

**NEW ENGLAND'S CALHOUNITES: THE HENSHAW FACTION OF THE
MASSACHUSETTS DEMOCRATIC PARTY, 1828-1850.**

by

Craig M. MacAllister

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Doctoral Committee:

**Professor J. Mills Thornton III, Chair
Professor Maris A. Vinovskis
Associate Professor James W. Cook
Associate Professor Hannah Rosen**

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Chapter 1:

Introduction

Viewing the political culture and events of the antebellum period with the outcome of the Civil War in mind, historians have commonly tended to characterize the North and South as divergent in many ways. Many, hoping to explain the middle period of American history separate what they see as two distinctive regions into antithetical entities in some ways wholly foreign to each other, whether ideologically, politically, economically or socially. In doing so, they reduce the overall understanding of the period in question by presenting a flawed account that tends to overlook many of the obvious similarities that were inherent in the nation as a whole, beyond the narrow bounds of longitude and latitude. Viewing the systematic differences between an area defined by a free labor value system and one whose dominant economic structure was racial slavery, some have seen the inevitable political severing of the nation as virtually preordained from the opening decades of the nineteenth century. Believing that the pressures caused by the inherent differences between North and South could not “be contained within the existing inter-sectional political system,” their various theories agree in stating that internal conflict and the triumph of the stronger of these systems was bound to occur.¹

Reducing the national political situation to one of dichotomous tropes, which inevitably severed the union during the 1860’s, invariably oversimplifies the more nuanced and complex realities that helped define the middle third of the century. During these years political alliances were formulated that had little to do with sectional loyalties and in fact joined together ideological beliefs commonly associated only with certain regions and specific powerful individuals. There can be no better and more important example of the

¹ Eric Foner. *Politics and Ideology in the Age of Civil War* (New York, 1980), page 34.

truly national nature of core political ideas and values held by most Americans than the continuous relationships between South Carolina icon John C Calhoun and political segments from northern states throughout his long and distinguished career as one of America's most visible and venerated statesmen. While historians have tended to view this "cast iron man" as one of the most resolute and indomitable sectionalists in the years leading up to the Civil War, closer study of his own interactions, both personal and political, show him to have been more interested in national interests than most care to note. Indeed, his constant ability to gain support from all regions of the country, although never enough to make him a viable candidate for the presidency, did allow Calhoun to form and direct cross-sectional alliances that made him a major figure in the political debates within many states in the union. Whether it was with the conservative wing of the Democratic Party in Massachusetts, free-trade merchants or working class Locofocos in New York; or states-rights advocates from Pennsylvania to Iowa, Calhoun's name, image and supposed ideologies were utilized by a vast number of individuals from parts of the nation widely assumed by subsequent historians to be opposed to his principles.

This study presents the case of the faction of the Massachusetts Democratic Party led by David Henshaw and his closest political associates. These founding members of the Jacksonian organization in the state maintained a close political connection to Calhoun throughout the final two decades of his political life with a notably important five-year exception. In developing this political history, it is my intent to prove the case that the ideological beliefs and policy prescriptions shared between these men and the Carolinian proved more important than any regional commonalities they may have had with other local politicians. Since the man who is widely renowned as the symbol of sectional defiance in antebellum political culture will be shown below to have had important associations, both within the world of politics as well as in the arena of ideological discourse, with a group of influential politicians from the state seen by many as the diametrical opposite of Calhoun's South Carolina, it must be clear that America as a whole

was more unified than previous accounts depicting the vast dichotomy between North and South have implied.²

The reason for this firm connection between Calhoun and these Massachusetts politicians was rooted in a common belief system that was based upon the issues of state rights, limited central government, and republicanism. Largely reacting against what they viewed as the overly assertive tendencies of President John Quincy Adams and his secretary of state, Henry Clay, in promoting their nationalizing American System, this faction located in Calhoun the best representative of political ideals seen as Jeffersonian in nature. Like Calhoun, Henshaw's faction viewed the national government in Washington to have taken too active a role in influencing and directing the lives of all Americans. They believed their interests were best protected by local governments, not an over-arching and powerful centralized force. Because of the slant that American government had taken since the end of Jefferson's presidency, it seemed as if the more centralized notions originally espoused by Alexander Hamilton and carried on by the Federalist Party had gained ascendance within national politics. To men whose political education had been based upon the idea that all central power corrupts, best seen in the relationship between the British Parliament and American colonies in the decade preceding the American Revolutionary War, these more recent political developments seemed particularly worrisome. As a result, they clung to a political belief system that located in states rights ideology the best defense against the over-reaching tendencies of the national government. Because many of the programs supported by those with their similar school of thought appeared to be slanted toward favoring the South at the expense of northern interests, the Henshaw faction came to be seen as harboring interests that clashed with those commonly held by their neighbors. As this study intends to prove, however, their interest in policies seen as pro-southern in nature, was based upon a common political ideology, one rooted in

² Indeed, historians suffer from the general, although not universal, tendency to label Calhoun as an anti-democratic symbol of South Carolina's political culture and thus some sort of political anomaly in Jacksonian America. Such accounts range from opinions of Calhoun as a political opportunist who disassociated himself from democratic politics but still tried to appeal to moderate concerns, to those that disregard his unionist tendencies altogether in pointing to the supposed follies created by his actions in helping to bring about Civil War.

a return to proper Jeffersonian republican ideals, that trumped any sectional affinities or desires for political gain.

Generally speaking, what this realization proves is that although Calhoun, as rightly pointed out by several biographers and others who have focused on his political career, was certainly one of the more extreme southern sectionalists throughout the period from the early 1830's until his death during the political debates that led to the Compromise of 1850, even his ideas and beliefs were available to be embraced by those from regions and geographical climes supposed to be antithetical in both ideological outlook as well as economic and societal expectations. It is my intention in this project to show that the man most commonly associated with extreme sectional radicalism had much in common on a broad number of issues with those from a region supposedly dominated by different interests from his own over an extended period of time, thereby complicating the stereotypical sectional differences that have been asserted in the works of such historians as Eugene Genovese, William Freehling and William Cooper among others. Instead it is hoped that this account will build upon the ideas of other scholars who have shown the sections to be less divergent than the simple calculus of tautological Civil War studies has presented them. In so doing, my wish is not so much to disassemble the carefully constructed theses of others as to help shed new light upon the political realities that helped distinguish Jacksonian and antebellum America from other periods of our nation's past.

That there were inherent differences between North and South cannot be denied. Most importantly, the presence of millions of African slaves dispersed throughout the southern portion of the United States and the relative absence of African-Americans from the areas north of the Potomac and Ohio Rivers created obvious social and economic disparities between these two portions of antebellum America. That being said, however, I believe accounts such as those of Eugene Genovese depicting the South as a region dominated by the master-slave relationship and characterized by plantation agriculture to be slanted toward oversimplification. Such accounts are built upon the notion that the slave system served to spawn a distinct manner of living that was wholly divergent from

that of the free labor and more capitalistic North. Additionally, historians who fall into this school of thought see the hierarchical nature of slavery as coming to permeate southern life and society as a whole, thereby making it a distinctively different, and to some extent foreign, nation to those living north of Mason and Dixon's line. In their view, the linking of leading and subordinate castes both among Whites and Blacks led to complex negotiations between different groups. But always at the top of the system, the planter was destined to rule southern life in the manner of a benevolent liege watching over his dependants.³ This rendering of history would have scholars believe that the distinctive nature of slavery and the world that it created was cause for wholly different ideological outlooks in the South from those more commonly found in the North, all because of the presence or lack thereof of the peculiar institution. Such an explanation, while compelling due to the ease with which it helps to explain events that would fracture the union at a later date, does not successfully account for the obvious commonalities that existed between the two regions in the realms of ideology, politics, and economic interests.

Other historians, focusing directly upon politics as the best way to point to the distinctive nature of southern society, have chosen to narrow their collective visions toward the issues surrounding slavery, calling it the predominant battleground for much of the antebellum period. Labeling southern politics as the "politics of slavery," William Cooper outlines the ways in which he sees concerns over the institution predominating in the actions of that region's ruling classes from the time of the Constitutional Convention through the secession crisis and ultimately the Civil War. Because slavery was the one aspect of their world that helped make the South a distinctive region, actions taken by a variety of political groups, be they Federalists, Whigs, Free Soil Democrats or finally Republicans, were cause for concern and action by the men who were ultimately responsible for the political survival of a region with interests quite divergent from those which were seen as essential elsewhere. Therefore, all motions made by northerners that could be said to encroach upon southern sovereignty were seen as a direct assault on slavery itself, engendering protest. In such an environment the discord and division that

³ Eugene Genovese. *Roll, Jordan, Roll: The World the Slaves Made*. (New York 1974); *The Political*

would split the nation by the 1860's appears inevitable due to the lack of understanding between the two parts of the country, each of them with antithetical ideological programs and beliefs.⁴

Similarly, in placing slavery, along with the debates and worries surrounding its existence as a form of labor and the basis for society, at the heart of his interpretations of both the Nullification movement and the crisis of the 1850's, historian William Freehling presents the North and South as distinctly different regions with less and less in common with the passage of time. Addressing the South Carolina debate over the tariffs of 1828 and 1832 and the resultant decision to declare them unconstitutional and suspend their operation within the state's borders, Freehling ties an action motivated more by economic as well as ideological concerns to the institution of slavery. To his mind, South Carolina's political leaders tended to associate any type of governmental control over their daily lives, the tariff ordinances included, with infringements that placed the survival of their peculiar institution in particular danger. The rationale underlying this association was that if the federal government, led by more populous and thus more politically powerful northern states, could pass laws without the consent of the overwhelming majority of a particular section with its own concerns and interests, there was nothing to prevent it from legislating on slavery at a later date.⁵ Along these same lines, southern politicians in subsequent decades would take the perceived threats to their institution to be of paramount importance, and therefore would help to formulate a program for secession and independence.⁶ Thus, the history of the antebellum South, with South Carolina as a leading force early on, but later reflecting a common attitude of the region as a whole, was seen to be permeated by an impending sense of doom associated with the threat of northern intervention into that most particularly southern of concerns: slavery.

Economy of Slavery (New York 1965).

⁴ William Cooper. *Liberty and Slavery: Southern Politics to 1860* (New York, 1983); *The South and the Politics of Slavery: 1828-1856* (Baton Rouge 1978).

⁵ William Freehling. *Prelude To Civil War: The Nullification Crisis in South Carolina, 1816-1836*. (New York 1966).

⁶ William Freehling. *Road to Disunion: Secessionists at Bay, 1776-1854*. (New York 1990).

This tendency to present the South and its defenders as possessing attitudes and ideologies wholly different from the other half of American society permeates the writings of other more recent historians, focusing on both political and social aspects of the Antebellum period. In its most cohesive presentation it conflates such ideas as honor, paternalism and the hierarchical nature of the slave-based system with political intransigence and personal assaults on the encroaching political power of the non-slaveholding region. These accounts thus follow Freehling in placing the overarching institution of slavery, and the obvious differences that the existence of such a mode of economic and occupational standards engendered, at the heart of the divisions within the United States in the decades leading up to the Civil War. In essence, the South is often viewed as being dominated by the interests of the planter politicians who were said to control its collective ideology and to influence all decisions made on which course was best to follow during difficult periods. The construction of specific political belief systems is frequently seen as the pivot upon which the hegemony of the elite class turned in southern society. As the vested interests of planters were more often than not tied both economically and socially to slavery, this issue came to dominate southern political life and served as the foundation upon which the conflict between North and South would be built. Thus, the masters of large numbers of slaves, due to their economic strength along with their image as able leaders of society, came to impose their belief systems, often rooted in patriarchal codes of conduct on the region as a whole, thereby differentiating it in the minds of many recent chroniclers of the past from the more liberal-minded North.⁷

Whether directly or implicitly, John C. Calhoun plays a role in all of these depictions of southern uniqueness. To many historians of the period, he is the one figure who best represented an ardent defender of a specifically southern way of life; one centered

⁷ For the influence of paternalism on southern politics see: Manisha Sinha. *The Counterrevolution of Slavery: Politics and Ideology in Antebellum South Carolina* (Chapel Hill 2000). Studies that deal with the cult of honor and its relations to southern life include: Kenneth Greenberg. *Masters and Statesmen and Honor and Slavery: Lies, Duels, Noses, Masks, Dressing as a Woman, Gifts Strangers, Humanitarianism, Death, Slave Rebellions and the Proslavery Argument, Baseball, Gambling in the Old South* (Princeton 1996); Steven Stowe. *Intimacy and Power in the Old South: Ritual in the Lives of the Planters* (Baltimore 1987); and Wallace Hettle. *The Peculiar Democracy: Southern Democrats in Peace and Civil War* (Athens, GA 2001).

upon the promotion and perpetuation of slavery. This system of forced servitude was the foundation of a society that was inherently and irrevocably different from that of the free labor, capitalistic, modernizing North. Over time Calhoun has been presented as the one national politician who stood firmest for the interests of a particular region, with little hope of developing an inter-sectional following. In many cases he has been displayed as a lone voice, railing against national or party interests in hopes of furthering a regional or sectional cause, one wholly at odds with that of the majority of the nation, best represented by the image and political program of the northern states. In that way, he would seem to stand as the symbolic figure whose political beliefs were in almost complete agreement with the renderings of the South promoted by the likes of Foner, Genovese, Cooper, Freehling, and the other representatives of their school of thought.

Not all depictions of the obvious differences between the regions prior to the Civil War, however, focus solely on the South. Other historians have geared their efforts toward explicating a specifically northern ideological ethos and emphasizing the obvious incongruence between it and that characterizing southern life. Describing the North to be a region permeated by the ideals of free labor and capitalism, notions that contrasted directly with the feudally based southern system of labor, historians such as Eric Foner and Susan-Mary Grant have distinguished between the two regions on the level of self-presentation. Through the decades of dispute over the territorial issue, some see the two regions as presenting a contrast to each other so strong in the minds of their residents that their respective societal beliefs and expectations could not be held within a unified system. With a special focus on the way many northerners of free-soil inclinations looked upon the less progressive nature of southern life, dominated as it was by a seemingly outdated institution, a basic structure for conflict was emerging during the last two decades before the Civil War. Because of the increasing impact of the opinion that southern institutions and manners of living contrasted directly with those of the free labor North and were therefore destined to compete for hegemony in the territories opening up in the west, many northerners came to view the South as a blight upon their understanding of what American life comprised, according to these historical interpretations. Therefore, given the claims for the superiority of their way of life, they also inevitably beheld a latent threat

in the alleged plans for southern expansion, and that threat was destined to create tensions due to the obviously antithetical nature of each region's beliefs conjoined with the rapid settling of territories acquired in the aftermath of the Mexican-American War. Thus for many, the presentation of the South as both a geographic location and a set of ideals came to highlight the differences and to emphasize the need to prove the superiority of the mode of living characterizing the North. As a result, the ideological programs of the two regions, already divergent on many fronts, became impossibly separated, helping to induce great misunderstanding between them.⁸

Despite the many contributions of each of these interpretations of the divergent cultures of the two sections, it is my belief that the differences between North and South were in many ways outweighed by their less frequently observed similarities. Both regions shared many of the same political, economic and social concerns. It is wrong to look at the South during the Jacksonian and antebellum periods as undemocratic in comparison to other parts of the country. Interest in democracy, politics and the vagaries of the two-party system was just as high in each region. At the same time, describing the North, and most especially New England, as an area with interests generally antithetical to the South is an interpretation with little historical merit. As has been shown by various historians, the basic issues of tariff reform, internal improvements, land distribution and the national bank were debated everywhere, with political alignments more often than not having more influence on ultimate outcomes than sectional concerns. Jacksonian Democrats in the North were continuously more likely to associate and ally themselves with like-minded politicians from the South throughout the antebellum period. Similarly Whigs, for the most part, subscribed to a common ideological and political program that did not vary depending on geographic location. The reasons for this political concord were not based on any overwhelming sense of national purpose, but on the fact that most Americans in the early nineteenth century lived locally rooted lives and thus were influenced most by what occurred in their everyday experiences. Parties were able to direct and focus the important

⁸ Eric Foner. *Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Men: The Ideology of the Republican Party Before the Civil War*. New York 1970); Susan-Mary Grant. *North Over South: Northern Nationalism and American Identity in the Antebellum Era*. (Lawrence, KS 2000).

issues for those disparate masses throughout the nation and thus gained loyal adherents whose interests were personal and as a result were not derived from a primary concern with the overall good of a regional or geographic entity. The consequent appeal of mass political parties, able to shape ideology based on the beliefs of their constituents, shows the commonality among Americans from many different locations. It was the specific issues and the ways that each party addressed them that allowed the adherence to a certain political program to dominate the loyalties of each individual American. These ideas were universal in the nation, thereby placing partisan interest, not sectional dissent at the core of ideological belief.⁹

Although this definition of political alliances may work for the major parties of the era, greater questions emerge when confronting the issue of loyalty to such a politically ambiguous figure as John C Calhoun, who was known to shift between different parties as well as to remain aloof from mainstream politics at various times throughout his career. Oftentimes simply labeling correspondents as Democrats or Whigs does not actually clarify their respective political views and serves little purpose, though party loyalties could and did prove difficult to break. What bound many of these men to Calhoun, and vice-versa was something larger than mere partisan alliance, although this element of more general concern does find a way of creeping into their relations on numerous occasions. More often than not, what drew these groups of individuals to Calhoun and his associates were time-honored beliefs surrounding the republican ethos of American democracy. This ideology, steeped in the value system and rhetorical principles of the revolutionary generation, had such a firm hold upon many Americans throughout the nation that it served as the lingua franca during most of the antebellum period. Although different groups viewed its tenets in divergent ways, often in fact depending upon sectional beliefs and loyalties, still the general principles were similar enough to help formulate common modes of action and reactions to a variety of situations. Although it may be true that by the time of the Civil War politicians were able to affix different meanings to the concept of republicanism, thereby providing the justification for secession in one region and the

⁹ Joel Silbey. *The Dynamics of American Politics Before the Civil War* (New York 1985).

promulgation of war in another, during the period of Calhoun's political career, similarities in belief were sufficiently commonplace to provide a general framework for Americans from disparate geographic locations to share the same attitudes. Indeed it was with the end to partisan wrangling over important issues that had dominated the Jacksonian period, conjoined with the ever present nature of the territorial question throughout the 1850's, that common political belief systems rooted in republicanism began to fade and the language of the ideology was co-opted by those whose sectional loyalties came to outweigh national sentiments, allowing for disunion to occur.¹⁰ Thus, this republican ideology whose core values were centered in the ideas of liberty, equality and the fear of corruption and power, and which dominated the American cultural landscape in the pre-Civil War decades, must be seen as characterized by its national principles prior to the last few tumultuous years when its meanings changed to include sectional variations able to be utilized for divergent purposes.¹¹

Before the fracturing of American society upon sectional lines, however, the ideas that predominated within political alliances more than any other element centered on the way that particular individuals viewed their respective worlds. Whether adopting a strictly partisan identity tied to economic, social or ultimately political interests or simply finding commonalities between themselves and others in how they viewed the proper ideological pursuits, individuals chose their allies mainly based on common perceptions and beliefs. These ideas and value systems were not wholly influenced by where each lived or what geographic location they had grown up in. Therefore, individuals from Boston, the most Whiggish enclave in Massachusetts and possibly the country, could share the same beliefs with like-minded men from regions more predisposed to a radical state rights ideology. More importantly for the analyses of historians focused on sectional differences, these same individuals could debate in alliance with and ultimately conjoin their efforts with southerners. The very realization of this fact should help to prove the national appeal of many general concepts that were prominent within American society, most obvious among

¹⁰ Michael Holt. *The Political Crisis of the 1850's* (New York, 1978).

them republican ideology held over from the Revolution. To say that this was the only commonality would be a misstatement, but it becomes obvious upon reviewing much evidence that it was the universal bond that bound various communities as well as individuals from different socio-economic, political and religious backgrounds in mid-nineteenth century America.

