supreme Court. If anything could draw Breese into the race, it was his bitterness toward Douglas.  

The Douglas press denied Breese would join the race and declared that all such statements were false. Joining the bolters, they explained, would be contrary to the Judge's principles, as well as political suicide. The Chicago Herald, confident that the Judge would run against Douglas, replied that if he did not take the stump it was only because "he regards political speech making as improper for a judge." Breese drew ever closer to joining the fray as he wrote to the editor of the Belleville Democrat denying reports that he was not a candidate. Breese added that he did not agree with Douglas' position on the Kansas question and that Douglas' followers were abandoning party principles by remaining with him. The Chicago Democrat added that Breese had denounced Douglas as a traitor, out only for himself.  

By September, it was obvious from the Judge's attacks on the Douglas Democrats that he considered himself a candidate, relieving the National Democrats from the charge that by opposing Douglas they had to be supporting Lincoln. Now they boasted a candidate of their own. The Buchanan papers all hoisted Breese's name to their mastheads. Friends sent letters of encouragement. Iowa's Senator Jones wrote, "I am rejoiced...for the sake of our cause & the Union, to see that you have buckled on your armor." Sheahan's Chicago Times which had described Breese as a "consistent, life long Democrat" only weeks before now blasted away at the Judge. Joining the bolters, explained the Times, made Breese as much an abolitionist as Fred Douglas or Joshua Giddings.
Judge Breese ignored the charges of the Douglas press and began to formulate his position. He expressed support for the President and his Lecompton policy, adding that had Douglas harmonized with other Democrats on the English bill that he would have supported the Senator. Finally, Breese declared that he would not campaign actively, wishing only that the people know of the fraud instigated by Douglas to separate the Illinois Democracy from the national party.

Breese's candidacy, however, was too little, too late. The National Democrats desperately needed a vigorous campaigner to match the energetic Douglas, but Breese confined his efforts to speeches near his home at Carlyle and to writing letters explaining his position to Buchanan newspapers. Even if the Judge had been the barnstorming orator the Buchanan party needed, he entered the race only two months before election day, hardly enough time to challenge Lincoln and Douglas effectively.  

The National Democrats' campaign met yet another obstacle in the seven joint debates between Lincoln and Douglas. Optimistically, the Buchananites hoped that the front-runners would "chaw" each other up. Their hopes were dashed when it became apparent that the debates served only to create massive popular enthusiasm for the two antagonists, eclipsing the small third party. If Judge Breese had joined the race several months earlier he might have insisted upon being included. Douglas even considered refusing Lincoln's proposal for the debates in July because of rumors of Breese's candidacy, fearing that his two opponents would arrange to take the opening and closing speech in every case. Without their own candidate to share the voters' attention, the debates made it almost impossible for the National Democrats to make their voices heard. The Buchanan press tried unsuccessfully to use
the debates to their own advantage by printing "truthful" accounts of the proceedings making both Lincoln and Douglas look bad. Several days after the Ottawa debate, for example, the *State Democrat* carried the headline "Antagonists Both Chawed Up."  

The Buchananites also used Douglas' Freeport doctrine as campaign rhetoric. At Freeport on August 27, Lincoln asked Douglas whether the people of a territory could lawfully exclude slavery from its limits, against the wish of any United States citizen, before formation of a state constitution. Douglas replied that regardless of the Dred Scott decision which pronounced the constitutionality of slavery in the territories, slavery could not exist anywhere without the protection of local police regulations. Douglas also implied that the local legislatures had the lawful right to refuse protection to slave property. Southern Democrats admitted that slavery needed protection but they added that the local legislatures had no *lawful* power to refuse it. Many southerners understood Douglas to have repudiated the Dred Scott decision, the Cincinnati Platform and southern rights. The National Democrats hoped to use the Freeport doctrine against Douglas in Egypt where southern sentiments were strong. Buchanan orators, led by R. B. Carpenter, condemned the Freeport speech as abolitionism and the *Chicago Democrat* predicted Douglas would lose thousands of Democratic votes. Douglas, said the paper, "is out of and against the Democratic party." Most Illinois voters, however, kept the same opinion of Douglas they held before the Freeport debate as he had stated the Freeport doctrine earlier in the campaign.  

