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GENESIS OF THE WHIG PARTY IN ILLINOIS.

(By C. M. Thompson, University of Illinois.)

If meetings of this kind are to be productive of the greatest amount of good, those attending and taking part must have no hesitancy in being critical, for they, of all people, show by their presence here, that they are vitally interested in the history of our State; and in no better way can the chaff, which has too long encumbered, be separated from the grain. Thus the writer invites the most searching criticism, in the sincere hope that several new ideas expressed in this paper may be disproved, if they are erroneous.

The political leaders in Illinois were divided into two factions even before the State was admitted to the Union in 1818, and despite the fact that a majority of the leaders of these factions was dead, and many of the issues over which they struggled forgotten, when the term Whig came to be used to designate one of the great political parties, there is a continuity of principles and personnel, striking enough to warrant the belief, that territorial political alignments had considerable influences in determining the make-up of the Whig and Democratic parties in Illinois.

As is generally well known, the leader of one faction was Governor Ninian Edwards, and supporting him were Nathaniel Pope, Daniel Pope Cook, Thomas C. Browne, and Pierre Menard. The opposing faction was under the nominal leadership of Shadrach Bond, with whom were associated Jesse B. Thomas, Elias Kent Kane, John McLean, and Michael Jones. With the coming of statehood, and the consequent increase in the number of offices to be filled, evidence at hand points to a reconciliation of factions on the basis of a division of public emoluments. Every factional leader of the first rank received office; Bond and Menard became Governor and Lieutenant Governor, respectively; Jones was elected to the State Senate; Thomas and Edwards were chosen United States Senators; Phillips and Browne were given places on the bench of the State Supreme Court, while Pope became a member of the United States judiciary; Kane was appointed Secretary of State by Governor Bond; McLean was elected to Congress; and Cook, who was the unsuccessful aspirant for the sole congressional seat to which Illinois was then entitled, was appointed Attorney General.

The year 1819, saw a revival of the old struggle. Edwards, whose term as United States Senator expired March 4, 1819, was re-elected, but not without considerable opposition on the part of the Bond faction, which supported Jones for the place. Later in the year Cook and McLean, for the second time, contested for congressional honors, with Cook

the victor, due to his opposition to the proposed Missouri Compromise as well as to his tremendous personal influence over the voters.

In 1820 the Bond faction brought out Kane as Cook's opponent. Both candidates expressed themselves as favorable to the proposition to make Missouri a state without restrictions. The election resulted in a landslide for Cook, who received the support of the old Edwards faction, as well as that of the lately arrived settlers in the northern counties.

The August election of 1822, witnessed a general clash between the factions. Both Coles and Phillips, who were candidates for Governor in that year, were distasteful to the Edwards people, so much so that Edwards, through Hooper Warren, brought out Thomas C. Browne as a candidate. The contest was very close. Coles carried the northern counties, in which, on the whole, the people were lately arrived and hence not adherents of either of the old factions; Browne and Phillips divided the vote in the southern part of the State, the former being supported by the Edwards faction, while Phillips very generally received the votes of the Bondites. Both factions voted irrespective of their slavery predilections, and the generally accepted opinion that Browne was brought out as a stalking horse by the slavery element in an attempt to elect Phillips, is not supported by reliable evidence. Cook, who was no less zealous in his opposition to slavery than was Coles, carried seventeen counties, of which number eight supported Phillips or Browne. The inconsistency of the position of those who contend that the gubernatorial election was on the basis of slavery, and that Browne was a slavery candidate, is further shown by the fact that Hooper Warren, an uncompromising opponent of slavery in any form, supported Browne's candidacy. In this election began a third party with its principal strength in Sangamon and adjoining counties, and a party which was to continue for more than a decade to hold the balance of power between the various factions of the Democratic party.