To illustrate the important effect that Calhoun's course played in the Henshaw faction's political affairs, I have undertaken a deep analysis of their own policies and actions, both those separate from the Carolinian and in relation to his own activities. In so doing, an attempt has been made in the pages that follow to decipher exactly what motivated them to think and act as they did and in what ways they influenced or were influenced by Calhoun's political path. During the course of my research, it became evident that many of the attributes of Calhoun's ideology and political beliefs found to be attractive by Henshaw's Statesman clique have been misperceived or misrepresented by previous historians. The clique's political approach followed one similar to Calhoun's during most of this period, and quite often located in his policies and actions unionist sentiments, a position embraced for the good of the nation that was not sectional in sentiment, despite what many at the time and since have said. To their way of thinking, in protecting the interests of the South, Calhoun was often simply ensuring equality of treatment for all areas of the nation; by promoting state rights he was endorsing a policy that had been deified by the sainted Jefferson during earlier disputes over the nature of the Constitution. Viewing him as the only statesman, North or South, who most effectively maintained the interests of the nation, the leaders of this faction seem to have been genuinely above the allegedly 'doughface' politics that marred several of their northern contemporaries.¹²

¹¹ Lacy Ford. *The Origins of Southern Radicalism: South Carolina Upcountry, 1800-1860*. (New York, 1988); J. Mills Thornton. *Politics and Power in a Slave Society: Alabama, 1800-1860* (Baton Rouge 1978); William Gienapp. *The Origins of the Republican Party, 1852-1856* (New York 1987).

¹² See Leonard Richards *The Slave Power: The Free North and Southern Domination, 1780-1860* (Baton Rouge 2000). Though I consider Henshaw's group separate from the northern politicians discussed by

It is my hope that by investigating the nature of this support from these New England “Calhounites” a more complete understanding can be achieved not just of the group as political actors but also of the very essence of American society. There was something more than the promotion of their own political careers that instructed David Henshaw and his cohorts to follow a man whose own interests were so obviously enmeshed with those of his own state and region, to the point of alienating many who viewed him as an icon of an opposing value system. I do not think that historians both past and present have been wrong in focusing upon the tensions that Calhoun’s overtly pro-slavery doctrines and his endorsement of the doctrine of Nullification created within certain elements of both sections; but I think that the excessive focus on these divisive issues has been misguided. Both in form and presentation, such ideas were advanced in order to help to foster a more enduring union, last ditch efforts if you will to preserve the integrity of the nation offered by a powerful statesman with the appeal and foresight to win possible approval for these notions.¹³ Indeed, that is precisely what the Statesman group said of these most radical approaches, following their political reunion with Calhoun upon his rejoining the national Democracy in 1837. Although the later outcome of his sectional measures proves that Calhoun was unable to unite any type of majority behind his ideas, it is still true that northerners such as these men, and undoubtedly others like them, viewed his approach and methods as at the very least both honorable and politically feasible.

Speaking more broadly, the union between the Henshaw group and Calhoun was rooted in a common ideology, one that was essentially republican in nature. They seem to have shared a belief in state rights that accorded closely with Calhoun’s, one that feared the involvement of overly centralized power. To the Henshaw faction, the threat embodied by a federal government in Washington pressing a nationalist program, one centered upon such important contemporary political issues as high tariffs for manufactured goods, federal assistance for local internal improvement projects, and the Bank of the United States, was large enough to imperil national well being. Beyond these touchstone political

Richards, it still seems as if he overlooks commonalities in sentiments in painting his subjects as simply bowing to southern interests for their own personal gain.

¹³ Ralph Henry Gabriel. *The Course of American Democratic Thought* (New York 1956), pg. 107-114.

issues of the Jacksonian Period, however, their worries were more basic in nature. The very fact that a government located hundreds of miles from individual states and particular regions could implement programs and policies that went against the best interests of individuals seemed contrary to the very basis of the Revolution. In that regard, they adhered to an ideology that accorded wholly with Calhoun's oft-stated principles, oftentimes utilizing the Carolinian's own language in their newspapers to state their case. Similarly the Statesman group believed in the inevitable destiny of the country to expand, regardless of the presence of slavery in the territories. More often than not the strongest appeals that the faction's organs made were to Calhoun's adherence to the guiding ideals embodied in the concept of Jeffersonian republicanism. Despite the fact that growing elements of northern society placed their faith in societal reform efforts that tended to raise moral and material progress above a more individualized and less regulated way of life, the appeals of these older notions were still quite powerful.¹⁴ Both the strictly political and the ideological strength of Calhoun's approach to government seemed obvious to individuals and groups with this mindset, and formed the basis for his support within Massachusetts Democracy. Upon reflection on the evidence at hand, it becomes apparent that in the minds of this group, the issues addressed by Calhoun were not centered upon questions dealing with slavery or any other regional interests, but merely reflected them incidentally, and that conviction allowed his political views to appeal to these important politicians hailing from a region separate from his own.

The political and ideological affinities that the Statesman group held with Calhoun were very real and went beyond any type of political posturing. Since much of the evidence included below was located in a few particular Massachusetts newsheets one could be led to question the merit of basing an argument around what could be seen as public rhetoric and blustering. But the very fact that Henshaw and his newspaper editors chose to praise publicly and repeat the musings and direct statements of Calhoun in the columns of their papers, as representing their particular sentiments on both important political issues and an overall approach to government, oftentimes when most of their

¹⁴ Clyde N. Wilson. *The Papers of John C. Calhoun* (Columbia, SC 1979), volume XVII, pg. xxi-xxii.

fellow Massachusetts residents could reasonably be expected disagree firmly with such sentiments, would seem to prove their belief in these ideas. Although such issues as state rights and charges over the harm that individual policies and programs brought to other regions were at times utilized against local enemies in a way best fit for the particular political arena of Massachusetts, that does not mean that Henshaw's group was merely utilizing Calhoun's state rights and republican agenda for its own selfish purposes. They, as did many of their peers, saw threats inherent to opposing political viewpoints that often divided the two great parties of the period, and more often than not saw the path promoted most ardently by Calhoun as the best way to ensure against the ruin that could be brought to the union if less beneficial and more selfish ideals were allowed to succeed. His language and enunciated political ideology quite often seem to have represented the most correct and beneficial manner in which to present their own pursuits and beliefs both on a local and national stage. That is not to say that this faction always was consistent in its presentation and proclamations to the public. The bulk of the evidence, however, proves that by and large they supported the political policies at the center of Calhoun's program and harbored many of the same fears and modes of protecting against those fears through actions both proactive and defensive in nature. In that way they were compatriots both ideologically and rhetorically with the Carolinian. The two need not be separated in this case.

Ultimately it is my hope that this study of the important Henshaw faction in Massachusetts and their strong connection to John C Calhoun from the 1820s until his death in 1850 will make evident the broad based, unifying tendencies of Jacksonian politics. In the process, I hope to dispel the views of this time period that look at the United States as a federation of states sharply divided between the slavery dominated South and free labor North. Although general conceptions of differences between the sections may have some merit, the many congruencies created by nationalism and the commonality of traditions and ideologies serve substantially to discredit many of these notions. Utilizing the prism of the divisive Civil War as a medium through which to refract the structures of each society is, to my way of thinking, a flawed exercise that must be countered by paying attention to the many dissenting voices to be found throughout the literature and correspondence of the era. Although studying the actions and pronouncements, both

public and private, of such a specific political faction could be construed as a somewhat narrow approach, I feel that it opens the doors of broader possibilities for discovery. If it can be proven that even the man seen by many to be the ultimate symbol of southern difference, defiance, and sectionalism had much support among important allies in the most 'Federalist' and Abolition-minded state in the country, the notions of unbridgeable differences can begin to be dispelled. With this as the ultimate goal, the point to be made would be that the sections held much more in common than obvious variances would seem to indicate. Realizing that many of the important notions on government, economics and even slavery that Calhoun held were not limited to one region or particular interest group will go a long way toward correcting the many myths of sectionalism that still surround and constitute the historiography of the antebellum period, as well as the one-sided perceptions that many still hold toward the man himself. Proving that Calhoun's political program was about much more than the defense of slavery, as important as that idea became to him over time, will help to clarify views on both antebellum politics and political ideology.

The second major purpose of this dissertation is more basic in nature. It is to tell the story of this particular group within the Massachusetts Democratic Party, an account that has remained largely untold by past chroniclers of the period. Since Arthur B. Darling published his important monograph, *Political Changes in Massachusetts*, in 1925, the faction of the state's Democratic Party led by David Henshaw has been overlooked by the vast majority of historians. Though an unfortunate occurrence, it is one that is not difficult to comprehend as reasons for this continued lack of attention are easily located. First and foremost, the Democracy because it was regularly the minority party in the state during the period, has generated low levels of scholarly interest. Studies that have tended to highlight the importance of the Whig Party in the state, especially given the role played in it by such historical luminaries as Daniel Webster, John Quincy Adams, Edward Everett, and later Charles Sumner, have figured more prominently in depicting Massachusetts political course during the time period in question. Simply put, no Massachusetts' Democrat with the possible exception of George Bancroft, better known for pursuits beyond politics, has had the cachet of these more notable Whig contemporaries. Similarly, due to the

heightened attention given in recent years to the Abolitionist movement in the state, the party whose national and oftentimes local emphasis frowned upon radical anti-slavery has been largely ignored in more current historical interpretation.

Additionally, in the handful of studies dealing with the Massachusetts Democracy and Democratic politicians that have succeeded Darling, this faction has never been the group that best suited scholars' analytical purposes. In his seminal study *The Age of Jackson*, Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., devoted much attention to the Democratic Party in Massachusetts. That account, however, presented the Henshaw group as interlopers in party affairs, who after a short period of time directing local Democratic politics, were soon replaced by true Jackson men best represented by the 'Country' Party described below. Schlesinger's focus on a class-based analysis drove his interpretation in a direction that allowed him to locate the source of Jacksonian Democracy in radical economic measures that worked against aristocratic and corporate interests. Because Henshaw's group was directly tied to banking and other corporate measures, Schlesinger argued that they were not actual Democrats but were better lumped with more conservative politicians from the Whig Party. Schlesinger asserted that it was only when they were replaced by the Loco Foco faction that the philosophy of Andrew Jackson was established as the foundation for the party in Massachusetts. As a result, they are almost an afterthought in his study.¹⁵

Nearly forty years later Ronald P. Formisano undertook another study of politics in Massachusetts during this time period. This highly praised work ambitiously addressed all of the important aspects of political behavior in the state from pre-revolutionary times through the 1850s. Its scope took in a variety of perspectives, from grass roots political activity to legislative proceedings, electoral campaigns, and the social factors that determined specific party affiliation. Because of such a broad-based approach it is not terribly surprising that Formisano did not pay much attention to a particular wing of the state's Democratic Party. His limited discussion of Henshaw's clique ascribed some level

¹⁵ Arthur Schlesinger. *The Age of Jackson* (Boston 1945), pg. 167, 171-172, 176.

of political acumen to the group, in their ability to hold onto power while a seeming minority interest for several years during the party's formative period. Like Schlesinger, however, Formisano treated their temporary control of state Democratic affairs as more of an anomaly, due to political and manipulative skill, in turn denying any important similarity of interest they may have shared with their cohorts. Additionally, the fact that the Statesman clique was based in Boston inevitably led to his lack of emphasis on the group, mainly due to his contention that Democrats in general dominated the geographic periphery and Whigs the urban areas of the state. That is not to say that his analysis was incorrect in any way, as Boston was continually controlled by the Whig Party while the state's interior and southeast were aligned with the Democrats during the period. But as a result of those political realities, Formisano's depiction of the Henshaw group as a minority within the local party and separate from the 'Country' group that is at the center of his thesis, is comparatively underdeveloped. Thus his account sells short the important role this group played in the continuing operation of the party in the state through the 1850s.¹⁶

More recently, Jonathan Earle has published a study of northern anti-slavery politicians. In one of his chapters he offers a detailed study of Marcus Morton, leader of the 'Country' faction that continually struggled with the Henshaw group for control of Democratic affairs in Massachusetts and an important figure in the pages that follow. While Morton was certainly an eminent politician, and is worthy of discussion in any study of northern Democrats, attention focused on him is indicative of a final reason for the exclusion of his intra-party opponents from historical analysis. Studies like Earle's pay too much heed to the role that anti-slavery played in Democratic affairs in the North. Though Morton and other of his associates within the state's Democratic Party were anti-slavery men, they in fact often made great efforts to keep their opinions out of public knowledge and rarely allowed them to play a role in political affairs. This desire to obscure his anti-slavery views held true essentially until the war with Mexico in the late 1840's. At

¹⁶ Ronald P. Formisano. *The Transformation of Political Culture, Massachusetts Parties 1790s-1840s* (New York 1983), pg. 247-249, 273-275.

that point Morton's identity as a Democrat became questionable due to his flirtation with the Free Soil Party in the 1848 presidential election.¹⁷

The focus on the hidden Abolitionist sentiments of some politicians in the North ignores the vast commonality of sentiment, racial and otherwise, that existed between men North and South and that would continue to exist throughout the period, as has been effectively shown by historians such as Leonard Richards and David Roediger.¹⁸ Several historians, locating sectional divisions as eagerly as possible, have taken to searching in a number of places to find them, thereby ignoring much of the older evidence that commonalities were far more prominent than differences between the sections.¹⁹ In the process they give too much import to private sentiments that played little to no role in determining political affairs during the Jacksonian Era. Because of this phenomenon, men like Henshaw and his supporters who would maintain political and ideological affinities with southern politicians during the entire period, have been and will continue to be ignored by historians who choose to focus on individuals whose political activities are more in line with modern sympathies. The previous unwillingness of others to notice the important similarities in sentiment that existed between men like Henshaw and his faction and many southerners seems to be reason enough to offer a narrative that analyzes a connection that goes beyond merely political affinities for an individual like Calhoun.

In fact, I believe that the presence of a proslavery ideology among this important group and their repeated tendency to publicize it, tends to raise questions about the effectiveness of agitators against the institution in the North during the period. If the Statesman group made no efforts to qualify their language regarding the value of that form of labor, the amount of disfavor for the 'peculiar institution' and its supposed effect on northern politics, whether direct or implicit, must be doubted. This realization would seem to show the slavery issue to have been distinctly peripheral in northern political

¹⁷ Jonathan Earle, *Jacksonian Antislavery and the Politics of Free Soil, 1824-1854* (Chapel Hill 2004).

¹⁸ Leonard Richards. *Gentlemen of Property and Standing Abolition Mobs in Jacksonian America* (New York 1970); David Roediger. *The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class* (London 1999).

presentations at this point, thereby raising doubt about the assertions of historians who have argued for its important presence throughout the Jacksonian and antebellum periods.²⁰ In the decades to come, with the increased prominence given the issue of territorial expansion and slavery along with the demise of the economic issues that had divided the parties during this era, that calculus would change. Nonetheless, in showing the Statesman faction for what they were, describing and developing both their political and ideological sentiments, this work will I hope raise many questions about the supposed liberalism of Massachusetts during the time period.

Darling's book is the oldest scholarly study that deals with the course of the Jacksonian Democracy in Massachusetts. Due to its approach and presentation of state political history, his work is the most similar to my own. He carefully follows the course of the party over the same time period and gives ample attention not only to each faction and important grouping within the party, but to political groups such as the Anti-Masons and Workingmen who became largely subsumed within the structure of the Democracy. His book is extremely informative and still offers the greatest depth of any study on the subject. By focusing the majority of his attention throughout the period on the groups that controlled party affairs at particular times, however, Darling's story often loses track of Henshaw's group, most especially after 1837 when the Port Collector position shifted from Statesman to 'Country' faction control and the majority of important patronage positions followed suit. This approach, perhaps better suited to the specific type of work Darling was writing—one that considered the shifts and trends of party sentiments as well as the most important events and procedures involved—inevitably gives its attention to the course of local leadership. For the most part, he only addresses other groups when they are specifically involved in important events or are challenging directly for control. In that

¹⁹ Grant, *North Over South*; ; Foner, *Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Men*; William E. Gienapp, *The Origins of the Republican Party, 1852-1856* (New York 1987); Bruce Collins, "The Ideology of the Ante-bellum Northern Democrats," *Journal of American Studies* II (1977): 103.