The third joint debate was held in Jonesboro, John Dougherty's hometown. Douglas hoped to make a strong showing to destroy Dougherty's organization. In his closing speech, Douglas accused Breese, Reynolds
and Dougherty of working to "abolitionize" the Democracy. All three, he pointed out, worked with the Republicans in 1854 to defeat the Kansas-Nebraska bill and again in 1858 to defeat Democratic candidates for Congress and the state legislature. Dougherty answered Douglas with "a stirring" Buchanan speech but, unfortunately, the crowd grew restless after over three hours of speeches and slowly drifted away, prodded by the announcement that Senator Douglas’ train was departing. The announcement was planned, according to the *State Democrat*, to prevent Dougherty from refuting Douglas’ arguments. The Republicans later announced that Douglas’ followers were "crest-fallen" at the results of the debate. Some, they added, spoke of abandoning the Little Giant and uniting on Sidney Breese as the last hope of defeating Lincoln. In spite of his opponents' claims, Douglas was successful at Jonesboro. By appearing with local party leaders in Dougherty’s hometown, he proved that he was still an orthodox Democrat, reassuring Egypt’s pro-slavery men that his feud with the Administration did not make him an abolitionist. Lincoln had little to lose in this pro-slavery district but the Buchanan party suffered dearly.\(^\text{11}\)

On September 18, Lincoln and Douglas met at Charleston to continue the debates. Douglas twice accused Breese, Reynolds and Dougherty of being abolitionists by working with the Republicans. Their object, charged Douglas, was "the defeat of all men holding national principles in opposition to this sectional Abolition party." The Buchanan men did not answer Douglas until three debates later at Alton on October 15, when Thomas M. Hope, the Buchanan candidate for Congress in that district, put several questions to Douglas after the debate ended. He asked, hoping to further alienate Douglas from the south, if the territorial legislatures failed in their duty to protect slavery, did Congress
possess the power, as was claimed by the Richmond Enquirer, to establish a slave code for the territories? Douglas allegedly replied only that slaves were subject to local laws. Hope also repeated an old charge that Douglas had told Missourian Francis P. Blair that he planned to join the Republican party. 12

Buchanan orators and newspapers echoed the charge that Douglas had abandoned the Democracy for abolitionism. Senator Jones added fuel to the fire with a letter to Sidney Breese charging Douglas with making a deal with Senator John J. Crittenden of Kentucky and Republican Senator William H. Seward of New York. They were supposed to support Douglas for re-election in 1858; in return, Douglas would support Seward for the Presidency in 1860, with Crittenden forming the Cabinet. Douglas was to follow for the Presidency in 1864. The National Democrats used Jones' charge as proof that Douglas was only using the party as a tool to advance his own career. The Democratic party, declared the Buchanan press, wanted no more of Senator Douglas; word from outside the state indicated that the south wanted no more victories on "abolitionist platforms." The St. Louis Daily Democrat asked that if Douglas could push his Kansas-Nebraska Act as a test of party loyalty in 1854, why could the English bill not be a party test in 1858? 13

The National Democrats' barbs were not exclusively aimed at Douglas. The Buchananites, sensing that they were being overwhelmed by the contest between Lincoln and Douglas began to lash out at both candidates. In a speech at Centralia, Thomas Hoyne explained why neither man deserved Democratic support. Both Douglas' version of popular sovereignty and Lincoln's abolitionism were wrong. Why, he asked, should the Administration party be chastised for running its own candidate on a genuine Democratic platform? Hoyne called on Illinois Democrats to fall in line
with the rest of the states in warmly endorsing the Administration. Attacks on Lincoln, however, were rare. In fact, many party leaders openly expressed preference for Lincoln over Douglas. "I tell you, my friends, to be honest with you," Reynolds declared in September, "that I would rather vote for Lincoln than for Douglas. I would rather go to hell than to support Douglas' principles." The Douglas Democrats seized upon this as final proof that the National Democrats were actually the tools of the Republican party. The State Democrat, seeking to extricate the Buchanan party from this dilemma, denied Reynolds was for Lincoln. He may rather see Lincoln elected before Douglas, the paper explained, but he would not vote for either as the National Democrats were united behind Sidney Breese. 14

The Douglas press continued ... uncover Buchananite-Republican collusion. The Urbana Our Constitution believed that there was a plot between Breese and Trumbull whereby Trumbull would support Breese's election as a compromise candidate. Breese allegedly claimed Republican support because of his earlier hostility to the Kansas-Nebraska Act. Douglas remained confident, though he believed that the Republicans and National Democrats were united against him. "The Democracy," he wrote, "are thoroughly aroused, and well united, and a glorious triumph as certain as the day of election comes."15