The Bond faction was characterized by the great number of ambitious politicians within its ranks. Although this faction was defeated in the gubernatorial election of 1822, it succeeded in electing a majority to the General Assembly. Being favorably disposed toward slavery the members of that faction, aided by not an inconsiderable number of others who favored any plan to worry the new executive, succeeded in carrying through the General Assembly in February, 1823, the famous proposition to call a Constitutional Convention.

The election of 1824, which decided this momentous question, resulted in a complete victory for the anti-slavery forces. Not only was the convention proposition defeated by a large majority, but Cook, against whom the conventionists had pitted Governor Bond, was elected to Congress. The counties that had supported Coles in 1822, declared against the convention, but the anti-convention vote in those counties would have been of no avail without the assistance of the anti-slavery element in the southern part of the State. Although Coles had received but 4 per cent of the entire vote cast in Alexander County in 1822, the convention forces were able to carry that county by only a small majority; and the election returns of Gallatin, Johnson, Franklin, Wayne, Randolph and Jefferson counties show that hundreds who voted for Browne or Phillips in 1822, voted two years later against the call for a

convention to amend the State Constitution. In none of the counties named had the Coles vote been greater than 15 per cent, yet the vote against slavery varied from 18 per cent in Gallatin to 45 per cent in Randolph County. The counties of Lawrence and Union, which had given Browne and Phillips together more than 82 per cent of their entire vote in 1822, two years later rejected the convention proposition by a vote of three to two. On the whole, communities favoring the call for a convention, supported Bond for Congress, the notable exceptions being in those in which Cook had a strong personal following that clung to him despite his utterances against the extension of slavery.

On account of the all-absorbing slavery question, the Presidental election of 1824, received scanty attention at the hands of the voters. While contemporary accounts differ as to the relation between the conventionist and anti-conventionists on the one hand, and the Presidential candidate on the other, the vote indicates that Adams and Clay had their greatest strength in those counties in which the anti-conventionists had a majority, while Jackson's supporters were on the whole supporters of the proposition to call a convention. Thus there seems to be established by the election of 1824, a line which divided roughly the voters into two groups, each having a clearly marked preference for certain men and measures. One group, which comprised the voters of the northern counties and the Edwards strongholds in the southern part of the State, supported Cook, Adams or Clay, and opposed the Convention, while the other group, which was dominated by Bond, Kane, McLean and Thomas, supported Bond, Jackson or Crawford, and favored the Convention.

As in 1822-4, so was the General Assembly of 1824-6 completely dominated by the Bond faction. As a result of this political affiliation, two of the leaders of that faction, and zealous slavery men, McLean and Kane, were elected to the United States Senate. A writer on this period has said concerning this election that "there is nothing stranger than this in our political history." The explanation for such a seemingly strange paradox rests not upon a study of the Convention parties but rather upon older political alignments. The majority of the Legislature that elected McLean and Kane, was not necessarily pro-slavery and pro-convention because it elected men of that belief to office, for the issue of slavery and convention had ceased to have life after the August election in 1824. The majority was a Bond faction majority, and nothing was more natural than to honor its two greatest leaders by electing them to the United States Senate.

One of the central figures in the election by the House of Representatives of Adams to the presidency in 1825, was Cook, sole Congressman from Illinois. Cook is said to have declared before the presidental election in 1824, that if the selection of a president should devolve upon the House, he would cast his vote for the candidate that received a majority of the popular vote in Illinois. Jackson carried two electoral districts, the Second and Third, but neither he nor any other candidate received a majority at the general election. As a result of this indecisive vote, Cook felt himself free to use his own judgment in making a selection from the three candidates before the House, and for various

and valid causes, one of which was his admiration for the man, he cast the vote of Illinois for Adams.