²⁰ See Matthew Mason. *Slavery and Politics in the American Early Republic* (Chapel Hill 2006); Richard C. McCormick, "The Jacksonian Strategy," *Journal of the Early Republic, Vol. X No. 1. (Spring 1990)*, pg. 1-17.

sense his comprehensive view often loses track of undeniably important politicians who are out of power.²¹

Continuously following Henshaw's faction throughout the entirety of the period is the main approach this study takes. In the course of that pursuit, this dissertation hopes to prove that they were the single most important force in establishing, shaping, and developing the initial Jackson Democratic Party in Massachusetts. In the subsequent period, one in which they were unable to control state party affairs, I will show that the 'clique,' as they came to be called, nevertheless played an undeniably important role in influencing the Democracy's course of action. Their decision to remain within the party to the very end of this period, at a time when the debate over the expansion of slavery to the territories newly acquired in the war with Mexico reshuffled the political deck, proves them to have been the party's most essentially Democratic group, especially when one takes into account the flight of their rivals. This realization runs contrary to statements made directly by Schlesinger and Formisano and implied throughout Darling's work. It also will show the importance of studying this somewhat neglected group, largely ignored because of many of their illiberal sentiments, most especially their repeated endorsement of slavery and attitudes toward expansion that run contrary to those espoused by intra party opponents like Morton and many of their Whig contemporaries.

The important role that the Statesman group had in state political affairs will I believe prove that support for Calhoun's political ideology and programs was not a mere fringe movement within the Massachusetts Democratic Party. Instead, this was the group that for much of the time period served as a driving engine of party affairs in the state. As such, the 'Calhounite' interest in Massachusetts was much stronger than other historians have previously noted. Particularly in Chapter Six, which deals with the alliance Calhoun and David Henshaw formed with President John Tyler in 1843-44 and Calhoun's failed presidential run, I hope to add to the somewhat underdeveloped literature on these

²¹ Arthur B. Darling. *Political Changes in Massachusetts, 1824-1848: A Study of Liberal Movements in Politics* (New Haven 1925).

subjects.²² Though historians have talked about the role that Calhoun played in the Tyler Cabinet, few have looked at the effects that Henshaw's union with a nominally Whig administration had in Massachusetts. Similarly, biographies of Calhoun and studies of the election of 1844, make note of the significant support that Calhoun had in New England, but none has taken the time to discuss how important and influential it was.²³ The fact that Calhoun nearly earned delegates from a convention in a state that until now has been represented as having ardently supported Martin Van Buren's candidacy has been underemphasized. This oversight has caused historians to neglect the prominence that Calhoun's political image held in party affairs in Massachusetts, an inevitable byproduct of their having downplayed the importance of Henshaw's group in overall state activities.

Finally, my account of the Henshaw faction seeks to give additional insight into the effect that important national policies and political actions had on the local level. In providing a chronological narrative of the course of Jacksonian Democracy that focuses mostly on Boston over a twenty year time period, one is exposed to the opinions of and reaction to each of the important political decisions made on the national level. Following the public pronouncements made in the Boston *Statesman* and *Morning Post* continuously throughout these two decades, as well as those of its rivals, many times in fact reacting to the city's Democratic organ, provides an understanding of the way that the 'clique' interpreted the effect that each important action would have on the daily lives of themselves and their constituents. As such, my work is intended to give the reader a sense of how particular men felt about the manifold events that form the litany of traditional Jacksonian political history. In the pages of these newspapers none of the important issues and debates that framed the Jackson Era politically was avoided. Thus, by examining the particular interpretation of the different affairs presented by the Statesman group and their opponents' reaction to them, one can get a sense of how each sought to present the issues and the proper role that its readers and followers should play in supporting or opposing

²² Frederick Merk. *Fruits of Propaganda in the Tyler Administration* (Cambridge 1971), pg. 60, 110. Most recent literature dealing with Tyler's presidency nearly ignores the important role that the Statesman clique played in the Tyler-Calhoun relationship. See Edward P. Crapol. *John Tyler: The Accidental President* (Chapel Hill 2006).

them. In short, this monograph provides a window through which the reader can view the effect that the events that form the standard textbook timeline of the era had on specific individuals and groups.

Though this study is located in a specific region and looks most closely at a particular group of individuals, it is to be hoped that understanding their interpretation of the political events that had such a large effect on the nation will help to offer a better understanding of the overall course of Jacksonian politics. Consideration of the reasons that men who belonged to the Statesman group believed in or emphasized what they did, will offer contextualization for the import of specific programs and policies. It will also illustrate the ways in which particular politicians and their associates chose to represent those issues. It is my hope that beyond an added understanding of inter-regional political connections, this view of Henshaw's faction can help provide meaning for the attitudes that Democrats formed about the activities that their leaders in the national party were undertaking. While for the most part, this process will show them to have been like-minded with their party compatriots from other sections, placing a particular focus on the words and actions of this specific group of men will help to define further what the political ideology and program of the national Democracy was and how it evolved over the course of this time period. At the same time, in noting the obvious divisions between the two important party factions in Massachusetts, the disputes between radical and conservative wings of the national party over the important issues of the day will be given a local context, helping to define further the complexities of Democratic political philosophy.

The specific events that helped to frame the time period are discussed in great detail below from the perspective of how they were received and acted on by members of this single political group. By viewing each of them individually, a new understanding of what these issues meant to this faction will be presented and in the process much can be learned about the various issues' meanings. For instance, the fact that the debate over the origins of

²³ John Nivens. *John C. Calhoun and the Price of Union* (Baton Rouge 1988), pg. 225, 256.; Charles M. White. *John C. Calhoun: Sectionalist, 1840-1850* (New York 1951), pg. 98, 139. Clyde Wilson. *The*

the union was given prominence in the pages of the Statesman and that the opinion given by the Henshaw clique fell directly in line with those of many radical state rights men will no doubt surprise many who stereotype New England as an area whose beliefs were more in line with the unionist stance of Daniel Webster, as will their relatively radical position taken on the doctrine of nullification. In addition, the dispute over the National Bank was as complex in Massachusetts as it became in the rest of the nation. There the interests were divided among multiple groups and disputes tended to rend the local Democracy. The connection of the Henshaw faction to the large Commonwealth Bank, on the corporate board of which its leader sat, engendered a great deal of intra-party acrimony. Understanding this complex relationship will I think supplement an already rich body of literature on the banking issue. Later on, the internal debate among Democrats over how to treat the Tyler Administration in light of its activities that seemed to accord with Democratic political sentiments, were perhaps more heated in Boston than elsewhere due to the course of action chosen by Henshaw's faction. While that group's approach to this unique situation was itself unique, the decisions made by Henshaw and his associates hint at the dilemma that faced many of their peers in other states. The intra-party debates over the issue of territorial expansion, the Mexican-American War and the resultant Free Soil movement, are the final important chapter of the period addressed by my study. Viewing the reactions to these inherently divisive issues within the Massachusetts Democratic Party and more specifically the position taken by the Henshaw faction, adds much to the understanding of the fate of the party nationally and offers proof that its loss of popularity in the North during the later part of the 1840's was not an automatic process. Many state Democrats abhorred the position taken by the Free Soil movement and thought loyalty to the old party issues should trump all anti-slavery sentiment. Though Massachusetts was at the forefront of political efforts to end the advance of slavery westward, not all of its Democratic politicians shared that belief. Indeed, the interests of the Statesman faction seem to have been more important in holding the party together and directing its affairs than all others.

Papers of John C. Calhoun (Columbic, SC 1959), vol XI, pg. xi-xii, vol. XVII, pg. xi-xiii.

Additionally, the narrow purview of this study allows for intense attention to be focused on the political affairs of Boston. Because of the local nature of the Jacksonian world, it was inevitable for contemporary political issues to be addressed through the lens of what was viewed as most important to each specific location. Thus the struggles that took place both within the Democratic Party and with their local National Republican and Whig foes, while similar in nature to the same struggles in other states, undoubtedly had a different context and tone. In turn, the particular modes of operation by which political disputes were carried on involved terminology and approaches that were often times inherent to the region itself. In the early years of the dispute between different wings of the Democracy in Boston, for instance, claims against Federalist loyalties of non-Statesman members in past decades loomed large in the political rhetoric. This circumstance was particularly endemic to New England and has gone largely unnoticed in past studies.²⁴ For the entirety of the Jacksonian Period, however, such language was to be found in the newssheets and political speeches. Directly related to this matter was the way in which sectionalism was interpreted by the Statesman faction. Contrary to popular belief, during these years the issues of sectional versus national interests were not automatically designated respectively to the South and North. In much of the rhetoric of the Boston Statesman and Morning Post, opponents arguing for the interests of New England over those of other regions on issues like the tariff and internal improvements, were seen as the actual fomenters of sectional discord and were continually compared to Hartford Convention Federalists. Because of the Civil War and attention paid to southern demands for state rights at that time, many historians have forgotten that the issue of regional interests has not always been directly associated with the South. In discussing what was then relatively recent history, the Statesman group made this point about New England sectionalism regularly, and thus reminded its readers of the hypocrisy of many critics of contemporary Southern state rights advocates.

This study is divided into seven chapters. Each looks at the development of the Massachusetts Jacksonian Democratic Party and the role that Henshaw's Statesman faction

²⁴ Richard Buel in his book *America on the Brink: How the Political Struggle over the War of 1812 Almost Destroyed the Young Republic* (New York 2005) begins a discussion of the important role Federalist

played during a particular chronological period. At the same time each chapter follows the course of the clique's connection to John C. Calhoun and analyzes how that particular connection influenced their political actions, to differing degrees.

Chapter One describes the origins of a party created to support Andrew Jackson's presidential campaign from two distinct sources. In 1828 former Federalists in opposition to John Quincy Adams' candidacy joined forces with more Republican-minded politicians led by David Henshaw to set the original course of the party. Both factions were heavily influenced by the presence of John C. Calhoun at the forefront of Jackson's campaign. It is argued that as a result of their common affinities for the South Carolinian, the origins of the Jackson Party can be characterized as directly connected to Calhoun. The deeper political and ideological bond that the Statesman group had with Calhoun and his closest associate Duff Green enabled them to seize control of local party affairs at this early date.

Chapter Two relates the continuing struggles for party dominance between the two originating factions. In the course of this local intra-party conflict, the usage of language and rhetoric related to former Federalist Party membership and national loyalty was constantly employed for political purposes. This chapter also addresses the clique's hesitation to acknowledge the developing split between President Jackson and Vice President Calhoun, further confirming their connection to the latter. By the time of the Nullification Crisis, however, with the undeniable split within the Executive Department, the Henshaw group was forced to decide between their loyalties to Calhoun or the administration. Because of political and patronage, but not ideological, considerations they chose the latter and maintained their important positions at the forefront of Massachusetts Democratic affairs.

Chapter Three discusses the continued movement of the Statesman group away from Calhoun's orbit, at the same time that their political opponents came to endorse many of his activities. Hoping to distance themselves from the former vice-president, the *Morning Post* and *Statesman* undertook a campaign to criticize his actions harshly, often

associations would play in the Jacksonian Era in Massachusetts.

contrasting them with the more commendable measures taken by President Jackson. At the same time, the clique was refining its control over local affairs, finalizing the excision of former Federalist Party members from the Democracy.

Chapter Four focuses mainly on the internal affairs of the Democratic Party within Massachusetts and the development of a contending faction for local supremacy. That group, the 'Country' Democrats, came to challenge the Statesman faction for control of party affairs, best illustrated by the struggle over the successor of David Henshaw as Port Collector of Boston. In the course of the five year period addressed, the political approach of the Henshaw group changed considerably to one that relied more heavily upon notions of radical Democracy, as opposed to its formerly more conservative doctrines. Concomitantly, the failure of Henshaw's Commonwealth Bank had a significant impact on the political situation within the state's Democratic Party.

Chapter Five looks at the return of John C. Calhoun to the national Democratic Party and the effect that event had upon politics in Massachusetts. It was at this point that the Statesman group, who had always agreed in principle with the ideological sentiments of the Carolinian but had been opposed to his presence within the Whig Party, were able to abandon all public criticism of him. As a result they welcomed their former political idol back to the party fold with exuberance. At the same time, their pro-southern rights doctrines became more pronounced, marking a direct contrast with the attitudes of their intra-party rivals. Also during this time period, the Henshaw clique attracted new allies to their cause. Most notable among them were Benjamin F. Hallett, a former 'Country' Party leader, and the Calhounite orator Orestes A. Brownson. As a result of the differences between the party's local factions, their partisan feelings became more pronounced in the aftermath of the Presidential Election of 1840.

Chapter Six addresses the public association each faction of the Massachusetts Democratic Party came to have with its respective presidential favorite. During the two years before the 1840 election it became public knowledge that the 'Country' group represented the interests of Martin Van Buren, while their 'City' rivals as always were

Calhoun supporters. As the election neared, their animosity was emphasized through the local and the state nominating conventions, where the Henshaw faction had varying levels of success in promoting Calhoun's course while denying support for Van Buren. Locally, the animosity between the groups was ratcheted up due to David Henshaw's re-entry upon the political stage, most especially with his nomination for secretary of the navy under Whig President John Tyler. The temporary alliance of the Post faction's leaders with Tyler, through the conduit of Calhoun's developing connection with the administration, led to accusations of party abandonment by the Bay State Democrat. It also allowed the Post clique to regain an increased measure of influence over local party affairs through increased patronage.

Finally, Chapter Seven narrates the period in which the Democratic Party of Massachusetts began to fracture over the issues of slavery and territorial expansion. Although he was able to obtain the position of Boston Port Collector, Marcus Morton's continuing disenchantment with the course of James K. Polk's administration during the War with Mexico and with the national Democracy regarding the issue of promoting slavery's expansion, caused the lifetime Democrat to abandon the party by the election of 1848. Because of its similarity of sentiment with that of Polk on these national matters, largely due to their political ideology that discountenanced any restrictions on either the North's or South's partaking in the benefits of republicanism, Henshaw's group remained within the party. As a result they were able to regain some of the control lost earlier with the ascendance of the 'Country' faction. In turn, they remained true to their Calhounite principles until the death of that statesman in April, 1850. By that time, the struggles over the territories and the future of slavery in America had begun to change the political calculus of the Second Party System, and were impossible to deny in Massachusetts.

Chapter 2:

Calhounites at the Foundation: Establishing and Asserting Control Of the Jackson Party in Massachusetts With Assistance From Vice President Calhoun.

In the 1824 presidential election Andrew Jackson, while winning the national popular vote, did not fare well in Massachusetts. He was able to generate very little support in the Bay State. There were two main reasons for this notable shortcoming. First and foremost, John Quincy Adams was one of his main rivals for the Chief Executive post. Adams, heir to the second president of the United States, was a native son of Massachusetts. As a result of his considerable local appeal, he was able to generate strong support in the field of four equally prominent opponents. Additionally, his past association with the former Federalist Party, elements of which remained strong in Massachusetts, was able to bring votes from an otherwise forgotten group. Since this was an era when all men claimed to be Republicans, even those men associated with the party of the first Adams were compelled to select a candidate from that political group. For most of them Quincy Adams represented the least possible evil. Due to his descent from an iconic Federalist father he had become the most promising option in an otherwise bleak campaign. Of secondary importance in explaining Jackson's lagging local backing was the status of Secretary of the Treasury William Crawford among Massachusetts Republicans. Because they were a fledging political group in the state, their lack of organizational apparatus made many of their most prominent leaders more likely to favor the methods of selection that had been effective in the past.¹ Thus while many national party members were unwilling to back the nominee of the Republican Congressional Caucus, the most prominent politicians in Massachusetts did not share this sentiment.

¹ James Spear Loring, *The Hundred Boston Orators: Appointed by the municipal authorities and other public bodies, from 1770 to 1852; comprising historical gleanings illustrating the principles and progress of our republican institutions* (Boston 1853), p. 562-564.

At the same time, the secretary of the treasury's strongest backers were men hostile toward what they regarded as the overly centralized forms of government that had cropped up in the aftermath of the War of 1812. Antagonistic toward the Federalist elements within their midst, the diehard Republicans of Massachusetts preferred the political ideology of Crawford. He was said to be the scion of the party's founding men and most prominent organizers. Though he was currently a resident of Georgia, Crawford had spent his formative years in Virginia as a member of what was known as the "Old Republican" school. As such he was a noted supporter of state rights and limited central government. All in all, he seemed to represent the most non-Federal candidate in the campaign. Such an association was particularly appealing to Massachusetts men who had been denied power in local politics by this party, long-since dormant nationally but maintaining some residual power within their state. For these reasons Crawford was able to generate the bulk of anti-Adams support within the state during this election.²

While Jackson lacked popularity in Massachusetts during his initial attempt at office, however, there were still promising signs that he would be able to generate support in the future canvass. Adams' political appeal among men with ties to the Federalist Party was by no means uniform. In fact several comments the campaign's successful candidate had made during and after the late war had since turned otherwise friendly men against him. Questioning the patriotism of Federalists during the War of 1812, especially in light of the Hartford Convention, Adams had labeled all men who did not support the course of President Madison and the Congress during that period as having been tinged with traitorous characteristics. As a result of these and similar accusations, many men who either had ties to the Hartford Convention or viewed Adams' implicit slanders against his former party as deplorable, were loath to grant him any support. In light of this hatred and antipathy for Adams, it was common to find former Federalists or men who still viewed themselves as members of that party, vehemently

² Arthur B. Darling, *Political Changes in Massachusetts, 1824-1828: A Study of Liberal Movements in Politics* (New Haven 1925), pg. 42-43.; John Barton Derby, *Political Reminiscences* (Boston, 1835), pg. 65-67; Ronald B. Formisano, *The Transformation of Political Culture: Massachusetts Parties, 1790s-1840s* (New York 1982), pg. 247-248. Much of Formisano's argument that the Jackson Democracy in Massachusetts was partly comprised of men outside of the traditional centers of political control is valid as

opposed to the new president. With the emergence of Andrew Jackson as Adams' main rival, many of these men would enter the “Old Hero’s” columns as a means of defeating their now hated adversary. Endorsing the most notable military figure from that war it could be argued, also represented the overt manner in which men alleged to be treacherous during the nation’s most perilous hour could reclaim lost honors.³

Andrew Jackson’s symbolic value is perhaps the most important reason behind the backing he would generate in the old heart of Federalism. Massachusetts was a state run politically by an old aristocratic element. The shipping magnates who were in the process of being replaced by manufacturers and heads of corporations, held great sway in local political affairs. At the same time the old “blue-blooded” families had for many years dominated political affairs. These men had always voted with the Federalist Party. Their former devotion was due in main to the party’s symbolic association as the bastion of order and decorum. The Federalists had commonly presented themselves as the antithesis to the mob-influenced Jeffersonians, men who had publicly endorsed the licentiousness of the French Revolution and emerging democracy. Thus for many men outside the controlling circles of political operations, support for Jackson represented an opportunity to best their well-heeled and haughty neighbors. Since Crawford had been unable to succeed nationally or in Massachusetts, many of these Republican men were ready to throw their support to the most viable candidate who stood for all that the patrician-minded Federalists did not. Massachusetts, as the only state where the tenets of that outdated party survived, was a perfect breeding ground for an opposition movement to a party viewed as aristocratic in nature. This antagonism partially explains the emerging appeal of Jackson.⁴ Their original “Old Republican” candidate having failed and abandoned pursuit of the presidency, Andrew Jackson, who was seen by many as a frontiersman untainted by the sins of overly politicized society, seemed the perfect replacement.⁵ The merger between Vice President John C. Calhoun, a man who

an explanation for the political types who helped to form the party.