As the campaign moved into the Autumn months, it seemed that Douglas' confidence was justified. In July and August, the Douglas press gradually shifted its attention from the Administration party to Lincoln and the Republicans. The Joliet Signal claimed in July that the Buchanan men were no longer a force. It called on all Democrats, for or against the English bill, to unite and face the common enemy. In August, the Cairo Gazette reported from Egypt that the "Danites" were generally despised and
would not carry a single county. Charles Lanphier received word that
the Administration would "scarcely be heard of" in the southern
section of the state. There were no general political polls during
the campaign but a correspondent from the *Oklahoma Republican* questioned
the riders of a west-bound *Ohio and Mississippi* train. He reported
that Douglas received 189 votes to 24 for Lincoln and only one vote
for Breese. The National Democrats were undaunted by such reports. The
*Star of Egypt* declared that Douglas "is losing ground daily, and will
by the day of election, scarcely be known in the race." Other Buchanan
papers described mass defections from the Douglas camp. In late
September, the *Quincy Democrat* gave the Buchanan party a pleasant
surprise by dumping Fondoy and French for Dougherty and Reynolds. Even
Republican William H. Herndon remained optimistic through the summer
and predicted a strong showing by the National Democrats.\(^{16}\)

In private, the Buchanan candidates were not quite so confident.
In July, only a month after his nomination, John Reynolds privately
admitted that he had no hope for election; "Mine is irretrievably lost."
But to Reynolds, and the rest of the party, the hope of preventing
Douglas' re-election was enough incentive to continue the fight. The
*Times and Delta* declared in defiance that although the National Demo-
crats were outnumbered in Illinois, only they were in line with the
party in the rest of the states; the Douglas men were the bolters.\(^{17}\)

Regardless of their chances, the Buchanan party leaders campaigned
with as much intensity as the primary contenders. Reynolds and Dougherty
moved about the state addressing rallies with a vigor that rivalled the
younger Lincoln and Douglas. Leib, Cook, Carpenter, Hoyne and Fitch
served as the primary orators and organizers for the party. In the
course of only two weeks, R. B. Carpenter addressed meetings in ten
counties from central to southern Illinois. Upon one occasion, Douglas and the Buchanan orators arrived in the same town simultaneously. Thomas Hoyne and Daniel S. Fitch addressed a crowd standing only two hundred yards from where Douglas was speaking. Republican witnesses reported that Douglas became so angry that he foamed at the mouth. National Democratic leaders even issued a challenge to the Republican party for a series of joint debates across the state which would pit "Democracy against Republicanism." The challenge specified that the Buchanan men would defend the Dred Scott decision, the Supreme Court and the Administration's Kansas policy. The Chicago *Press and Tribune* indicated that the challenge would be accepted, but except for a few local debates little came of the challenge. 18

The National Democrats experienced difficulty in fielding candidates for Congress and for state offices. Local meetings were often overwhelmed by mischievous Douglasites. In Putnam County and again in Springfield, enough Douglasites appeared at Buchanan meetings to force the Administration men to withdraw to another location to pass their resolutions and nominate their candidates. The *State Register* counted only seven Buchanan men listening to a speech by John Reynolds in Springfield. Fifty Douglasites called for their own orator and forced Reynolds off the platform. The Congressional conventions were only slightly smoother than the local meetings. 19

The first Congressional convention was in the Sixth district in Springfield on September 7. Party organizers flooded central Illinois with colorful posters advertising the rally and Vice-President Breckinridge and former-New York Senator Daniel Dickinson were promised as speakers. On the appointed day, forty to fifty delegates assembled in the hall of representatives in the state house. The primary orator was
John Reynolds who delivered "servid appeals and melting allusions to the halycon days of old fashioned Jacksonian Democracy." The rest of the work-horse orators followed. Leib, Fitch, Hoyne and Brainard delivered their own stinging attacks on the Little Giant. Resolutions passed containing the usual condemnations of the anti-Lecomptonites with the addition of one repudiating Douglas' Freeport speech. The delegates nominated John L. McConnell for the Congressional seat held by Thomas L. Harris and chose candidates for the state legislature and several local offices. Unfortunately, the meeting adjourned without the appearance of either Breckinridge or Dickinson, though Dickinson sent "a thousand greetings." The embarrassed Buchanan leaders charged that the invitations were intercepted by some cunning Douglas postmaster.20

Three days later, the National Democracy of the Third Congressional district met in Bloomington. After choosing a president and a committee on credentials, the thirty-six delegates appointed a conference committee to meet with representatives of the Douglas convention meeting in the same city. David LeRoy, Wilson Allen and J. T. Thompson were instructed to explore the possibility of the two conventions uniting on a common candidate for Congress. That afternoon, the three men reported that the joint-committee had decided on George W. Armstrong, a Douglasite. This was not what the delegates wanted to hear for they had no intention of supporting a Douglas candidate. They nominated, instead, David LeRoy who reluctantly accepted. The convention pledged continued support to Buchanan, Reynolds, Dougherty and LeRoy before adjourning.21