The election of Adams, or better to say the defeat of Jackson, determined largely the political alignment in the United States for the next thirty years, and on account of Cook's vote, is this statement particularly true of conditions in Illinois. As soon as the people learned through the medium of Jackson's astute managers, that the old hero had been cheated out of his rights and the will of the people had been thwarted, by a corrupt bargain between Adams and Clay, they rallied to the Jackson standard. Cook's close affiliation with the old anti-convention party had the effect of throwing headlong into the Jackson camp his opponents, who, on the whole, had been conventionists and who owed allegiance to Bond, Kane and McLean. The Edwards faction, which had been in temporary alliance only with the anti-conventionists, and which, after the August election of 1824, had set about to reorganize upon old lines, very generally favored Jackson's candidacy, and Cook's vote for Adams alienated many of his oldest and best friends. The Coles party had voted for Adams, and his election by the House met the approbation of that element.

Thus growing out of the convention contest of 1824, and the presidential election of 1825, were three more or less distinct parties: the ultra, or, as was more familiarly called "the whole hog" Jackson party; a party favoring Jackson's candidacy, the members of which were generally known as "milk and cider" Jackson men; and finally the anti-Jackson party, which was confined principally to the northern counties. Although the lines are not hard and fast, one may say with confidence that the "whole hog" and "milk and cider" factions of the Jackson party were continuations of the old Bond and Edwards factions respectively, and that the anti-Jackson party was made up of the newer elements, which knew nothing of the political alignments of earlier days.

The gubernatorial election of 1826, resulted in a victory for a political coalition of the anti-Jackson party and the "milk and cider" faction of the Jackson party. Edwards was elected governor, but the closeness of the election indicates quite clearly that the anti-Jackson party was hopelessly in the minority, and that its only hope for success lay in playing off the factions of the opposition one against the other. At the same time Cook was beaten by Joseph Duncan, a young "whole hog" Jackson man, who had a good military record behind him. The defection of the Cook supporters was general all over the State. A county here and there gave him an increased majority over 1824, but this was offset by a few other counties which showed a marked falling off in their support. Cook uniformly ran behind Edwards except in those counties where his popularity still exerted its old time influence: and it is on account of this tremendous influence that he was able to make a valiant fight against overwhelming odds.

In the presidental election of 1828, less than fifteen thousand votes were cast out of a population numbering considerably over one hundred thousand, and Jackson's majority of almost five thousand is evidence of a temporary union of the two Jackson factions in support of his candidacy. The "whole hog" candidate for Congress, Duncan, was elected over George Forquer, a recognized leader of the moderate Jack-

son faction, and a close personal and political friend of Governor Edwards. The apparent inconsistence in selection of adherents of different factions raises the suspicion that the Jackson managers saw to it that only ultra Jackson men should go to Congress; it also goes a long way in demonstrating the political sagacity and popularity of Edwards himself.

The next gubernatorial campaign began more than twelve months before the election in 1830. The candidates were William Kinney, representing the "whole hog" Jackson faction, and John Reynolds, who, at that time, was a confessed "milk and cider" Jackson man. Kinney, expecting to ride into office on a wave of Jackson enthusiasm, was extravagant in his praise of the President. Reynolds with all his faults proved that he was a better politician than his opponent by securing the support of many radical Jacksonites, without alienating that element in the State opposed to the old hero. Reynolds' strength was principally in the extreme northern, western and southern parts of the State, and in the central counties of Sangamon, Morgan and Macon. Despite Kinney's defeat, Duncan who was no less a radical than was Kinney, was elected to Congress by a large majority. Thus again was the radical wing of the Jackson party beaten by a coalition of the "milk and cider" Jackson men and the anti-administrationists.