³ Boston *Statesman*, October 30, 31, and November 3, 7, 1828; Henry Orne, *Letters of Columbus* (Boston, 1829), pg. 16-17, 58-59.

⁴ Darling, pg. 59-61.

⁵ For insight on Jackson’s symbolic importance see John William Ward, *Andrew Jackson: Symbol for an*

increasingly endorsed ultra free trade and state rights doctrines in the years leading up to the next presidential election, and Jackson was also an important impetus in gaining the support of these men. With his increasingly strident endorsement of both these positions, the Carolinian statesman seemed a readily available icon to follow in opposing the desires of local manufacturers and other former Federalists interested in strong-centralized government.⁶

It is safe to say that by the midpoint of Adams' single term as president, a significant Jackson movement in Massachusetts had begun to form around these political elements. In the main this support was based on an outright opposition to the president, his policies, and political ideology. Around the time of the midterm elections, two separate groups would align themselves with the political career of the “Hero of New Orleans.” One of these entities was composed of men predisposed toward Adams’ political ideology, but opposed to his harsh words and deeds toward the Federalist Party. The other was made from inveterate enemies of both his actions in office and his public character, men who were notably hostile to any political policies that could be identified with Federalism. The differences between these two groups in political beliefs, origins, and former party alignment would in short order bring about a split in the local organization.⁷

Brought together for the sole purpose of assisting in the election of their presidential candidate, these core founding groups had so little in common that it is rather surprising to realize they were actually part of the same political party for however brief a time. Historians could argue that this temporary alliance bears testament to the

Age (New York 1955).

⁶ Ronald B. Formisano, *The Transformation of Political Culture: Massachusetts Parties, 1790s-1840s*, pg. 247-248. Much of Formisano’s argument that the Jackson Democracy in Massachusetts was partly comprised of men outside of the traditional centers of political control is valid as an explanation for the political types who helped to form the party. Also see Darling, pg. 62-64.

⁷ Henry Orne, *The Letters of Columbus* (Boston 1829) , pg. 19-20 ; *Boston Evening Bulletin and United States Republican*, Sept. 3, 7, 17, 19, 21, 28, Oct. 3, 7, 1829. As Orne’s newspaper, the *Bulletin* printed much of what would be published in the *Letters of Columbus*. Both sources go to great length to display the differences between their faction and the Statesman group during this initial period of Jackson’s

galvanizing power of Andrew Jackson to bring together men of disparate interests and beliefs. While this assumption may hold some truth, the original commonality between these politicians was not their connection to the future president. Instead it was a shared affinity to the sitting vice president, John C. Calhoun. It is more accurate to say that the South Carolina statesman was the conduit through which these men were separately brought to the Jackson fold than to point to the leader of the party that would come to bear his name. Their interests in Calhoun came about for different reasons, one based mainly on his political ideology and the other his erudite reputation. Upon subsequent realization that they failed to share the same political beliefs as the vice president, many of the original members of the party renounced their loyalties to the Carolinian, while temporarily remaining in the Jackson camp. Members from the other faction over time profited greatly from their connection to the vice president. The strong bond between Calhoun and his most loyal political associates in Boston allowed the latter to seize control of the city's Democracy. Their powerful position was maintained for the next decade. This latter ruling clique remained wedded to the vice president until his ultimate separation from the party caused a re-evaluation of their loyalties. In time, the ideological similarity between this latter group and Calhoun helped bring about a political reunion between the two entities. This combination was ultimately be strengthened throughout the entire Jacksonian Period.⁸

Nearly from the start of the 1828 presidential campaign in Massachusetts, unity among Jackson men was problematic. The two factions of the party which developed over the course of the canvass and split into divergent and antithetical groups in its aftermath were nearly opposites in political ideology. The group of former Federalists mainly opposed to the apostasy of John Quincy Adams, never fully believed in many of

administration.

⁸ In offering this analysis based on the ideological differences between two temporarily united groups who would divide largely due to their differing political emphases, my interpretation agrees with historians who highlighted the real divide in thought processes that would lead to party formation in the coming years. The classic works in this column include Marvin Meyers, *The Jacksonian Persuasion: Politics and Belief* (Stanford 1960); Lawrence Frederick Kohl, *The Politics of Individualism: Parities and the American Character in the Jacksonian Era* (New York 1989); Henry L. Watson, *Liberty and Power: The Politics of Jacksonian America* (New York 1990).

the republican ideals espoused by the core of the Jacksonian party. At the head of this faction were such men as Theodore Lyman, an old Federalist member of the state Legislature whose father had been an original member of the Essex Junta; Francis Baylies another former Federalist with ties to the Hartford Convention of 1814-1815; Henry Orne, who would become editor of this group's news organ; and Dr. William Ingalls, a wealthy Boston shipping magnate. These men were all part of Boston's elite social and economic structure. In hindsight it appears that their collective favor for more centralized forms of government would never have allowed such men to establish any lasting allegiance to Old Hickory. The future policies of his administration were wholly objectionable to this soon to be disenchanted group and would play a large role in their defection to the fledgling Whig Party several years later.⁹ During the months leading up to the election, however, partly out of their blind hatred of the current president, they became firmly entrenched in the Jackson camp.

By far the most significant reason for this union of former Federalists with the Jackson Party was their developing connection to John C. Calhoun. While many of these men had become averse to the path followed by President Adams, they hesitated to offer support to Jackson's fledgling campaign. Since Federalist ideology had largely called upon the most refined and able statesmen to lead the mass of uneducated voters, uniting with the comparatively uncouth and unrefined frontiersman Andrew Jackson remained somewhat problematic to Orne, Lyman and their associates. It was the presence of the statesman-like Calhoun, Jackson's greatest supporter in Washington that helped bring these men into the columns of the "Hero of New Orleans." Only after directly inquiring about Calhoun's political views was this group comfortable enough to endorse the Carolinian's favored candidate. This support came largely out of the expectation that Jackson would serve one term, to be followed by his vice-president.¹⁰

In August 1828 Theodore Lyman wrote to the vice-president to ask about his

⁹ Derby, *Political Reminiscences*, is the best source outlining the evolution of the Bulletin men away from the Jackson Party.

¹⁰ Marcus Morton, 7 Mar. 1829, to John C. Calhoun, in Clyde N. Wilson, *The Papers of John C. Calhoun*

political attitudes. Calhoun's written response was met with satisfaction from this group. Knowing the Carolinian believed in a moderate principle of government, "held up by all the means delegated by the Constitution, and which could be exercised consistently" on all occasions, this original faction of the Jackson Democracy in Massachusetts were assured that their support for Adams' opponent was warranted. Calhoun's stated principles regarding issues of constitutionalism led them to believe him a proper candidate to hold an otherwise unconventional politician like Jackson in line in the Executive branch.¹¹ Additionally, the former Secretary of War's much-noted earlier affinity for the major segments of the current American System while serving President James Monroe, added to their tendencies to trust the Carolinian. The connection between Calhoun and this wing of the fledgling party became worrisome to men who shared similar ideological sentiments to both the vice-president and Andrew Jackson in the not-too distant future.¹² For the time being, however, this segment of ex-Federalists was brought to the columns of Jackson due to their affinity with to the South Carolina statesman.

The other wing of the Massachusetts Jacksonian Party during its initial phase was comprised of a group that came to be known as the Statesman faction. At its head was David Henshaw of Leicester. This man, who became one of the most powerful figures and certainly the most controversial in the Democratic Party's ranks over the coming two decades, had arrived in Boston in 1814. A former druggist's apprentice, Henshaw over the intervening decade amassed substantial wealth through trade as well as involvement in local banking institutions. In 1824, along with several other political associates, Henshaw had incorporated the Commonwealth Bank in Boston. It soon became the city's largest financial institution. This and similar investments over the years greatly enhanced his financial and political influence. Henshaw's other business concern involved the Boston Statesman, a newspaper he had been instrumental in founding at the outset of the decade. This paper became the organ for his political faction and provided

(Columbia, SC 1979), vol. XI, pg. 5-9.

¹¹ John C. Calhoun, 8 Sept. 1828, to Theodore Lyman, Jr., in *Papers of Calhoun*, vol. X, pg. 418-420.

¹² Marcus Morton 8 Dec. 1828, and 7 March 1829, to John C. Calhoun, *Morton Letterbooks*, MHS.

its name. Henshaw's public political career had been somewhat brief to this date. He had been elected to the Massachusetts State Senate during the 1826-1827 session, as part of an "amalgamation" ticket. During that campaign the Commonwealth Bank director joined a coalition of former Federalists and Adams men to represent Suffolk County in the Massachusetts State House. This single term in office was not distinguished in any way. Unable to run on his own merits and equally unwilling to continue the previous fall's political alliance, Henshaw publicly split with his faction and was unsuccessful in an attempt to run as an independent incumbent. His rising distaste for the administration of John Quincy Adams could never allow such an avowed republican to continue this brief union with the president's supporters. Despite his attaining local political prominence, Henshaw's modest background never allowed him to break into the city's upper social ranks. Opponents viewed him as a selfish man, who was continually grasping for status and privilege through political machinations.¹³

The remainder of this faction's leadership was comprised of Henshaw's closest political friends and affiliates in Boston. Nearly as prominent among this ruling group was Nathaniel Greene, editor of the Boston Statesman. Greene had learned his trade as an apprentice to Isaac Hill, editor of the New Hampshire Republican. His brother and assistant editor, Charles G. Greene also became increasingly important to this group over the succeeding years. Another founding member, J.K. Simpson, shared a background similar to that of his long-time confidante, Henshaw. A furniture maker by trade, he was likewise an outsider to political and economic favor. Like his friend, Simpson had joined the amalgamation campaign in 1826, attaining a seat in the Massachusetts House of Representatives for the following session. He was joined in the Legislature's lower house that year by another Statesman member, Andrew Dunlop. Unlike the class background of the majority of the faction's founders, Dunlop came from a prominent Boston family. He had graduated from Harvard and was a practicing lawyer. D.D. Broadhead, a Salem trader, rounded out this core group of the leadership of this Boston political clique. Taken collectively, this assemblage of political men came from modest

¹³ Loring, pg. 564-570; A.H. Ward, "David Henshaw," *Memorial Biographies of the New England*

origins. In contrast to their future intra-party rivals, they had few financial or social advantages preceding their embarkation upon political careers. As such they would come to be noted as distinct from the city's "aristocratic" individuals, several of whom joined the opposing Republican faction, who had been largely responsible for running political affairs to date.¹⁴

Further differing from their opposites in the Republican faction, the Statesman group largely supported free-trade, state rights, and a less consolidated Federal Government. In this regard they were natural opponents of John Quincy Adams and the American System of Henry Clay. In the election of 1824, Henshaw and these close associates had endorsed the candidacy of William Crawford. Due in large part to his emphasis on "Old Republican" values as well as his having secured the Congressional Caucus nomination as the party's regular candidate, the Georgian was seen as the most favorable prospective president among an initial five-man group that also included Adams, Jackson, Calhoun and Clay. Over the course of the next several years, however, Henshaw developed an increasingly strong affinity to the policies and political ideology of John C. Calhoun. During this time period, when Calhoun was modifying many of his former political beliefs while increasingly endorsing the doctrine of "State Rights", Henshaw began to follow his political course more enthusiastically. Most especially, he was attracted to Calhoun's stated opinion as to the injustice of tariff laws enacted in order to protect American manufactured goods. The Statesman had been founded in 1821 as an aggressively free trade journal and opponent of protective tariffs. Once Calhoun changed his earlier sentiments in favor of duties on manufactured goods, his political course became much more acceptable to the group of politically-minded individuals directly affiliated with this organ. Thus with Calhoun's abandonment of the principles that had defined his earlier political career and tenure as Secretary of War ones that viewed centralized government with increasing antipathy, Henshaw's political faction rapidly moved to support the vice-president's political career. Due in large measure to their

Historical Genealogical Society I, pg. 483-499.

¹⁴ Ward, pg. 477-480, 504-507; Darling, pg. 6-8.

political ideology and its similarity to that now embraced by Calhoun, this group became well-established within the ranks of the Democratic Party throughout the Jacksonian Era.¹⁵

The process of uniting these disparate groups within the Jackson movement began in the summer of 1827. That August Duff Green, editor of the United States Telegraph and Calhoun's son-in-law, journeyed to Boston in search of financial backing for his newspaper.¹⁶ Specifically, he sought a \$15,000 loan from opponents of President Adams to support the main public organ of Andrew Jackson's campaign. His decision to visit Adams' backyard for financial contributions seems questionable considering the extent of local support for Massachusetts' native political son. Whatever his motives, Green was quickly able to find men to pledge their financial interests to the cause. Green approached these two distinct groups of anti-Adams men separately. Additionally, he utilized differing sales pitches to address each of them. From the start it would appear that even outsiders were able to recognize the lack of meaningful connection between interests as different as those came to be called the Statesman and Republican groups. The initial distinctions Green made between these two factions make it clear they had little in common besides their eventual support for Jackson. This circumstance had more importance in the months following his election.¹⁷

Green had little trouble drawing the interest of Henshaw and his associates. These men had been exceedingly critical of the president in the pages of their organ and had made no bones about their conflicting views on the nature of American government. As such they had come to support Andrew Jackson in the coming presidential contest

¹⁵ Derby, pg. 6-7, 100-101; *Boston Evening Bulletin and Republican*, Sept. 17, 1829; *Boston Bay State Democrat*, April 13, 1843. In their series titled, "Twenty Years Service of David Henshaw" printed in the pages of the *Democrat* years later, Henshaw's intraparty opponents would repeatedly charge him with an unwonted connection to Calhoun, much the same as Orne and Lyman

¹⁶ Calhoun's strong connection to the *United States Telegraph* became much more prominent in the coming years. During this earlier period his affinity for Green's paper was also made apparent by his written protest to Martin Van Buren's request to displace the *Telegraph* with a different Jackson paper headed by Thomas Ritchie, editor of the *Richmond Enquirer*. John C. Calhoun, 7 July 1826, to Martin Van Buren, in the *Papers of John C. Calhoun*, vol. X.

¹⁷ *Boston Bulletin and United States Republican*, Sept. 28, Oct. 1, 1829; Derby, pg. 42-44.

once it became apparent that he would be the favored candidate against Adams. Thus Green needed only to illustrate the importance of his paper in promoting Jackson's cause against Adams to this group. Promising to pay \$6,000, to be delivered after the election, they publicly pledged an interest in the success of the *Tennessean*. In turn Green promised to use his influence with his father-in-law to help obtain the most important offices available to them for Henshaw and several of his associates. Because this Statesman group had previously expressed an affinity for Calhoun's measures and person, this promise was inherently plausible and warmly accepted.¹⁸

In dealing with the Republican men Green had a somewhat more difficult time procuring a loan. Approaching Lyman, Orne, and Ingalls in tandem, the editor employed a different approach to that followed with Henshaw's group. Due to their Federalist past, he repeatedly referred to John Quincy Adams' highly-publicized malicious statements against their former party. At the same time, keeping in mind the obvious differences in political ideology and notions of respectability between them and General Jackson, Green placed great emphasis on the campaign's connection to John C. Calhoun.¹⁹ Seen as a more respectable and statesman-like political leader, Calhoun closely accorded to Federalist notions of an appropriate governmental leader. Because of his arguments Green was able quickly to obtain a 5,000 loan from William Ingalls. This commitment allowed the Telegraph editor to leave Boston with commitments for \$11,000 in tow. Such an amount was less than he had hoped for but nonetheless a substantial commitment. Although Green was unable to gain any capital from either Lyman or Orne, he was successful on another account. They were convinced to utilize finances withheld from the Telegraph to help establish a local Jackson organ in the city. Founded as the Boston Jackson Republican, the new paper required a significant monetary commitment of \$500 a piece for Lyman, Orne and a host of other investors. Thus, Green achieved a good deal of success from his visit to Boston. He had managed to keep his paper afloat

¹⁸ Derby, pg. 40-47.

¹⁹ Robert V. Remini, *The Election of Andrew Jackson* (Philadelphia 1963), pg. 30-31, 53-61, 97, 100. Remini also discusses Calhoun's important role in the campaign of 1828. Although he gives more credit to Van Buren, Calhoun is noted as being one of the key political organizers who was responsible for bringing many men otherwise hesitant to support Jackson to the electoral fold.

with the promised investment of the city's most prominent Jackson men, while ensuring the further promotion of Jackson's cause through this newly founded paper. With the establishment of this paper in addition to the continued Jackson support in the pages of the Boston Statesman, by the beginning of the electoral year the city had two prominent newsheets advocating the cause of Old Hickory. Despite the limited membership of the Jackson party in Massachusetts, the commitment of its leading figures, both financial and moral, had proven to be somewhat disproportionate to its size.²⁰

Green's very appearance in Boston, as has been previously noted, was painted as somewhat singular in later times. Orne asked in the pages of his paper a year later, "Why should General Green come to Boston, when there were so many in Washington friendly to the cause, and able to assist him? Why come such a distance here when other cities were so much nearer? Why apply where the party was comparatively the weakest, and most heavily burdened already? And why, above all, insist that the most remote, the weakest, and most heavily burdened should furnish not only its proportion but the whole loan?"²¹ The answer to both the paper at that time as well as to the historian with nearly two hundred years perspective seems rather obvious. The divided nature of the Jackson men in Boston, coupled with their seeming commitment to the cause for divergent reasons, appeared likely to generate multiple sources of income for Green. By appealing to both separately, playing upon their fears of being trumped by each other while promising future political and financial spoils, the editor was likely taking advantage of the unique situation within the city's party ranks. Although Green was probably not as successful as he seems to have hoped, utilizing this strategy he was able to garner most of the desired financial commitment. Perhaps he did not really anticipate receiving \$15,000 at that time. It is entirely possible that Green approached the interested parties with that proposed goal hoping to propel their future commitments beyond what they otherwise might have been. Unfortunately for his ambitions, Green was unable to gain the monetary support of the editors of the Jackson Republican and was thus relegated to accepting the loans of Henshaw and Ingalls as the only revenue from his trip northward.