The town of Dixon in Lee County hosted the National Democratic convention in the Second district. Almost half of the sixty delegates came from Cook County. A resolution passed which declared that it was
the duty of all true Democrats to take the field against any foe, including Douglas. Breckinridge F. Blackburn was nominated for Congress and the meeting closed with three hearty cheers for President Buchanan. In other districts the conventions followed much the same pattern. Thomas M. Hope was nominated in the Eighth district, Dr. S. S. Baldwin in the Seventh, Jacob C. Davis in the Fifth, Jacob Gale in the Fourth, Richard H. Jackson in the First and Mr. Parrish in the Ninth. Gale was placed at an immediate disadvantage for the Buchanan men in the Fourth district did not meet until October 20, less than two weeks before the election. None of the candidates were given more than a few months to campaign. In fact, the National Democrats failed miserably to field a full slate of candidates for the state legislature and for local offices. Even if there had been widespread popular support for the Buchanan party, two months was hardly enough time to build a viable political following. The failure to field many candidates indicated that there was not much popular support anyway. 22

Buchanan's proscription policy did not help the situation at all. It gathered a few more friends to the Administration's side, but it alienated many more. The removals continued erratically through the fall. The first week in September saw seven postmasters removed, among which was Calneh C. Zarley, editor of the Joliet Signal. Zarley finally had become too friendly with the Douglas Democrats to suit the President. In October the Chicago Democrat reported that some thirty postmasters had recently been removed, and that many more removals had been decided upon. "Old Buck has got the guillotine well greased and in full swing," declared the Democrat, "from now till election we may expect to hear of Douglas postmasters' heads falling into the basket as fast as the old machine can be made to work." Removals continued until October 27, when John
Galbraith, postmaster at Belvidere, lost his position, but they came too slow to please the National Democratic leaders.\(^{23}\)

Jacob May complained to Judge Breese that Douglas postmasters were allowed to hold office in spite of their fierce denunciations of the Administration. Isaac Cook blamed this on Assistant Postmaster General Horatio King. King, charged Cook, delayed the removals in order to help Senator Douglas. John Reynolds found his advice ignored in several patronage matters. The Administration was experiencing doubts because of the public indignation brought about by several of the removals. When the Pekin postmaster was removed, the townspeople reacted so violently that his replacement failed to appear. In Bloomington, the new postmaster was hung in effigy and a man trying to cut the effigy down was stoned. The \textit{State Register}, no longer worried about the removals, described the final few as "amusing."\(^{24}\)

The last weeks of the campaign brought only more bad news to the National Democrats. Local organization moved sluggishly if at all and the President gave only half-hearted support. Administration-backed Democrats went down to defeat in the October elections conducted in several eastern states, crippling the Administration's influence in Illinois. The Missouri Republican, which had been the Administration's leading voice in southern Illinois, grew indignant over the President's apparent willingness to see a Republican elected to the Senate and came out for Douglas. The final blow came in late October when the Vice-President added his name to the list of leading Democrats pledged to Douglas' support. Breckinridge's endorsement was well publicized by the Douglas press to prove that the Administration was not unified against the Senator. Isaac Cook wrote indignantly to Buchanan expressing his outrage over the Vice-President's "treachery." Cook's complaint brought
no reaction from Washington.  

If the contest between Lincoln and Douglas had not been so closely fought, the Douglas Democrats would have completely ignored the Buchananites. But the outcome was very much in doubt and Douglas and his candidates needed every vote available. Senator Jones advised Breese that, "Douglas is playing the last game in the rubber—he has become desperate & of course has resorted to all kinds of corruption and collusion."  

Douglas may not have engaged in corrupt practices himself, but the Douglas press resorted to questionable tactics to trick Buchanan's followers into voting for Douglas candidates. Shortly before election day, several Douglas papers carried false reports of the withdrawal of Buchanan candidates from the race. The Chicago Times reported that the National Democratic tickets in Will, Kankakee, Stephenson, Logan, Champaign and twelve other counties would be withdrawn and that only cash payments from Abraham Lincoln had kept them in the race so long. The State Register added that David LeRoy had come out for Douglas in a speech at Bloomington on October 21, a report which LeRoy immediately denied. The Alton Democrat claimed that John Reynolds had become disgusted with the "bolters" and was now considering withdrawing from the race, allegedly calling the President a "rascal and traitor." Abraham Lincoln urgently instructed a leading Republican in Hancock County to head off an effort by two Douglasites to induce the National Democrats there to vote for the Douglas candidates for the state legislature.  