During the six years following the State election of 1830 the political alignments in Illinois underwent radical changes. The position occupied by the "milk and cider" Jackson element was not only illogical but untenable, and its ability to maintain itself as an organization depended almost entirely upon the chance election of two of its leaders to the office of Governor. Its midway position between the radical Jackson faction on the one hand, and the anti-Jackson party on the other, made it a convenient and fruitful recruiting ground for its more extreme opponent. The election of Jackson for a second term, which was a complete vindication for the affront offered the old hero in 1825, served to cool the ardor of the more extreme supporters of the President, and bring them into more complete harmony with the radical members of the moderate Jackson party. The intrusion of Van Burenism into national politics, and the dogmatic distribution of office in the State by the national administration, tended to force the lukewarm supporters of Jackson into the ranks of the opposition, which included all the elements opposed to Jackson and Van Buren, and which took on the name Whig in 1834.

Thus during the territorial period the political interests of the people of Illinois were taken up with the personal strife between the two factions, one headed by Governor Edwards, and the other by Shadrach Bond. These factional contests extended over into the period of statehood, but with the attempt to introduce slavery into the State in 1823-4, new elements came into political leadership, and the result was a temporary change in political alignments. On the whole the Bond faction supported the proposition to legalize slavery, while the Edwards faction temporarily allied itself with the anti-slavery party led by Governor Coles. After the slavery question had been decisively settled in 1824, the two old territorial factions underwent a reorganization on the basis of loyalty to Jackson and his advisers, Bond and his followers becoming

what are commonly known as "whole hog" Jackson men, the Edwards faction taking a more moderate, or "milk and cider" position. The third party, which had made its appearance first in support of Coles in 1822; and afterwards in opposition to the proposition to call a convention, became the Adams, or anti-Jackson party, and it was around this party as a nucleus that the later Whig party grew. During the decade following 1824 the "whole hog" Jackson men succeeded in electing their candidate for Congress, but the "milk and cider" faction, aided by the anti-Jackson party, won every gubernatorial election during the decade. In the course of time the moderate Jackson faction began breaking up. The more radical members went over to the "whole hog" faction, which was growing less radical in its views and these two elements uniting became the nucleus of the later Democratic party, while the extremely moderate "milk and cider" Jackson men allied themselves with the anti-Jackson party.

One of the forces contributing to bring about the union of the two Jackson factions, was a change in the personnel of leadership. Before 1833 Edwards, Bond, Cook and McLean were dead; Thomas, Phillips and Sloo had removed from the State, while Browne, Pope and Smith were on the bench; and their places in leadership were filled with such men as John Reynolds, Adam W. Snyder, and others who knew little about the old animosities between the leaders and cared less.

The anti-Jackson party had its beginning, although unconsciously, in the convention contest of 1823-4. Its first accessions were from among the friends of Clay, who had supported the convention movement, but who believed that Jackson's denunciation of Clay's attitude toward the election of Adams was little less than prescriptive. The second accession came principally from among those members of the Edwards faction who considered the defeat of Cook in 1826 as a travesty of justice, and the beginning of political persecution. The high-handed manner in which Jackson's unofficial advisers carried out measures and policies caused a slight defection from the Jacksonian ranks, the most notable in Illinois being Senator Thomas. Jackson's continued opposition to federal aid for internal improvements was another cause of dissatisfaction, which resulted in alienating support in many sections. While all these disturbing elements were driving supporters from the Jackson party, it does not necessarily follow that all of them were to be found immediately in the ranks of the anti-Jackson party, for the "milk and cider" faction served as a sort of half-way house for those who, from personal or political reasons, feared to come out openly against Jackson. Beginning with the opposition to Van Buren as Vice Presidential candidate in 1831, the anti-Jackson party received a constant stream of recruits into its ranks, and the attack on the United States Bank, followed by the withdrawal of deposits confirmed the growing suspicion of many thinking men, of whom Joseph Duncan is the best example, that Jackson's administration, not necessarily Andrew Jackson, was a menace to the well-being of the country.

When the Whig party emerged in 1834, it contained all these factions and probably more, and when one asks why the Whigs were in-

clined to be a crowd rather than a compact party with definite purposes, the answer may be found by pausing in the examination of the large and diversified parts of the national organization and giving some attention to an analysis of typical geographical units such as was Illinois.