²⁰ Darling, pg. 61.

Nonetheless, Green's approach to the procurement of funds makes evident the obvious rift in the potential Jackson party during the days preceding its official formation. In so doing, his course of action further proves how dissimilar the Statesman and Republican factions actually were.

Divisions between the original Jackson men in Boston were made more apparent because of the immediate control the Statesman faction was able to obtain over the course of party proceedings in the months preceding the national election. As Donald P. Formisano has noted at this time before the formation of massive, wide-ranging parties, men who gained control of the inner-circles of power were still able to maintain a tight control on state political affairs. Primary organization of the party was orchestrated by Henshaw, Dunlop, and their friends in such a manner as largely to exclude former Federalists from the highest circles of political power. This approach helped to block such men from potentially influencing important political machinery or taking positions of prominence at the head of the party. At the celebration of the anniversary of the Battle of New Orleans on January 8, 1828, Henshaw and his allies displayed what came to be identified as their group's strategy. On this occasion, which served as the introductory campaign event in Boston, Henshaw was able to wrest the chairman's post from more venerated attendees. While others at the gathering insisted that the military credentials of local General Robert Boyd recommended this older gentleman for the symbolic office, the friends of Henshaw thought otherwise.²² Utilizing significant influence and connections, their favorite had the honorary title of Event Marshal bestowed upon him. Henshaw's ability, with the assistance of his friends, to assert himself at the public forefront of party affairs helped the Statesman clique assume the mantle of leadership within the party at that important ceremony. From this time forward many Jackson men in Boston came to believe the group belonged at the head of Jacksonian endeavors in Massachusetts.²³

²¹ Boston *Evening Bulletin and United States Republican*, Sept. 28, 1829.

²² *Ibid*, Sept. 17, 1829.

²³ As Formisano notes, at this time before the formation of massive, wide-ranging parties, men who gained control of the inner-circles of power were still able to maintain tight control on state political affairs in the same manner as Henshaw and the Statesman faction. See *Transformation of Political Culture*, pgs. 245-

The Statesman group subsequently followed a similarly manipulative course to solidify their control of the party in more concrete ways. During the early months of 1828 the fledgling Jackson Party in Massachusetts held several informational and organizational meetings. Utilizing the great degree of influence they had attained in party circles, Henshaw and his associates were able directly to control the membership of many of these meetings. By alternately obscuring the agenda of upcoming events, under-publicizing convocation calls to County and Ward Committees, and altogether neglecting to announce future meetings, the group was largely successful in pressing their private stamp upon local party affairs. This strategy worked to great effect at a Central Committee meeting held in Boston that February. Most such gatherings were called at regular intervals and consisted merely of mundane political functions. As a result attendance typically ran along the lines of one out of every twenty invited men. At the Committee Meeting in question no advance notice was given that any special proceedings were to take place. Thus, the vast majority of otherwise interested members were absent. Most prominent among those absentees was the entire membership of Orne's faction. In contrast, those with connections to the Statesman group had been apprised that this was to be no ordinary meeting. As a result, when order was called and the agenda announced only a handful of uninformed outsiders were surprised to learn of the events about to transpire: this was to be the nominating session responsible for selecting statewide electors for Jackson in the coming national campaign.²⁴ Since the hall was packed with Statesman membership, it comes as no surprise that David Henshaw and John D. Simpson were nominated for the two statewide positions. Similar proceedings followed in Cambridge, Charleston and Roxbury. Due to their prominence in those meetings, the two earlier nominees were summarily approved. Thus Henshaw and Simpson were allowed positions of utmost importance in the eyes of the national Jacksonian Party. As

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²⁴ Robert V. Remini discusses the importance of the State Central Committees to Andrew Jackson's 1828 presidential campaign in his study, *The Election of Andrew Jackson* (Philadelphia 1963), pg. 91-92. As the bodies responsible for organizing and coordinating the activities of town, ward, and county committees, the Central Committee's decisions held a great deal of weight. Thus the ability of Henshaw and his allies to direct Massachusetts central board undoubtedly gave them an unmatched influence within the inner circles of the party at this early date.

such, their underhanded maneuverings had led to a monopolizing of power for the Statesman faction. During the months to come this group achieved a great deal of success in enhancing their recently established control of Democratic affairs in Boston and largely because of the city's influence, the rest of the state as well.²⁵

Their relative level of statewide influence becomes even more important when recognizing that the vast majority of Jackson supporters from within the state came from areas far removed from Boston. In fact as voting records have shown, both the presidential candidate and his party were and would continue to be much more popular in the regions of western, central and southeastern Massachusetts. In short, the appeal of what would become the Democratic Party was much stronger in rural areas removed from Boston's sphere of influence. It was in those regions that the policies and political ideology that would come to be closely associated with Jackson were more prominent. Just as the Democratic Party would gain more credence with those less connected to the emerging "market revolution" throughout America, its popularity in Massachusetts was strongest among these relative outsiders to the emerging trends in America's economy. Therefore, despite its overall dominance in state affairs, it was no foregone conclusion that Boston would be the focal point of Massachusetts Democratic Party. Instead, the ability of the Statesman faction to gain control of political affairs was vital in making the capital city the fulcrum on which the state party operated.²⁶

The ability and inclination of the Statesman group to grasp control of party affairs at such an early time perturbed the leaders of the former Federalists who had joined in the cause. Led by Henry Orne, these men worried that their interests would be subsumed under those of a group whose support for Jackson, they believed, was attributable to selfish political ends. The manner in which this rival group had gone about ensuring control over local affairs further reinforced the differences in political ideology already known to be a dividing point among Jacksonian Party leaders. Hence, Orne and his associates decided to let their own ideas be known early in the election year. Publicly

²⁵ *Boston Evening Bulletin and United States Republican*, Sept. 17, 19, 1829.

seeming to subsume the differences between themselves and the Statesman group, out of interest in ensuring unity behind their candidate's success, they continued ostensibly to project harmony across party ranks in Boston. At the same time, however, these men carried through their promise to Duff Green, establishing a new Jackson paper in Boston.²⁷ This creation of this new Democratic organ in a city that did not carry a great wealth of support for that party must have appeared noteworthy to political insiders. It certainly raised eyebrows among the Statesman faction. Always distrusting former Federal men, they now expressed concern at the presence of a paper that could very well serve to undermine their control, as was indeed intended by its founders.²⁸ Therefore, the creation of the Jackson Republican marked an important point in reinforcing the obvious divisions that separated supporters of the opposition to Adams, during a time when their public actions were needed to promote union for the cause of the Hero's success in the national election.²⁹

During the course of the election cycle the differences between these factions were largely submerged in public. Over that time period, the Statesman continually attempted to convince former Federalists to join the Jackson ranks. Pointing out the slanderous words uttered by the president towards men who had been associated politically with the Hartford Convention, the paper hoped to win to the fledgling party those whose political interests may not have accorded with Jackson's. Calling the alleged apostate Adams their worst enemy and the most base of traitors, the clique sought to argue that Jackson had no similar prejudices against Federalists. By continuing to support Adams for regional or even political interests, these individuals were sacrificing a

²⁶ Formissano, pg. 278-288.

²⁷ Remini, pg. 76-86, notes the importance of the development of a national network of Jackson newspapers to the overall coordination of the campaign. This organization included both funding Green's *U.S. Telegraph* and establishing Jackson papers throughout the nation. There is no doubt that the *Republican* was part of this proliferation of media sources. Still, the multiplication of these sources in John Quincy Adams' home turf no doubt raised the attention of many.

²⁸ Washington *United States Telegraph and Gazette*, July 20, 1829; Boston *Bay State Democrat*, April 7, 8, 1843; Derby, pg. 27-30.

²⁹ Boston *Evening Bulletin*, Dec. 25, 1828; Boston *Bulletin and United States Republican*, Jan. 1, 15, 19, 1829. As will be explained later, the *Bulletin* merged with the *United States Republican* in 1829. In the process, Orne and Lyman were more direct in their criticisms of the *Statesman* and the faction affiliated with that paper.

good deal of pride at his hands, the paper claimed. Pointing to the shame such a course would engender, the Statesman asked former Federalist supporters of Adams, “Where is your manhood-where is your sense of honor as gentlemen, to fawn upon the hand that smites you? Have you no passions, desires, affections like other men? Or are you resolved to act like beasts of burden because you have been treated as such?”³⁰ In such instances, the leaders of the Statesman clique sought to strengthen their ranks by involving all possible allies. By including former Federal party members, they acted in an inclusive manner during the days leading up to the election, thereby submerging any differences among the potential supporters of Jackson. During the coming weeks and months, however, the taint of past involvement with the party of the Hartford Convention would become a stigma employed again and again by these same leaders to demean their rivals for control of the Democratic Party in Massachusetts.

In the immediate aftermath of Jackson’s victory the accord that had temporarily held together Massachusetts Democratic Party quickly dissolved. Once the election of their leader had been secured, both sides took the opportunity to battle with each other. At first this conflict was maintained largely by subtle hints and indications of difference. Later it would be prosecuted through rancorous language and accusations. The initial manifestation of this changed public outlook took place a mere two days following the publication of electoral voting results. On November 23rd the Statesman publicly summoned all friends of Jackson to attend a formative meeting in Boston the next night. Their printed notice, however, specifically prohibited all men with Federalist ties from attending. Noting that these barred men could not be trusted with maintaining high office, the clique’s leadership hoped to limit the role that members of the Republican faction would be able to play in the years to come. While the Statesman group believed these men should be allowed to avow their preference for Jackson over Adams, the inherent political ideology of ersatz Federal men left them forever corrupted. These individuals, it was claimed, were ever to be tainted by association with the party of the Hartford Convention. They were unable to reconcile the ideals of centralized leadership

³⁰ Boston *Statesman*, Oct. 31, 1828.

with the more individually-oriented agenda of true Democrats, reasoned the paper. Thus, they could not be trusted to offer any sort of guidance to the party.

Reminding its readers that the political ideology of Jefferson and not of his former political opponents should set the tone for their new party, the paper offered membership its ranks only to those who truly believed in the republican cause. “Let principle be the test, and remember not all who cry Jackson, Jackson, either love the principles or the patriotism of Jackson, or the great national republican party who have chosen him,” demanded editor Green. He went on to claim that many of the less ardent Jackson men would just as easily have defected to Adams if he had been able to retain incumbency. Hence, only those lacking all association whatsoever with the defeated candidate should be allowed to play a role in party leadership.³¹ Such a policy appeared to exclude all Republican faction men from involvement in the caucuses that were to decide the course of the Massachusetts Democracy. Similarly, they were to be shut out of the process of supporting or opposing potential candidates for the most lucrative offices in the city and state during the coming national administration. Restricting access to inside circles of the party and thereby abandoning previous principles of open access to all denoted a change of attitude and an increasing level of intolerance toward different political groups by the Statesman clique. Charges against the Statesman group followed from Orne's faction of having attempted to reduce the number of party members. Similar claims were made against the faction for much of the ensuing two decades.³²

In the early aftermath of the 1828 presidential election, Duff Green's United States Telegraph drew attention to the developing situation of the Democratic Party in Boston. In so doing the party's national organ stated an opinion, doubtless shared by the Statesman clique, which the latter group was unable to articulate publicly due to local circumstances. Green threw his support behind the Statesman faction in the battle for leadership of the party, due mainly to their reputation as the body of Jackson men

³¹ Boston *Statesman*, Nov. 23, 1828.

³² Once again Orne's *Letters of Columbus* and Derby's *Political Reminiscences* are the sources that argued this point most vehemently. Later the *Bay State Democrat* would repeat similar charges, most particularly

possessing true republican ideals and interests. In offering this endorsement, Green indicated an initial rending of ties with the Federal Jackson faction. It was publicly noted that the administration's foremost media representative would be unable and unwilling to work with this latter wing of the party in any leadership role. To his mind, and it would appear to his affiliates in Boston, former Federalists like Lyman and Orne as well as their compatriots at the Jackson Republican, had to go through an initiation period within the ranks of the Democracy before they would be allowed any sort of eligibility to run for important office in the city. Noting that there were some men born as Federalists who over time and through proper instruction had been able to move away from the dangerous orbit of that tainted group, Green offered the hand of friendship and fellowship in the coming battles with the opposition. The obvious differences between their alleged former group and that to which they were now offering their assistance being so great, however, he remained leery of granting outright trust to these men. "If federalists join our ranks they must consent to a probation. They must obtain the confidence of our party before they are to become our leaders," Green noted in the December 10 edition of the United States Telegraph.³³

Claiming not to trust these recent converts to the cause of Democracy, the ever cautious editor continued his assault. "We protest against any movement which will bring to our ranks, aristocratic spies and deserters who under any pretext of supporting his administration, will require, as the reward of devotion to him that the destiny of the republican party will be placed in their hands." He worried that if clear distinctions were not allowed to remain between men whose leanings were aristocratic and the actual ideological republicans in favor of the Jackson administration, party unity would become damaged. Therefore Green vowed that distinctions between these different groups had to be maintained. If this course were not followed, the true friends of General Jackson would be cheated out of their rightful rewards and muddled with men whose beliefs did not accord with those espoused by the party. The ultimate threat of such a circumstance, of course, would be these infiltrators' corrupting the party in such a way as to undermine

its editions printed on April 8, 11, 18, 1843.

its effectiveness, thereby destroying the movement before it had been allowed to attain any of its important goals. Under that scenario the country would remain dangerously unreformed. Only with republican-minded men in office might Jackson be able to fend off the corrupt political enemies who had succeeded in stealing office from him once before. Green realized that such a stance might be called proscriptive in the circles of those who did not understand the dire circumstances surrounding the current political situation in Massachusetts. However, he maintained this was an essential approach to adopt. Only by appointing the right men to office would the president-elect be fulfilling the wishes of people who had elected him due to political principles. If he refused to do so, it was alleged, the very basis for the Jackson Party would be largely threatened by the elevation of such questionable Democrats to important offices.³⁴ Here Green and by implication the Statesman group, pointed to the undesirable nature of the pending claims of men like Orne for offices in Boston. Calling their true interests in the cause of democracy into question, the clique hoped to make a case that would limit the appeal of Orne's faction. As a result, only men from the Statesman faction's ranks remained as viable candidates for the lucrative and influential positions that were in the process of being divided among the city's Jackson men.

The November 24 caucus meeting to organize Boston's Democratic Party was dominated by the Statesman faction and their ideological compatriots. In fact it appears as if the Republican men heeded the instructions found in the Statesman and neglected attending. As a result Henshaw and his political associates were easily able to direct the course of events. The order of business on that evening was quickly announced to include the election of local Ward and County Committees for the party. After naming many of their number to the Suffolk County Committee, the gathering proceeded to create a centralized State Democratic Committee. This group of Democrats would be wholly constituted of Statesman representatives and chaired by David Henshaw. While allowing appealing power to the various County Committees as a means of appeasement toward those outside clique influence, Henshaw's Central Committee was granted actual

³³ Washington *United States Telegraph and Gazette*, Dec. 3, 1828.

power over the state's Democratic Party. In the succeeding months the power allotment granted to the Statesman group was further enhanced. At the March State Convention in Boston, the Central Committee was given power to appoint the chairman of each County Committee. These latter officials were responsible for the direction of each of these more localized gatherings. Thus, Henshaw and his closest political allies in essence had been able to assume full control over the main affairs of the party throughout the state within the first several months following Jackson's electoral victory.³⁵

Two weeks following the November formative gathering at the State House, the excluded men decided to hold their own convention. It was declared this December 9th conclave would be held in order to assert "a new organization of the Jackson Republican party." The Statesman, of course, claimed that the only representative group of that political unit had already held its initial and widely-publicized conclave. Those who refused to heed the open invitation were either acting out of spite for the rightful leaders of the movement and considered their private interests paramount to the party's general well-being, or did not belong to the Jackson ranks due to Federalist sentiments. Indeed by calling for this second and much smaller gathering, the Statesman claimed, the Republican men had intended merely to promote the hopes of disgruntled outsiders. The ultimate objective of their rivals, the paper inferred, was to gain influence over the distribution of patronage in the city. It was understood according to Greene, "that the present project to organize *another* Jackson party is set on foot, with perhaps a dozen exceptions by *new men*, who come in after the battle, and almost all federalist to a man, and will not associate with the Jackson Republicans on any other principle than the exploded one of *Amalgamation*."³⁶ Since it was well known that the men who had requested and organized this second meeting were associated with "a paper established in this city about nineteen weeks ago," the implication is clear that the Jackson Republican faction was at the core of this requested reorganization of the party. This mention of the differences between the leaders of the two Jackson papers in Boston was the first

³⁴ Ibid, Dec. 17, 1828.

³⁵ Derby, pg. 34-36; Boston *Bay State Democrat*, Apr. 18, 1843.

³⁶ Boston *Statesman*, Dec. 15, 1828.

indication of the rift in the party which was to deepen over the coming months. It was a division that would become more public during the months to come.