The Douglas Democrats were indeed very concerned about the National Democrats. Congressman S. S. Marshall reported from Egypt that the "Danites" might well affect the results in Union, Alexander and Pulaski Counties. He spent several days tracking John Reynolds as he moved through
the district. John A. Logan feared some "Danite ... in Franklin and Logan Counties and spent the last week of the campaign trying to head it off. The last few days passed with all three parties making final, desperate efforts to win a few more votes. On November 2, the eyes of the nation focused on Illinois as the voters went to the polls.28

That morning dawned cold, wet and raw. The fate of Douglas, Lincoln and all the other candidates now rested with the thousands of Illinois voters who made their way through the poor weather to the polling places.

Party leaders on all sides did not rest, however. The press urged the party faithful to watch the polls for illegal voters. The Buchanan papers echoed Republican charges that Douglas had bought up Irish laborers, with whom he had great influence, and transported them as railroad hands from Chicago, Wisconsin, Indiana and Missouri to central Illinois where their votes could tip the balance in favor of the Douglas candidates. The State Democrat claimed that over one hundred Douglas voters had already been imported into Sangamon County and offered a $100 reward for the arrest and conviction of any illegal voters. Charges of poll judges accepting illegal votes flowed from all sides.

The State Democrat, further threatened the use of arms to uphold the law. It is likely that illegal voting did take place but charges to that effect were rarely proven and it probably did not have an effect on the voting results.29

By November 3, it was clear that the Douglas candidates for state treasurer and superintendent of public instruction had gone down to defeat. Dougherty and Reynolds drew enough votes away from William Fondey and Augustus G. French to elect Republicans James Miller and Newton Bateson. Miller received 125,430 votes to 121,609 for Fondey, a
difference of 3,821 votes. Dougherty received 5,071 votes. Bateson defeated French 124,556 to 122,413, a difference of only 2,143.

Reynolds received 5,173 votes. If the votes cast for Dougherty and Reynolds had been cast for Fondey and French, and it is a fair assumption that they would have been if Dougherty and Reynolds had not run, the two Douglasites would have been elected. While injuring the Douglas party pleased the Buchanan candidates, the results also caused them some displeasure. Out of the 102 counties in Illinois, Dougherty received less than ten votes in twenty-eight counties and no votes in ten others. He made a stronger showing in such counties as DeWitt, Sangamon and Bureau. In Bureau County, Dougherty defeated Fondey by 177 votes. He finished second to the Douglas candidates in the southern counties of Union, Alexander, Franklin and Pulaski. But in the majority of the counties, Dougherty and Reynolds finished a poor third, each receiving only about two per cent of the total vote.30

Voting results for Congress more clearly spelled defeat for the National Democrats. Republicans were elected in the four northern districts while Douglas Democrats carried the five southern districts. Strangely, the pro-Lecompton Buchanan candidates did much better in the northern districts. David LeRoy made the best showing with over three per cent of the vote in the north-central Third district. The same district elected the radical abolitionist Owen Lovejoy by a large margin. Buchanan candidates in the Seventh, Eighth and Ninth districts which comprise Egypt gathered one per cent or less of the total votes cast. Buchanan candidates did better in districts that elected Republicans than in the districts where pro-slavery sentiment was strong, showing that the National Democrats were greatly dependent upon Republican support. The Douglas press even charged Republicans with voting for the
Buchanan candidates where their own candidates were safe. In all
but the Third district, the Douglasites had either widened their
margin of victory, or narrowed Republicans margins of victory,
from the 1856 Congressional elections, showing the impotence of the
National Democratic candidates, but more importantly, the 
value of Douglas' anti-Lecomptonism. 31

The results from the election of state legislators generated the
most excitement since they would determine whether Lincoln or Douglas
would represent Illinois in the Senate. When the results were in,
Douglas was clearly the victor. Including those legislators who had
not been up for re-election, the Douglasites outnumbered the Republicans
in the legislature 54 to 46. Unless some legislators defected from the
Douglas camp, Douglas would be elected in January by that same margin.
The National Democrats had little effect on the vote for the legislature.
Republicans displaced Democrats in five legislative districts, two of
which had been directly affected by the patronage. In those two districts,
Republicans owed their victory to the Buchanan candidates. But the
National Democrats did not swing enough districts to prevent the election
of Senator Douglas. While the proscription policy may have aided those
two Republicans, it most likely had an overall negative effect by
inspiring the Douglasites to greater efforts. 32