In the course of this publicized debate, the Statesman's harshest claim was that the Federal Jackson men never had any true political interest in supporting the president-elect. Instead it was alleged these men had pretended to endorse his candidacy due to lingering resentment toward John Quincy Adams or more nefariously, had hoped to divide the Democratic Party from within, undermining any true supporters of Old Hickory. The endorsement of the Jackson Republican men for James Otis in his 1828 mayoral candidacy served as proof for their claims. Otis, a former Federalist with a direct link to the Hartford Convention, represented the very type of man the Statesman had made a political career criticizing. That their opponents for primacy in the local Democratic Party would endorse such a political figure in any way proved to them that these men maintained sentiments from their days in the Federalist Party. The clique charged its intra-party opponents with never having completely abandoned their former political course. "Boston federalism, under any name, Adams or Jackson, is always the same," noted the paper," and will always rally, as Mr. Otis says, at the 'tallyho' of the Hartford Convention." Thus any proclaimed change in political course by men of this stripe meant nothing. Their political allegiances would always lie with narrow sectional and corrupting ideological principles. According to the beliefs espoused by the Statesman group, their Democratic rivals would forever remain inseparable from the Federalists of old.³⁷

Equally dangerous to the Statesman group was the tendency of these "aristocratic" types or Republican faction men, continuously to undermine the will of the people. The paper spent several issues and a great deal of energy explaining how their intra-party rivals had gone about weakening Democratic ranks. The editor claimed that in the current situation, their chosen mode of operation seemed to be setting different ranks of the city's Democracy at odds with each other or attempting to do so. By fanning

³⁷ Ibid, Dec. 20, 22, 1828.

the flames of discord, hence inciting a division within the Jackson party, these men had hoped to undermine any strength which that political entity could have attained. As a result of the rancor provoked within their ranks, Jackson's political supporters would be unable to organize any sort of effective campaign. Thus the renewed success of John Q. Adams would be ensured within Massachusetts. The Statesman additionally claimed that following Adams' triumph in the local presidential canvass, these Federalists in disguise had one further goal within reach. By continuing their pressure within the Democratic Party and thus further engendering intra-party strife among Jackson men, they assumed that Otis' election as Mayor would become a near certainty. Due to the dubious designs of their local opponents, the Statesman called on all citizens who valued the principles of republicanism to stand up to these false Democrats and reveal them for what they actually were. If not diehard Adams men, as many found it troubling to support an alleged apostate to their cause, it was a surety that the Republican faction sought to maintain the strength of ultra-Federalist James Otis in the city. Their ultimate goal it was claimed was to impose the doctrines of Otis and his Hartford Convention compatriots upon the citizenship.³⁸ In that manner Federalism could continue alive and well, having surreptitiously gained admittance through the backdoor of the Jackson Party in Massachusetts.

Although it is doubtful that the acrimony between these two groups had ever really been removed, during the winter of 1829 all pretenses to harmony within the party were dropped. Over the coming months the battle would be waged in public mostly over the issues of administrative patronage and office-holding. As both groups sought to gain a measure of control over the most important appointments in the city, their claims and charges against each other would become more acrid. It appears as if each side believed it had gained a tacit approval of its candidate for the most powerful and lucrative position in the city, Port Collector. Henry Orne and David Henshaw, respective leaders of the Republican and Statesman factions were alleged to have been given the promise of the incoming administration for the future bestowal of that office. Since the Collector of

³⁸ Ibid, Dec. 24, 1828.

Boston had access to all port taxes, the post was tantamount to ultimate control of the state's Democratic Party. As such, the position represented the easiest means to gain a firm hold on the party's power structure, nearly guaranteeing that other important offices such as District Attorney and Postmaster would be granted to the Head Collector's political associates. Due to the important stakes involved in the nomination and approval of this position, it is apparent that no matter which man was favored by the administration, members of the faction opposing his own would have felt the need to protest bitterly. When David Henshaw was named to the position, therefore, it is not surprising that the Republican men reacted with a good deal of vitriol.

Having gained control of the Custom House through Henshaw's nomination, the Statesman clique undertook a policy of denying offices to former Federalists. While their actual rationale behind this proscription approach remains a matter of conjecture, the group's news organ presented their newly established course of action as a logical policy. When one reads the various diatribes, both before and after the election of Andrew Jackson to the presidency, it becomes apparent that the leaders of the Statesman group held a special rancor for men who could have been linked to the resistance of the Federalist Party during the War of 1812. In the pages of the Statesman and various other published recriminations against the actions of the Hartford Convention men and other supporters of that cause, it is quite obvious that passionate sentiments about the previous decade's political occurrences in the Bay State remained. The continued references to "Blue Lighters, Federalists of the 1814 School," and above all, "Hartford Conventionists" are to be found repeatedly in the pages of the paper. These continuous assaults on such men for their past and perhaps current principles could be construed as typical political posturing common to all ages. Quite possibly such presentations were forms of mudslinging, grasping upon language likely to elicit public disapproval. Whether or not Orne, Lyman and others like them had any real connection to the Hartford Convention or old school Federalism would not have been known to the typical reader of the Statesman. But by repeatedly beating the drum of disloyalty, claiming these men to have lacked patriotism on one obvious occasion, their political rivals could and did garner a great deal of public approval out of the negative reaction engendered against their rivals. Whether

Statesman editor Nathaniel Greene or his political friends believed whole-heartedly in these charges is unknown. In any event, they had found a useful public hobby and would continue to ride it with great success.³⁹

Republican faction men offered a different interpretation of the Statesman's initial and subsequent printed assaults. From the start, Henshaw and company's motive in lining up behind Jackson had been based only tangentially on shared political views and ideology. What had always been more important for them was their belief that a Jackson Party in Boston be limited in size and scope since it would therefore be easier to control. As it was assumed that offices would be granted to leaders of local Jackson organizations upon his assumption of the presidency, Henshaw, Greene and their ilk had hoped simply to control the Democrats in Boston. Attaining this influential position, they assumed would enhance their chances to obtain the most desirable and lucrative positions after inauguration day. While they publicly offered conciliation toward the former Federalist Jackson men in the months leading up to the election, this tactic had been adopted only to enhance their own public image. Such an approach, it was alleged would allow this selfish clique to appear to be what they were not: tolerant and disinterested republicans. In truth, however, Henshaw and his associates had pined for the moment when potential challengers for control of the city's Democratic Party could be purged through unsavory means.

To the leaders of the Statesman's rival faction, this desired party reconstitution was made obvious by the relative quickness with which the group had taken action to effect change. Calling the formative caucus mere days after Jackson's victory, the Statesman consciously put into motion the steps that would permanently divide the local

³⁹ It seems that the association of Federalism with negative political speech in Massachusetts during this time period has not been the focus of major historical study. This omission is surprising given its prevalence in the pages of the *Boston Statesman* during the early years of Jackson's presidency. In fact, as we shall see, the conjoining of the Hartford Convention of 1814 with former Federalist Party members in print would be revived in the election of 1840 as well. The closest study to this phenomena that I have found is Richard Buel's *American on the Brink* (New York 2005). In that book's conclusion, Buel alludes to the negative connotations that Federalist Party membership held in the years following the end of his study, which runs through.

party organization. The split that attended this process was not unexpected or unwanted by their opponents, according to the Republican. Henshaw's ultimate design as leader of his clique was to reduce the scale of the Democracy in Boston to a group of loyal followers, men who would be particularly compliant with his wishes. At the same time, it was assumed he could magnify his role as the guiding force of Jacksonians in the city. Thus, Henshaw would appear to important Democrats in Washington D.C. as the political figure most worthy of controlling the patronage in Massachusetts. At the very least Henshaw hoped to be awarded the top local political plum: the collectorship of Boston. The events that took place in the aftermath of the November electoral season, the organization of the party along the Statesman group's preferred lines, and the continuously derisive tone adopted toward Orne, Lyman, Ingalls and their followers, all seemed to be part of this clique's script. According to the Republican group, their rivals never had the actual interests of the Democratic Party at heart. These men, especially Henshaw, had always sought their own gain above all else. The national success of Jackson and the limited popular resources he seemed to possess in their region were the mechanisms through which this status could be gained. The further office-hunting actions of their leading men in the months to come would only reinforce this belief among the enemies of the Statesman.

The Republican faction claimed that with the failure of Adams to hold onto the Chief Executive position and the subsequent rise of Jackson's popularity among both former Federalists and life-long republicans in Massachusetts, the recently minted Democracy should logically expect to gain majority status in Massachusetts during the next presidential cycle. Several newspapers in the city were said to be ready to abandon former loyalties in hopes of uniting behind the nationally popular president-elect. In the coming months, however, the very actions of the Statesman leaders precluded such an occurrence from taking place. The claims of Henshaw's close associate Duff Green that no man with past affiliation to the Federalist Party should gain favored appointments in the coming administration was the final blow to the abilities of non-Statesman members to gain prominence in Boston. By assuming such high-handed control of the local political organization from the seat of national government, Green had preempted the

natural movement toward an inclusive party. This path was followed out of a sense of obligation to his favored group in Massachusetts. As a result, his pronouncement forced many otherwise firm supporters of Jackson away from the fledgling party organization. The presumption of an editor from outside the state's political affairs in claiming to have any sort of influence upon strictly local matters of political involvement rubbed many otherwise eligible Jackson men the wrong way. They lamented that if their potential influence on affairs in their own state was to be minimized at the outset, the future held little promise. Direct guidance of matters in the Bay State by outsiders like Duff Green, indicated a lack of control over their political destinies. Thus many of these past Federalists, otherwise among the most loyal Jackson supporters, were turned away from the emerging party. The predictions of the Republican clique proved accurate in the years to come.⁴⁰

The Republican group also claimed that the manner in which appointments to local offices were made further damaged the administration's potential support in Massachusetts. In their words, the appointment of Andrew Dunlop to the District Attorneyship of Massachusetts represented the promotion of, "a man singularly obnoxious to the great body of our citizens... [and] was a heavy blow to the prospects of any Jackson party in this commonwealth." This appointment was followed chronologically by Nathaniel Greene to the office of Postmaster of Boston and most egregiously, David Henshaw to the major post of Collector of Boston. Placing these Statesman representatives in such noteworthy offices, it was claimed, led many to abandon any fledgling connection they may have held with the administration party. Because the majority of the city's patronage posts were to be in the employ of the Duff Green faction, men outside of this group were naturally discouraged. The questionable reputations of these new office-holders, in the minds of their opponents, were sure to serve as a blow to any chance that Andrew Jackson or his local associates had to become a political majority in Boston or Massachusetts, lamented the Republican. They continued their assaults against these appointments by vowing that the control and

⁴⁰ Boston *Jackson Republican*, Sept. 3, 1829.

influence given to this group of corrupt and nominal Democrats would help to make their own faction powerless, thereby tainting the party in the eyes of neutral and pure-minded observers. The powers granted to the Collector were declared to be in excess to those given even to the President of the United States, and thus rendered any foes of Henshaw at a loss to exert themselves outside of political power circles.

The intent of the Statesman clique to gain control of the Massachusetts Democratic Party was made most evident in their concerted attempts to obtain all of these major offices in Boston. Although the ultimate means by which the group was able to gain success is unclear, it is obvious that their pursuit of these important posts was an intricate matter. It involved much planning, several influential connections, and quite a bit of political intrigue. The story began in the early months of 1829, during the period immediately preceding Andrew Jackson's presidential inauguration. At that time a rush of potential office-holders descended upon Washington D.C. Many of these men hoped to press their own claims or those of political associates for the most coveted patronage positions in their respective regions or in the national administration. Among them were the leaders of the Statesman clique. Their presence among this horde became one of the more commonly-repeated criticisms of the group on the part of political enemies for the next twenty years. During the period of party formation the journey of these Boston Democrats to the nation's capital, closely followed by their most influential men's succeeding to the city's highest ranking offices, seemed to indicate unseemly forwardness in hopes of gaining the plums of office in the eyes of their political opponents. As a result of the appointments of Henshaw, Nathaniel Greene, and Dunlop, the former Federalist supporters of Jackson in the city undertook a campaign focused mainly on impugning the respective characters and asserting the covetous natures of these men. Their flaws were proven by this headlong pursuit of the financial gain to be had as a result of the election of Jackson. Noting the attempts of the Statesman clique to discredit members of their own party during the past months, the Republican opposition described an alleged conspiracy to undermine the overall well-being of Jackson support in Boston. Such a cabal was orchestrated by the clique in order to enhance their own selfish claims to the most powerful posts and thereby control of the entire organization of the state's

Jackson Party.

As was most often the case, the actions of David Henshaw in Washington during the winter of 1829 drew most of the ire from his intra-party opponents. The Republican group charged that his presence among the alleged sycophants, who were ingratiating themselves with administrative bigwigs, played a crucial role in the decision over the Collectorship. In addition to his wonted importunateness, Henshaw's actions in this matter illustrated another of his character traits. The future Collector was able to succeed to his desired post due to trademark manipulative skills. The Bulletin, Orne's successor to the Jackson Republican, would later report the course that affairs over the appointed offices in Boston followed at that time. Henshaw, it was charged, arrived in Washington at an appropriate time to block the appointment of Orne's associate Francis Baylies to the coveted Collector post. The methods by which he was able to effect this reversal were dubious to say the least. Utilizing the influence of Duff Green along with other friends close to the inner-workings of the Democratic Party, Henshaw was able to besmirch the character of his rival. Baylies, also in Washington and ready to accept the nomination at the time, offered no response. Whether this demurral was a matter of modesty or simply a result of his lack of connection in Washington is unknown. In any case, Baylies' silence was met with further action by David Henshaw and his friends. Utilizing the influence of Josiah Dunham, another visiting Bostonian, Henshaw was able to obtain an interview with New Hampshire Senator Levi Woodbury. Due to his close ties to the administration, Woodbury succeeded in denying Baylies' impending appointment in short order. In this way the Republican faction was robbed of the most important patronage office in Boston at a point when it was within their grasp.⁴¹

Further tainting Henshaw's role in this murky affair, Orne alleged that Henshaw had been required to grant several favors to Dunham in exchange for his assistance. Under their secret agreement, upon taking control of the Custom House in Boston, the new Collector was to grant three of Dunham's associates high-ranking posts. One of the

⁴¹ Boston *Bulletin and United States Republican*, Oct. 1, 8, 1829.

three, Abraham Quincy, was related to Levi Woodbury. Later events would complicate this matter and Quincy never attained his promised post. The other two men, Dr. Joseph Stevens and John Dyer, were able to gain lucrative posts under Collector Henshaw. These proceedings, when coupled with the realization that the Jackson Republican faction did not make a concerted effort to send its own men to Washington, Baylies unaccompanied trip being the lone exception, illustrated to the latter group the vast distinctions between the morals of each party wing. While Henshaw's clique saw the national success of Andrew Jackson as portending their future economic and political influence in the city of Boston, the Bulletin presented themselves as interested in party affairs for selfless reasons. The failure of the administration to reward their less corrupt brand of Democracy led to bitterness in the coming years. At a later date, with their subsequent inability to gain the ear of Jacksonians in Washington, the group lashed out at the entire party. For the time being, however, the example of their rivals' so blatantly seeking office by demeaning men with credentials supposedly better than themselves, helped to illustrate the corruption of politically self-interested, office-seeking Jackson men. Thus it became one of the main strategies of the Republican group to juxtapose the conduct of their rivals with their own in hopes of obtaining a redress of grievances from the administration. At the same time, they hoped to win the majority of Boston's Democrats over to their side of the debate. In both of these matters the superior influence and impetus of the Statesman faction led to the Republican group's ultimate failure.

While Henshaw was engaged in his exertions to annul Baylies' appointment, his fellows from the Statesman clique were also attempting to gain important local posts. Their efforts were largely successful due to the unwitting assistance of New York's Congressional delegation. The quartet of Daniel Brodhead, John K. Simpson, Andrew Dunlop and Nathaniel Greene developed a plan to assure their respective appointments to key offices, as they accompanied Henshaw to Washington. At various times three of these men would approach the New York politicians, presenting the name of the absent fourth member as a desirable candidate for an open position. Since the other was not present, it was assumed the Congressmen would think him a disinterested man with no connection to a political faction. Similar methods were followed on subsequent dates

until each of these four had attained his patronage post. Since Henshaw had yet to win outright nomination, at the end of the process the four acting in tandem were to present the case for David Henshaw for Port Collector. In this manner the four men were able to obtain the appointment of Greene as Postmaster of Boston and Simpson as Massachusetts Attorney General. Unfortunately for the clique, however, the rising suspicions of the New York delegation terminated their approach before Dunlop and Brodhead were able to obtain their desired posts.⁴²

At that point the clique was forced to rely upon their direct connection to Duff Green and Vice President Calhoun to secure the remainder of the offices they sought. Although trade-offs of influence for office with New England politicians certainly played an indirect role in Henshaw and company's ascension, the political clout wielded by Green and most especially the vice president in the new administration was more important overall. The previous financial support that Henshaw had offered Green serves as evidence of the editor's role in helping him procure the desired post of Head Collector. Around this time Green deposited a \$1000 note from Henshaw's Commonwealth Bank. The presence of this note offers evidence of an obvious connection between the two men. Its existence also led writers at a later period to conclude that he, Green, and by implication Calhoun were all in cahoots.⁴³ Their collective efforts at the time served to rescue the suddenly reduced prospects of the Statesman clique to gain the strongest possible hold on the administration's patronage in the city. Thus, it was due to the powerful influence of Green and Calhoun that Henshaw and his faction were finally able to establish a stranglehold on the party in Massachusetts.⁴⁴ The fact that their political opponents did not share the same favor with these two Democratic ring-leaders despite their similar financial and moral contributions to the cause further deepened the sense of bitterness already present over the matter. As a result of the Statesman group's dependence on the vice-president, they came to be known as the Calhoun faction of the Massachusetts Democratic Party until the Carolinian's defection from Jackson ranks.

⁴² Ibid; Derby, pg. 39-45. Derby corroborates much of this account, though not in full detail.

⁴³ Derby, pg. 42-44.; Boston *Bay State Democrat*, Apr. 7, 1843.

⁴⁴ Boston *Bay State Democrat*, Apr. 11, 1843.