As the results came trickling in, the Buchanan press exaggerated
the party's success. The State Democrat reported that Reynolds and
Dougherty had each polled about 15,000 votes and that another 15,000
National Democrats had voted Republican, driven to it by Douglas'
treasonable behavior. The Chicago Herald reported that the results from
59 counties indicated that the Buchanan candidates received almost 9,000
votes. A few days later, faced with the official returns, the National
Democrats admitted a poor showing. Buchanan leaders in Cook County claimed that their organizations voted for Republicans in a last ditch effort to defeat Douglas. The Urbana *Our Constitution* remarked that it was perfectly natural for the Buchananites to have voted for Republicans since the whole Buchanan movement was a Republican scheme. The Republicans, strangely enough, claimed that they would have done better if the Administration had supported Douglas. The *State Journal* claimed that many Republicans voted for Douglas as a rebuke to the President and Lecomptonism. The *State Democrat*, at the same time, blamed the Republican victory in the state-wide elections on the Douglas bolters. "Had they left the man and adhered to principle," the paper declared, "the Democratic party of Illinois would have stood to-day triumphant and the Administration sustained."  

The National Democrats' poor showing on November 2 had four major causes. Most importantly, the Administration's Kansas policy was simply not popular in Illinois. The Democratic party, led by Senator Douglas, gained more support within the state by opposing the Lecompton bill and the English compromise than it lost. Secondly, many National Democrats did vote for Republicans hoping to defeat Douglas. Thirdly, other Democrats, although they supported the Administration, refused to vote for the Buchanan ticket because the effect would be to elect a Republican. Finally, Buchanan badly mishandled affairs in Illinois. The patronage was used enough to infuriate the Douglasites but not vigorously enough to really bolster the Buchananites. Also, control of the patronage was given to men with unsavory characters, such as Cook, Leib and Carpenter. One historian writes, "it is difficult to over-estimate the odium and reproach cast upon the National Democracy of Illinois by the unfortunate identification of these men with it." President Buchanan
weakened his own party by denying it his full support. What steps he
did take were regarded by most Illinois Democrats as outside meddling
and created more enemies than friends. 34

That Douglas had won a great victory over the combined opposition
of the Republicans and the National Democrats could not be denied.
The Republican New York Tribune reported to the nation that Douglas
had achieved "a signal triumph." Harpers' Weekly added that the Admini-
stration party polled so few votes that it was likely it would deny
having run a separate ticket. But nobody appreciated Douglas' victory
than Stephen A. Douglas himself. He wrote to Virginia's Governor
Henry A. Wise, "Whatever may be the result in other Northern states,
you may always rely upon Illinois as being faithful to the Democracy
against the assaults and treasonable purposes of the Abolitionists and
their allies." 35
VI
1859-1860: THE PARTY LIVES ON

The resounding defeat suffered by the National Democrats might ordinarily have destroyed it but this had been no ordinary campaign. Few campaigns, "Even when the presidential chair was the prize of the contest," observed an Illinois editor, "have been so bitterly and desperately contested, or have involved interests of more genuine importance." The National Democrats' bitterness toward the Douglasites did not die away. They summarily rejected pleas to let bygones be bygones, pledged to continue the war and continued to attack Douglas as an abolitionist and an enemy of the Democratic party. John Reynolds still quite literally hated Douglas. In a letter to Abraham Lincoln, Reynolds lamented his defeat: "My humble sun shall go down without a spot on it, whereas his will be shrouded with dark dirty filth and corruption."¹

Administration Democrats in Congress also carried on the war. On December 9, in a move inspired by the President, a caucus of the Democratic members of the Senate ousted Douglas from his chairmanship of the Committee on Territories, which he had held for eleven years. It served him as an effective power base and platform for his views and removal was a serious blow to the Senator. The move indicated that the Administration had no intention of ending the feud. The split in the party continued into the Charleston national convention in 1860. As long as the Administration battled with Douglas in Washington, the Buchanan party in Illinois maintained a spark of life.²

Douglas' followers were deeply angered at events in Washington. S. S. Marshall explained to Charles Lanphier that Douglas' removal
bade "farewell to all hope of harmony." The Douglas press remarked that opposition to Douglas was based solely on his declaration that the President and his supporters had attempted to force the Lecompton constitution as a fraud on the people of Kansas. The State Register accused the National Democrats in Illinois of being supported only by Republican money and the Joliet Signal lashed out at all Democrats who opposed Douglas in the great battle against the Republicans. The words went unheeded. Buchanan Democrats, in and out of Illinois, continued the fight and the Douglasites were quite willing to fight back.3

The National Democrats, though severely beaten, did not concede Douglas' election. Isaac Cook informed the President that it was possible that it could be prevented. Buchanan party leaders claimed that several Democratic state legislators from Egypt planned to vote against Douglas, that they felt obligated to the many National Democrats who had supported them. These reports were received with skepticism. Two of the hold-overs reported to have defected publicly reaffirmed their loyalty to Douglas. Senator Trumbull expressed his own doubts as the Republicans had grown wary of Buchananite promises. While Douglas Democrats dismissed the rumors as worthless, they still remained wary. James Sheahan feared a plot by some dubious Douglas men but his fears proved unfounded. On January 6, 1859, Douglas was re-elected by a vote of 54-46.4