Further disapproval of the Statesman faction's course on the part of Republican men, was brought about by Henshaw's subsequent exclusion and removal of all former Federalists from offices in the Custom House. Following the advice of Duff Green, the leaders of the Statesman group embarked on a course of removing all men not associated with their political clique from government offices in the city. As a result of this policy the Republican charged its rivals with replacing many able and loyal public servants with men whose talents and motives were much more questionable than those of their associates. Many non-Jackson men were spared, however, while those formerly associated with the Federalist Party but now loyal to the president, had their appointments terminated with little remorse. Thus the process of reform in these government posts had little to do with actual political sentiments, but instead was geared toward limiting the power and influence of intra-party opponents of the Statesman clique. The removals of such men as William Little, a Revolutionary War veteran, a relative to Col. Orne, and "head of the most decided Jackson family in New England," proved the purgative nature of the process implemented by Henshaw and his associates. Whatever the actual rationale of the Statesman leadership, the Republican alleged this process was all part of a desire to keep the Democracy of Massachusetts under the sway of a few single-minded men. They charged Henshaw and his clique with having more interest in personal gain than with any potential electoral success that a united Jackson movement could command in future political contests. The Republican men were convinced that their group had suffered the most from the gains of the new Custom House clique. This consequence was largely attributable to the efforts of Duff Green and John C. Calhoun to reward their favorites in Massachusetts.⁴⁵

The acrimonious battle over the patronage of the Jackson Administration would lead to a deepening rift between the former Federalist members of the party and those who espoused republican ideals. As the faction of the party able to gain the influence of insiders in Washington, and hence the most important offices in the city of Boston, the

⁴⁵ Boston *Bulletin and United States Republican*, May 20, 1829.

Statesman group quickly induced the ire of their former political allies. Miffed by the perceived slights afforded their efforts on behalf of the president-elect, the members of the party centered around the Jackson Republican, soon to morph into the Bulletin and Evening Gazette, directed their anger at the newly minted leaders of the city's Democracy. Turning their repeated attentions to the respective merits of David Henshaw, Nathaniel Greene, and Andrew Dunlop, the Bulletin repeatedly demeaned these patronage-gainers in its pages. Under the heading of "Letters of Columbus," Henry Orne began an extended and vitriolic assault upon this triumvirate along with others of the ruling clique. Calling them merely self-interested profiteers, willing to sell their voices and votes to the highest bidder, the Statesman's opponents sought to draw into question that paper's true commitment to President Jackson in light of their group's perceived motivation to gain and hold onto office. In the process they hoped to paint Republican men as the only true Jackson men in the city, opposed to the corruptible office-seekers the Statesman group had proven themselves. These opponents, it was alleged, were more interested in promoting the cause of John Calhoun to the presidency in the next election than in becoming ardent supporters of the president and his emerging administration. This war of factions soon involved the United States Telegraph and Duff Green. The Jackson Republican took to juxtaposing his actions and interests in obvious support of the vice-president with the unassailable policies and ideals of themselves, unquestioned partisans of Andrew Jackson. The ability of the Statesman group to maintain and strengthen their hold on power during these initial years of Jackson's presidency eventually drove the Jackson Republican group first to frustration and then out of the party altogether. Thereafter they formed a more natural alliance with the emerging Whig coalition during the 1830's.

In presenting their case against the Custom House clique to the public, Orne and his associates chose to focus on two main points. First, their opponents were charged with purposely keeping the Democratic Party in the city limited in scope. This restrictive approach had been established in order to ensure their perpetual control. The most obvious mode by which this goal was pursued was in ensuring the appointment of men with affinities to their clique's leadership to most offices. That these newly inaugurated

officers were in the main wholly objectionable to the rank and file of the city's Democracy, made public endorsement of the party's actions nearly impossible to gain. Hence, support of the Jackson Party in Massachusetts was hindered. The president's continued local unpopularity, however, was no discouragement to the Custom House men in the eyes of the Jackson Republican. Instead, by causing the defection of party men unaffiliated with their own faction these men had strengthened their controlling grasp of the party in Massachusetts, albeit in a limited organization. Once their initial dominance was asserted the clique was able to further enhance its influence on state government by controlling nominating committees and disbursing the substantial financial resources that the Custom House put at their disposal. Perhaps most egregious to their opponents were the continued assertions in the pages of the Statesman that former Federalists were not true Jackson men and thus unworthy of party membership. With the continued power that the clique was able to wield, their publicized arguments soon took the form of action to drive many of these original supporters of President Jackson from the party.

The second point of emphasis made by the Bulletin was that their political adversaries were not supporters of Jackson at all. These were men who had readily shifted their support from Crawford to Adams to Jackson all in hopes of attaining office. In the future they would be just as willing to sell their political souls to whoever seemed best suited to cater to their interests. In the thinly veiled language of Orne and other Republican men, this charge was made with respect to Calhoun, whom the Statesman faction was known to favor over the president. Since Jackson had previously mentioned serving only for one term, the prospects of his second in command becoming his appointed successor appeared to be very real in 1829. Due to their inclination toward the political and economic spoils of office along with the extant knowledge of their connection to Duff Green and Calhoun, the Republican would come to reason that Henshaw and company were merely biding their time until 1832. If at that time their true political idol was able to attain placement on the altar of the Democracy, the Statesman group would reap untold benefits. Describing the situation in this manner, the Republican sought to present themselves as the only true members of the Jackson Party. Their opposites at the Custom House were shown to be the party of Duff Green or John

C. Calhoun. The Republican group's ultimate hope was to reverse the tide of favor previously bestowed upon the Statesman group. As one of their most prominent members put it, in accepting this latter group the otherwise uncorrupted president had purchased "his enemies by the sacrifice of his friends."⁴⁶ Disbelieving that Jackson when properly apprised of the situation, could feel the party's true interests lay in catering to Calhoun on matters of appointment, Orne's faction held out hope that at least some of the previous appointments would be rescinded and their favorites allowed further influence in the state's Democracy at a not too distant date.

The Statesman for its part turned its verbal assaults away from John Quincy Adams and toward their rivals within the Democratic ranks immediately following Jackson's election. Alluding to a process they labeled amalgamation, the clique's leadership questioned the desirability of uniting former Federalists with those more versed in the doctrines of republicanism. As a result, they came to charge the Jackson Republican group as self-interested politicians, men lacking principle in their own right. In the minds of the clique, individuals with a federalist ideology could not become true supporters of Andrew Jackson. Once a Federalist, always a Federalist, was the theory they upheld. Responding to the Jackson Republican's public demands to reform the state's Democratic leadership, the Statesman revealed its ire. All implications that members of the clique did not accurately represent the state's Democrats were vehemently denied.

"It is distinctly understood here-and we wish it to be equally so understood abroad-that the Jackson Republican party in this city who fought the presidential battle, are now, and always have been, perfectly well organized to their own satisfaction-and the present project to organize *another* Jackson party is set on foot, with perhaps half a dozen exceptions, by *new men*, who come in after the battle, and almost all federalists to a man and who will not [stand] with the Jackson Republicans on any other principle than the exploded one of *Amalgamation*."⁴⁷

Thus the Statesman chose to assail these men, however inaccurately, as newcomers to the scene. It claimed them to be wholly unworthy of recognition as potential men of

⁴⁶ Orne, pg. 31.

influence in the party. Furthermore, this group of outsiders represented a distinct party from that which had fought for the president-elect and were thereby undeserving of any of the laurels that actual party men had garnered. Finally, these pretenders for the favor of the coming administration were only attempting to enter the Jackson ranks in an effort to sully its purity. The party as they wanted it to exist would be compelled to accept their injection of federalist principles, in turn upsetting the ideals of its true founders. Amalgamation was just another word for an utter changing of republican principles in the lexicon of the Statesman group. Its leaders represented themselves as the only political bloc in the city able to preserve the Democracy from all the Federalist influence that had guided Massachusetts politics for too long already.

Throughout their assaults on fellow Jackson men in Massachusetts, the Statesman clique and their associates chose to emphasize their rivals' former affiliations with the Federalist Party. Playing upon the visceral reactions sure to be produced by such accusations as "Blue Light Federalism," and "Hartford Convention Men," the paper highlighted past associations while implying current ideological similarities that these new-found Jackson men had to their political forebears. Warning against a conspiracy among ersatz Democrats hoping to gain influence into top local Jacksonian circles, the Statesman chose to lump all of its enemies under the same construct. Combining outright Adams men with former Federalists who had opposed his election, the paper noted the similarity in background for each group. Their same point of origin it was argued, led these men to desire similar political ends. Both groups wished to reassert Federalist dominance in Boston. While the staunch defenders of Adams felt they were merely carrying on the actions of the party, the Federalist Jackson men played a more duplicitous role. Because of the dangerous conduct of most political men in their midst, the Statesman faction believed that only those who harbored the political sentiments of Jefferson and Jackson should be allowed to assist in the maintenance of the Massachusetts Democratic Party. Choosing conveniently to label all outside of their clique's orbit as enemies and threats to the well-being of the party, the Statesman utilized

⁴⁷ Boston *Statesman*, Dec. 5, 1828.

this newly-established dichotomous relationship in promoting its own interests.⁴⁸ Whether they truly believed their acrimonious claims against men like those associated with the Republican is beside the point. They chose to promote the allegedly underhanded designs of this group in hopes of shaping public opinion in their own favor. Ultimately the credibility of these claims enhanced support for their own candidates for local office by means of the basic comparison with their intra-party rivals.

In addition to men with obvious Federalist pasts was another group tabbed “amalgamation” men in the pages of the Statesman. These individuals had shifted from supporting Adams to Jackson, trying to blend into the fabric of whichever party appeared most liable to become victorious. As such they were said to favor amalgamating with whoever was most powerful.⁴⁹ Thus, this amorphous body was constituted by men without principle. Their political leanings were closer to Federalist ideology than republicanism. It was not feasible for such recent converts to Jackson’s party to be reliable in the cause at so early a date, their opponents charged. It remained questionable whether these former Federalists could ever be true Democrats. As the Statesman remonstrated, “The amalgamation politicians may call themselves what they please, but the democrats will call them by their proper name of FEDERALISTS. By that name we have conquered them in the nation, and by that name we will yet fight and conquer them in New England.”⁵⁰

Though newly established members of the Jackson Party in Boston pretended to be part of its actual framework, the Boston Statesman rejected their claims. In its pages, the clique demanded that the public take note of the men involved. Only by noticing the

⁴⁸ Boston *Statesman*, Nov. 19, 21, 29, Dec. 31, 1828; Washington *United States Telegraph and Gazette*, Dec. 5, 1828. It is particularly telling to observe just how quickly the paper went from a tone of welcoming acceptance for the Federal Jackson men, some of whom it had tried to draw to the general’s cause by noting Adams’ disdain for their former actions, to one of intolerance. In the very same edition of the paper in which Jackson’s electoral triumph was announced, the *Statesman’s* editor begins to urge a purging of all former Federalists from leadership roles of the party.

⁴⁹ Critics, Orne and Derby among them, would note that Henshaw in his earlier political career as a state Senator in 1827 had ‘amalgamated’ with the Adams faction in the Massachusetts State House, a charge which the *Statesman* faction leader would deny though the pages of his organ.

⁵⁰ Boston, *Statesman*, Feb. 24, 1829.

anti-republican tendencies among the ranks of these political opponents would their true character as a collectivity be recognized by the Democratic rank and file. Thus, the paper reasoned, it was best to simplify the categorization and conjoin these nominal Jackson men with others of their ilk who had openly supported Adams throughout the recent campaign. Responding to the printed assaults on Henshaw, Dunlop, Greene, and Duff Green in the pages of the Jackson Republican and its successor the Boston Bulletin, these charges of shifting alliances multiplied. In the terminology of the day the former Federalist Jackson men were said to be “twaddlers.” The term was meant to label one capable of jumping back and forth between parties when interests advised doing so. Such men had no real connection to the ideals that formed the core ideology of true Jacksonians, and indeed were closer to the policies and beliefs espoused by Adams during his term in office. Many of these vilified political doctrines were construed by the paper as having been originated by the “first Adams,” making them Federalist in nature. Thus, it was obvious to the leaders of the clique that men like Orne and his ilk had undergone no political conversion during the days of supporting Jackson. Despite their former alliance with the Statesman as well as the absolute support they had wielded for the president-elect, they had been no more than self-interested politicians. The favor granted toward the administration had been offered out of hopes either of directly controlling the local party elements or intending to corrupt its membership with their misguided notions. Either path would ultimately lead to the devaluation of the Jackson Democratic Party in Massachusetts and a corresponding rise in Adams or Federalist sentiment, to the Statesman clique's way of thinking.⁵¹

The Statesman alleged that the only reason the Federal Jackson men of Boston had abandoned the cause of John Quincy Adams in favor of Jackson was the former president's charges against those present at the Hartford Convention. Adams' subsequent claims against the Federalists for involvement in organizing that gathering had greatly damaged his credibility among these men. “Because [Adams] exposed the treasonable designs of the federal party in New England to Mr. Jefferson,” thus pointing out “a daring

⁵¹ Ibid, Nov. 28, Dec. 15, 22, 1822.

plot to dis sever the Union, of which the Hartford Convention” was the main chapter, they had conveniently grasped onto Jackson’s ascendant political star in retaliation, said the Statesman.⁵² Since these men actually remained Federalists in sentiment, they could not be counted as political allies. As political men truly distant from any real interest in the fortunes of the party in the state, these Federalists in disguise were best left to their own devices. Even if this tactic led to a great reduction in the numerical strength of the Boston Democracy, the party would be purer without such nefarious allies, reasoned the clique. Keeping the party smaller, if ridding it of such disreputable characters was the result, seemed like an acceptable and desired solution to the Statesman group. In time it was believed, these false Democrats would find their natural place under the columns of Daniel Webster, Henry Clay and their old director, John Q. Adams. For the most part, whether they actually believed this prediction at the time or not, this augury would prove largely correct.

The Statesman took its accusations against the Republican group a step further as the end of Adams’ presidency approached. Their most serious claim stated that one of the main reasons for the recent public split between Boston Democracy’s two emerging factions was their rivals’ wish to promote their own cause as being distinct and more acceptable in the eyes of the current president. By publicizing their claims while secretly caballing with Adams, the Republican men hoped to gain a series of “midnight appointments” from the departing president, the paper alleged. Capitalizing on the myth of John Adams’ actions in promoting Federalist judges during the final days of his administration two and a half decades earlier, the clique raised the specter of one of the most ridiculed series of actions in the country’s young history. Demanding that all nominations for office be stopped until the start of Jackson’s administration, the Statesman reacted against the recent clamor in the city over the future distribution of office. Utilizing the past association of their Democratic rivals against them, the paper implied that any movement toward naming men for the important posts in the city would raise the specter of National Republican or Federalist influence. This request did not

⁵² Ibid, Dec. 24, 1828.

extend to Statesman leaders seeking office, however. Due to their stated beliefs, the Statesman faction's leaders aimed to cut off all discussion of alternative candidates to its own favorites, who were instead presented as the rightful heirs to important patronage posts in the city. Coupling fears of Federalism with the recent image of corrupt bargains that would limit the political rights of deserving candidates, they sought to highlight further the questionable nature of their rivals' complaints over the course of the nominating process.⁵³

In January 1829 the Boston Jackson Republican ceased its existence as an independent administration paper. The successful conclusion of Andrew Jackson's campaign was given as the main rationale.⁵⁴ It is also highly probable that the paper's waning influence when compared to the Statesman played a large role in its demise. Henry Orne combined his interests in the Republican with those of the proprietors of the New England Bulletin, another Boston paper. Orne became the editor of this latter paper. The Bulletin had been solely a National Republican newsheet in the previous years. It had been vociferous in its defense of John Quincy Adams' candidacy and had regularly demeaned Jackson throughout the campaign.⁵⁵ With the merger of Republican men into its ownership group, the Bulletin's political course would change to a degree. This paper no longer followed an overtly anti-Jackson policy. Instead, its editors repeatedly called for an end to party distinctions, hoping for a return to the previous decade's alleged "Era of Good Feelings." Though such a pursuit was outdated in the new arena brought about by the former presidential contest, Orne and his group continued to prescribe this course of relative harmony. For their part the old Republican clique, reborn as the Bulletin faction, remained Jackson men, albeit in a more moderate form.

The merging of the Jackson Republican and New England Bulletin confirmed the suspicions of the city's leading Democrats that all former Federalists had the same goals in mind as their nominal leaders in the city. Orne's union with National Republicans

⁵³ Ibid, Jan. 5, 7, 14, 1829.

⁵⁴ Boston *Jackson Republican*, Dec. 31, 1828.

⁵⁵ Boston *New England Bulletin*, Dec. 27, 1827, Feb. 27, Mar. 3, 1828.

seemed to serve as the final notification that he had abandoned the Jackson Party to the Statesman group.⁵⁶ Although his association with the Bulletin did constitute a first step in the course of ultimately leaving Jacksonian ranks, Orne and his associates did not believe themselves to be changing political allegiances.⁵⁷ Before any final separation of the former Federalists from the party, however, the period of acrimony over Henshaw's nomination and then confirmation to the Collector post underwent its denouement. Countering the charges of their opponents of the Custom House leader's incompetence and questionable character, the Statesman focused most of its attention on the group of men formerly associates with the Jackson Republican. Because the Bulletin group represented the only other body of political men able to stake a claim as Jacksonians in the city, it was quite natural that their vitriol would be leveled at these contemporary intra-party rivals. While it is certainly true that the paper continued its previous assaults on all Adams supporters, it reserved its most obvious animosity for men who had in its view pretended to be in favor of Jackson, but now were perceived as political intriguers. Due to this interpretation of events, the Statesman chose to label these men not merely as wrong-headed in political belief, but more damagingly as traitors to the cause and potential usurpers to the throne of Jacksonian leadership in the city. As a result, special hatred was due them.