As mentioned previously, the Administration did not drop the war against Douglas even after his triumph. In addition to personal animosities, the issues which divided the party were not yet settled. Both Douglas and Buchanan had taken their positions on the slavery position and neither planned to back down. The Chicago Herald spelled out the differences. Douglas, it began, agreed that Congress possessed no power to
prohibit slavery in the territories, but he believed that the people of a territory could lawfully do so by refusing to protect the rights of slaveholders through local police regulations. The Administration, on the other hand, maintained that the territorial legislatures could not lawfully do so, though they may have the power. The Dred Scott decision, the paper concluded, required the protection of slave property in the territories prior to statehood. Accordingly, the National Democrats tried repeatedly to put Douglas in a position where he would either have to surrender to the President or alienate the south. The Dooglasites played down the differences between the two party leaders in order to prove that the Buchanan party in Illinois was unnecessary. In short, the issues which had divided the party in 1858 continued to do so in 1859 and 1860. A third group, led by the Joliet Signal, condemned both sides for failing to reconcile, though it was unable to say how this was to be done. 5

The majority of the Buchanan papers continued to operate after the election. A few, like the Quincy Democrat, folded after November 2. Most reaffirmed their intention to stay with the Buchanan party. The State Democrat and the Peoria Democratic Union declared that they would continue at least until after the Presidential election in 1860. In Chicago, Charles N. Pine's Chicago Herald continued publication under the banner "Principles—Not Men," enlarging its format because of increased circulation. It kept up the attack until July, 1860 when, strangely, it merged with its arch-rival the Chicago Times and declared Douglas its candidate for the Presidency. 6

Until the merger, the Times and the Herald engaged in a bitter feud as James Sheahan, editor of the Times, still resented Cook's control over the Chicago post office. In February, 1859, Douglas, who had returned
to the Senate, charged that he had not been able to get material
franked by him through the Chicago post office. Douglas' charge was
printed in the Times in an effort to have Cook removed. Pine defended
Cook in the Herald, charging that Douglas had illegally used his
franking privilege during the campaign. Cook emphatically denied the
charges of corruption and sent affidavits to Washington proving that
for every Democratic document from every other source, 99 were franked
by Douglas. The Joliet Signal, always working for party unity, denounced
Sheahan for carrying a personal grudge against Cook. When rumors
arrived from Washington that Cook was to be removed, he immediately
left for Washington to defend himself. Finally, after investigating the
case, Postmaster General Holt decided to retain Cook. Douglas and
Sheahan refused to let the case die. Sheahan also journeyed to Washing-
ton and labored for a month for Cook's removal. He simultaneously
wor to have Pine removed from his position as U. S. marshal hoping
thereby to silence the Herald, accusing him of overdrawing his salary
among other things. Though Sheahan succeeded in reviving the case—two
postal agents were sent to Chicago to investigate—the President stood
behind Cook and Pine until he left office.7

The National Democrats continued to run candidates for state and
local offices. Shortly after November 2, Douglasite Thomas L. Harris
died after being re-elected to Congress from the Sixth district.
Buchananite John McConnell tried again to secure the seat but his candi-
dacy proved unsuccessful. In the Chicago city elections in the spring of
1859, a full slate of Buchanan candidates ran against the Douglas Democrats
and the Republicans. Isaac Curran, their candidate for mayor, may have
affected the results as the Republican candidate was elected in a close
race. A month later, the Times and the Herald clashed over which candi-
dates were the genuine Democrats in the Chicago judicial elections. In October, several papers endorsed B. F. Strother for Governor but the Lecomptonite was persuaded not to run, according to the Herald, because it was felt that he was more valuable to the party in Chicago.

The most ambitious undertaking by the Buchanan was an effort to defeat Douglas at the Charleston national convention in the spring of 1860. As early as May, 1858 it was known that the National Democrats were looking beyond the fall elections to the next Presidential election. Lanphier believed that the November, 1858 elections were only a secondary goal of the Buchananites, advising Democrats to look out for "Danite" tricks. John Dougherty, shortly after the elections, declared that the Douglas delegates would not be admitted to the national convention.

The National Democrats, though even weaker than they had been in 1858, moved ahead with plans to send a contesting delegation to Charleston and make Dougherty's words come true. In April, 1859, the National Democratic state central committee, chaired by Isaac Cook, issued a message to the party stating its intention to set aside the Douglas organization in Illinois. The Douglasites knew the feebleness of the Buchanan party and viewed the message with amusement. They felt it was hardly likely that a few thousand Buchananites could set aside the 150,000 voters who had supported Douglas in 1858. Undaunted, Cook's committee, in October, issued a call for a state convention to be held in Springfield on January 10, 1860 to form a delegation to the national convention. Supporting the call were many of the party leaders from 1858. David LeRoy, Thomas M. Howe, William L. Dougherty, B. F. Strother, Charles Pine and Thomas Shirley all served on the central
committee. The convention accomplished very little, probably because of poor attendance. The delegates declared their intention to stand on the platform adopted by the Charleston convention and John Dougherty, John Reynolds and Isaac Cook were chosen to lead the delegation to the national convention. The meeting then adjourned to meet again at a later date. 10

Douglas grew increasingly apprehensive about the Buchananites' activities. During 1859 he expressed confidence that the bolters had been crushed but in 1860 he was not quite so sure. Buchanan's support of Cook and Pine along with the January convention convinced him that steps should be taken to prevent any more mischief. Douglas advised his Illinois supporters to nominate Presidential electors as well as delegates to the national convention fearing the Buchananites would form their own slate of electors and try to force them on the rest of the party. He wished to have both delegates and electors who could be relied upon. 11

The Douglas Democratic convention met on January 4, 1860 and warmly endorsed the Little Giant. The Douglas party leaders were both confident and worried. Lanphier wrote, "those rascals must have some hope of getting in, or they would not be pushing the matter as they do." The Republicans were again helping the National Democrats. Republican leaders even offered to defray the expenses of the Buchanan delegation in Charleston. 12

In late April, the Democrats began assembling in Charleston, South Carolina to nominate their candidate for the Presidency. Douglas was considered the front-runner since he controlled the majority of the delegates. A two-thirds majority, however, was needed for the nomination and this Douglas did not have. The southern fire-eaters labored
 incessantly for Douglas' defeat, viewing the Senator and his Freeport speech as little better than abolitionism. Also present in Charleston was John Slidell, representing the President. Passions had not cooled between Buchanan and Douglas and the President viewed the convention as his last chance to destroy Douglas' chances to succeed hin.

During the first few days of the proceedings, the delegates made several decisions favorable to Douglas' chances including a refusal to seat the Buchanan delegation from Illinois. But after this initial success, events turned against the Douglas forces. Finally, after heated debate over the platform, the southern delegations withdrew from the convention. In an effort to prevent party dissolution, it was decided that the convention would reconvene in Baltimore a month later. This move failed to restore party unity and the Baltimore convention also broke up. The southern delegates steadfastly refused to endorse any platform which did not absolutely protect slaveholders' rights in the territories. The Douglas forces refused to grant this knowing that such a platform would destroy the Democratic party in the northern states. As a result, the northern delegates remained in Baltimore and nominated Douglas. The southerners met separately and nominated John C. Breckinridge of Kentucky and Joseph Lane of Oregon for President and Vice-President. The division of the Democracy virtually assured victory for the Republican nominee, who turned out to be Abraham Lincoln of Illinois.13

In Illinois, the National Democrats hoisted the names of Breckinridge and Lane and were soon in motion preparing for the election. A second state convention convened on July 11 at Springfield with Dougherty presiding. The delegates expressed support for Breckinridge and the southern platform. Thomas M. Hope was nominated for Governor and B. T.
Burke was chosen to run for secretary of state. In addition to a complete state ticket, a full slate of Presidential electors was formed and a new state central committee was chosen. But despite all their efforts, the National Democrats had virtually no effect on the elections of 1860.14

The election of Abraham Lincoln to the Presidency and the coming of the Civil War spelled doom for the National Democracy in Illinois. Buchanan office-holders were immediately turned out by the new Administration and Douglas' defeat in 1860 simply satisfied many other Buchananites. Southern secession and the outbreak of war further divided the National Democrats. Most, led by John Dougherty, became militant toward the south and rallied to the Union's banner. Dougherty expressed desire to see the Union maintained, by the force of arms if necessary. In 1861, he joined the Republican party and in 1864 served as an elector for the Lincoln-Johnson ticket. Others, including John Reynolds, remained pro-south and supported secession. Reynolds believed that the south had no choice after Lincoln's election but to secede. In 1860, he wrote the "Balm of Gilead" in which he vehemently attacked any thoughts of emancipation and he spent the war years as a frustrated "copperhead." The National Democracy of Illinois, like so many other relics of the ante-bellum years, was simply swept away by the tide of the Civil War.15
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8 Illinois State Journal, April 21, 1858.

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