Because of the orientation of Orne's new paper, the Statesman had become the sole representative of the administration party in Boston within two months of Jackson's election. At the same time, its editors utilized this distinction to pummel their former political allies in the press. The merger of some of the more prominent members of that group with the National Republicans, allowed the paper to label all outside of its orbit as recidivistic Federalists. Thus the Statesman described this group as a collection of individuals temporarily joined to the Democratic ranks for corrupt purposes. Inevitably such dubious characters would return to their wonted position among the forces of opposition when their attempts at primacy failed. Commenting on attempts by the National Republicans to induce these vacillating Jackson men into their fold, the paper

⁵⁶ Boston *Statesman*, Dec. 31, 1828, May 27, Dec. 5, 1829.

raised doubts over the Bulletin faction's tactics. The latter group's attempts to cloud over political distinctions in the city, made possible due to the similar interests of all former Federalists, were derided by the Statesman as duplicitous. Claiming that there were real and unbridgeable differences between those who believed in republican ideals and the rest of the city's politicians, all of whom were steeped in Federalism, the clique made it a point to position themselves as the only true keepers of the faith in Boston. To their mind, there were undeniable differences between this outside faction and their own members. Just as wide a chasm seemed to separate them from Adams men in the city. To deny the political unity among all non-Statesman affiliated groups in the city was a ridiculous task, and not truly to be believed by any right-minded citizen. In the opinion of the writer Hamden, there was one way to determine a true republican: he was a man who had never claimed any affiliation with either ideals or politicians of the Federalist Party. This Statesman essayist asked, "Will those who style themselves, or who have been styled republicans, still unite with the Hartford Convention federalists of Boston, and think they any longer deserve the name of Republicans?" The obvious answer was no for the readers and any true Jacksonian. Only those who could claim total separation from any Federalist connection whatsoever deserved the title of Jackson men in the city of Boston, according to the Statesman faction.⁵⁸

The leaders of the clique were more than happy with the abandonment of their cause by all former Federalists. Their departure had allowed the Democracy to become purified of all aristocratic members, removing their corrupting ideologies. It was claimed that the return of these men to the party of their origin was "a matter that the democracy of this part of the country can never be too thankful- 'for better is one house split than two spoilt.'" Having previously abstained from criticizing the National Republican party, to focus on their intra-party rivals, the clique now reaped the most beneficial dividends. The ultimate hope of the Custom House clique had been fulfilled. They claimed, "We wished to have consummated what is now consummated-a union of those who have

⁵⁷ Orne, pg. 70-74.

⁵⁸ Boston *Statesman*, Feb. 26, 1829.

abused the name of republican and have ridden the republican party like a nightmare, with the federal party. The union has taken place in the most solemn manner, under the name of the National Republican party; and we trust that those whom God has joined together no man will ever put asunder.”⁵⁹ By removing the confusion that had existed over the loyalties of the Jackson Republican men, in their making an outright alliance with National Republicans, the Statesman had realized the wish of having unquestioned control of the city’s Democracy. No longer, in its mind, could there be any doubt about where the loyalties of these men lay. Once they had pledged their troth to the ultra enemies of the party, the National Republicans of Adams, they had been damned from any future alliance with Jackson men. For the Statesman, it would now be easy to pursue their political goals, having no longer to worry about dividing attentions between rivals within the party and those without. All could easily be grouped as enemies to the true ideals of democracy and as such an alliance worthy of ridicule and deserving political defeat.

Not only were these former Jacksonians reverting to Federalism, the Statesman pointed out, but they were also abandoning the cause of the Union and national interest for one of strict sectionalism and potential division of the states. In conjunction with the city’s old National Republican group, these relapsed Federalists were solely interested in the previously aborted strategy of formulating “the Northern Confederacy.” Their new organ was to be a continuation of previous sentiments, directed by “its old leaders, whose object [was] to rekindle the fires of sectional jealousy and form another New England Party.” Nathaniel Greene went on to accuse these former associates of being “Federalists, the natural enemies of democracy. No matter under what name or what shape they appear-whether under the imposing title of National Republicans, or under the tattered flag of ‘the American System,’ their political principles [were] alike hostile to the genius of the constitution and fatal to public liberty.” The true Democrats of New England were the only ones able to withstand attempts of such misguided politicians to dominate the

⁵⁹ Ibid, April 7, 1829.

city. As such, they represented the only outlet for Boston's patriots.⁶⁰ Grasping onto any hope of attaining political prominence, the Statesman's political opponents sought to form sectional alliances with the west as well, it was claimed. Seeking to take advantage of alleged affinities between the two regions, at the expense of the South, National Republicans had attempted once again to break down the ties of national unity. This approach was particularly notable in the case of tariff duties. On this matter, however, the democratic-minded men of the West would not take the bait. Out of truly national interest, they had determined to resist the blandishments of this "New England Party," and remain true to Jackson and the Union. Remembering the tactics utilized by National Republicans and Federalists to slow the development of the region, senators from the western states would not form any sort of confederation, congressional or otherwise with the Statesman's enemies. Thus, the latter's attempt to produce an insidious "sectional animosity" was sure to be defeated. The effort, however, was worth noting to illustrate the means by which this corrupt political group sought power and influence and to reinforce further their untrustworthiness in all political affairs.⁶¹

With the duplicitous actions of the Bulletin faction removed from an otherwise pure Democratic Party in Massachusetts, the Custom House clique assumed that their organization would be free to follow its natural course. To their minds, the ultimate result of this cleansing action would be not only the party's strengthening in its ranks, but its increased viability in the eyes of the right-minded public as well. Now that the scourge of Federalism had been removed from their own folds, and exposed to the light of day for the rest of the potential recruits to the Jackson structure in Boston, the Statesman and its followers were more able to present a unified front. It was thereby hoped they could gain ascendance in local affairs. The example of New Hampshire's having made a strong showing against Adams and in favor of Jackson in the national election, as well as several state legislative results in 1829, led the paper to project similar success for Massachusetts Democracy in the years to come. Coupled with the example of her more Democratic sister state to the north, the outing of former Federal men, it was

⁶⁰ Ibid, March 27, 1829.

hoped, would allow those truly interested in the success of the current Jackson Party to focus their efforts on future political endeavors.⁶²

As a result of the Jackson Republican's demise, the political faction affiliated with the Boston Statesman found itself able to announce their political ideals and notions unhindered by the complaints of other local administration men. Thus, they were increasingly able to mold the local party. Due to the patronage that their high-ranking local posts brought, the clique was able to project its ideology to the furthest regions of Massachusetts. Henshaw and Green's connection to the newspaper industry and ties to several skilled news editors, allowed them to publicize further their group's core political ideology outside of Boston. As a result, during the first two years of Jackson's administration, several papers were established with proprietary ties to the Custom House. These newsheets included the Lowell Mercury, the Worcester Republican and the Gloucester Democrat. Further utilizing the wealth brought about by their affiliation with the president, the clique was also able to affect a union with the influential Pittsfield Sun in the western part of the state. Additionally, Greene's obvious ties to his editorial mentor, Isaac Hill, soon to become a United States Senator, allowed for the political ideals of the Statesman group to be propounded among the many satellite papers of this major Democratic organ. Thus, the Custom House's reach was made to extend throughout New England.⁶³

As a direct result of this newfound ability to project its political beliefs, the clique felt increasingly comfortable in dictating its own political course. The Statesman's editor reasoned that these new circumstances allowed his paper to hold fast to its founding republican principles without causing intra-party strife. The political pull possessed by these papers combined with the lack of dissenting party voices, allowed for a near monopoly of influence for all associates of the Custom House group. Portraying itself as the voice of the entire party, the faction's mouthpiece endeavored to paint its interests as

⁶¹ Ibid, Feb. 27, 1829.

⁶² Ibid, March 19, 1829.

⁶³ Derby, pg. 82-83.

national in scope. No longer would Federalists in Democratic clothing have the ability to hijack the party's ideology or appeal to parochial New England interests. Thus, the clique now seemed to feel more comfortable issuing doctrines on such topics as state rights, the injustice of the current tariff, and the desirability of inter-sectional alliances. Accusing their at last public opponents of holding a narrow vision of political affairs, one centered solely upon New England, the Statesman repeatedly posited the notion that true national unity entailed sacrifice of certain political viewpoints. This admission naturally led the paper to demean policies ostensibly favoring their region to the detriment of others. Its interests, the editor declared, were with the union as a whole. Out of the changing circumstances of the local party structure, the Custom House faction was able to promote their actual sentiments as to the direction that national politics should take. Many politicians outside the faction and throughout New England, both then and later, would label these notions as favorable to the South above their own region.⁶⁴

In asserting its exclusive control over Massachusetts Democracy, the Statesman would continuously reify the divisions between their party and all outsiders. Responding to calls in the city's National Republican papers, the Statesman issued a warning to all true Democrats to avoid the blandishments of opponents in disguise. Referring to attempts to blur lines between real and artificial Jackson men as further "amalgamation," the editors noted that all men not displaying obvious republican credentials were little more than scheming Federalists. As such they constituted a dangerous threat to the party. Such an injunction was offered in reference to Orne and his associates at the Boston Bulletin. National Republican success at the polls in the early months of 1829 was attributed to this false posturing on the part of this brand of foe. Recent gubernatorial and state legislative dominance by men outside their ranks was the result of the neutral language utilized by alleged anti-Democratic rivals; language that in its very nature was corrupt and deceptive. Knowing full well that the men who had succeeded to office had no real connection to the Jackson Party in the city or state, the paper called upon its political cohorts to take note of the distinctions between themselves and victorious

⁶⁴ Boston *Statesman*, March 23, 27, May 6, 1829.

National Republicans.

As the “federal party” now held control over all branches of the state’s government, Democratic leaders sought to prove to the public that exclamations of “no party” or “away with party names,” such as those found in the nebulous language of the Bulletin, were merely a ruse. This tactic was similar in their minds to that followed when these same men pretended to be ardent Jacksonians only to abandon the party openly upon their failure to attain the highest offices in the state. The victims of the Statesman’s criticism, to its mind, were merely political schemers, interested solely in their own gain. In no way did they hold any ideals in common with actual Democrats. Thus, as Democrats could gain nothing but the corruption and ultimate ruination of their own party through an alliance with such men, it seemed obvious that the two groups needed to remain separate from each other. Any influence that men now exposed as Federalist or at least against the interests of the Democracy in sentiment, had held with Jackson forces in Massachusetts had ended in the name of party interest. Couching their beliefs in such language, seemed to justify a complete separation from men like those associated with the Bulletin while eliminating any claim these individuals had upon the most prominent offices in the state. At the same time, by devaluing their opponents in such a manner, the Statesman hoped to offer its political representatives to the public as men deserving of acclaim, undermining any taint from accusations made in the pages of the Bulletin or elsewhere by the adherents of the opposing faction.⁶⁵

For their part, Orne and other leaders of the Federal Jackson clique remained nominally loyal to Jackson despite their lack of a news organ to promote the administration cause. In order to retain any hopes for influence in party ranks, this faction had to continue to publicize its loyalty to the president. An article early in the controversy over the patronage issue began by stating, “Our confidence in the integrity of the present administration is unshaken.” Noting that questionable appointments were not the fault of the president, the writer went on to say, “We have not the same faith in some

⁶⁵ Ibid, June 6, 1829.

of [the administration's] pretended friends.” The current situation, in their minds could be largely attributed to a common occurrence upon the change of ruling groups: “It is always the case, at the establishment of a new order of political affairs, that designing and interested partisans, under pretense of regard for a party, or even for the country, but in fact seeking only their own good, will be found making efforts to obtain office or consideration, without being scrupulous as to the means employed, the actual mischief occasioned...or to the credit and honor of the government itself.” The men now taking advantage of their foremost efforts did not have the true interests of the party in mind, but were able to utilize their influence through public and private channels to gain the favor of several of its most powerful members. Hence, they gained the upper hand on local affairs and were able to co-opt power within the state. True Jackson men, however, were left out in the cold as a result of this adroit political scheming and maneuvering, Orne’s paper noted.⁶⁶

Giving the new administration the benefit of the doubt, the article went on to state that such an initial course was not surprising. “It cannot be wonderful nor unaccountable, that, in one or two cases, a staunch and unwavering friend of the administration should happen to be thrust aside unintentionally on the part of the government, and that men of less modesty and more assurance, office-hunters by profession, creatures of political accident, may have crowded into spaces thus produced.” Such a common oversight, however, could not be attributed in any way to the president. In fact, once the initial struggles and uncertainties typical of a change of regime had been accomplished, there was no reason “to believe for a moment that a discovered intrigue, a misrepresentation duly ferreted out, or an imposition of any nature practiced, in any quarter, will be suffered to escape retribution.” Hence, whether actually believed or not, the Bulletin offered an avowal that with the realization of the nature of political relations in the state, the Statesman group would be displaced to some degree in favor of their own ranks.⁶⁷ Such a result would require apprising the proper officials of the inappropriate conduct of both the Statesman group and their political associates in Washington. In the latter case,

⁶⁶ Boston *Bulletin and United States Republican*, May 20, 23, 28, July 29, 1829.

fingers were pointed squarely at Duff Green. In order to ensure this positive conclusion, the paper sought to blacken the respective characters of the leaders of the recently installed ruling party faction as well as of the editor of the new administration's national organ. Conflating these two otherwise separate entities became part of their approach toward positively resolving the situation.

Because Duff Green had assumed such a powerful role through the patronage granted his United States Telegraph, it was widely assumed his influence in the Jackson Administration was expansive. As a result, his hand was often seen in questionable appointments during the initial days of Jackson's first term. Also, during this time period, the deluge of office seekers upon Washington was widely publicized. The Bulletin took advantage of both of these common themes to raise the issue of the respective merit of appointments within its city. Noting the presence of various Statesman affiliated individuals in political circles in the first several months of 1829, along with the imprint of Duff Green's hand on the political favor granted his closest associates from the state, the paper drew seemingly obvious conclusions. Contrasting their own disinterested actions, men such as Orne and William Jarvis, co-editor and another founding Republican faction member, sought to highlight their lack of self-interest. They had chosen to remain aloof from directly seeking patronage and separate from Green's orbit and influence in Washington, according to the Bulletin. Thus, they hoped to portray their actions as serving the concerns of the general Democracy, depicting themselves as true party men, not mere graspers after the crumbs of Jacksonian patronage. In their pages over the next several months they quite obviously undertook to dissociate themselves from the supposed minions of the U.S. Telegraph. Contrasting their neutral policy with the solicitous nature inherent in the actions of their intra-party rivals in Boston, this faction hoped to show that redress of an iniquitous situation necessitated some changes in the state's political office-holders. It appeared mandatory for Jackson's administration to implement such modifications.⁶⁸

⁶⁷ Ibid, May 20, 1829.

⁶⁸ Ibid, Sept. 12, 14, Oct. 15, Nov. 3, 1829.

Attacking the character and actions of Duff Green was the primary approach the Republican faction took to address the necessity for a redress of their grievances. Noting Green's true interests in promoting his personal agenda, the paper sought to elucidate the unreliable nature of this editor. Green's dominant character traits were highlighted in an account of his original dealings with the Boston Jackson men while trying to procure funding for the Telegraph in the months leading up to the election of 1828. During his previously mentioned visit to Boston in August, 1827, Green had met with both current factions of the party. At that time, he had entertained hopes of obtaining some sort of financial commitment from both or either group. Noting that upon the successful election of his candidate, the paper would receive substantial federal patronage and become a quite profitable enterprise, Green had stated the benefits of financial investment in his concern. Claiming his paper to be barely solvent at the time, however, Green pled for additional revenue to allow for future publication. Before considering making a contribution, former Federalist, and current Bulletin co-proprietor, William Jarvis had inquired about Green's political ideology and views on important policy matters of the day. Since Jarvis was only a moderate supporter of the protective program, willing to advocate a just tariff, he and Green were able to work their way through differences of thought on that matter. On the issue of presidential succession, Jarvis claimed to be in favor of Van Buren over Calhoun. From his statement in the Bulletin it appears that Green alleged that he was in accord with Jarvis on this matter. This claim represented a gross falsity in the mind of Bulletin men. In the end the two reached a financial agreement. Hedging his bets, however, Jarvis maintained the right to dissociate himself from the Telegraph upon any future divergence over political belief.⁶⁹

Upon checking into the Telegraph's solvency, Jarvis decided to finalize his investment in the paper. At this time he became co-owner of the administration's organ. Believing that their connection would be permanent due to the claims of Green, he left Washington assured of the correctness of his decision. He soon found out, however, that

⁶⁹ Ibid, Sept. 21, 1829.

the insincerity of Green undermined any positive association with his new partner. Instead of the proposed permanency promised by Green, Jarvis claimed the Telegraph's editor was "harboring the base design of terminating our relations, so soon as the contest in which we were engaged should be successfully terminated, and almost immediately after my money had saved his establishment from an execution, and his person from a jail."⁷⁰ Feeling himself used by Green for the latter's own political and economic interests, separate from any real concern for the fortunes of the Jackson party, Jarvis interpreted the actions of his newfound associate to have been wholly meretricious and unjustifiable. Knowing all along that he would dump Jarvis and his associates in Boston from the ruling interest of the paper once its financial crisis had been resolved, Green followed his own political desires. This course involved his original plan of aligning the Telegraph with Boston's other Democratic faction. Since that group seemed more pliant to Green's injunctions and less likely to question his course of action in the future, they seemed a more reasonable ally. Most important, these men shared Duff Green's political views on most of the important matters of the day, involving Jackson's eventual successor.

Jarvis quickly split with Green over matters of basic political creed. Once the editor of the Telegraph's true opinions and sentiments on political issues and ideology were disclosed in the pages of his paper, their partnership abruptly ended. Green, however, refused to pay back the original investment, thereby ensuring an enduring rift between himself and Jarvis' associates in Boston. At the same time, Henry Orne, now editor of the Bulletin, along with the influential Jackson man Theodore Lyman, Jr., were undergoing their own separation from Green over similar issues. Orne believed he had previously attained a tacit understanding with Green and Calhoun to become Collector of Boston. Once Henshaw was granted that important and lucrative post however, Orne and his political associates decided to turn their anger at both Green and the Statesman group. As they had been the first group of Boston Jackson supporters to deliver their loan in 1827, these men felt cheated by subsequent actions, in having been superseded after the

⁷⁰ Ibid.

election by Henshaw, Dunlop and Nathaniel Greene. These latter Statesman investors had promised monies amounting to \$6,000. In so doing, they had trumped their emerging intra-party rivals. For their part, the Jackson Republican men considered their investment to have been more important, coming at the time when the paper was struggling for solvency, and when Jackson's success was still highly in doubt. Thus they felt worthy of a position at the head of the city's Democracy. They saw two main problems with the contribution by the Statesman group. First, it had not been delivered to Green until the national election was already won by Jackson. Second, and most damaging, was the rapidity with which Green's procurement of this loan was followed by the succession of appointments to Statesman representatives. This course of action seemed to indicate some level of bribery having taken place.

The relating of this version of events seemed to highlight the worst attributes of both Greene and the Henshaw clique. Green and the Statesman leadership were fully unmasked in this affair, claimed Orne. The inconsistent and unprincipled character of Duff Green was highlighted in the manner in which he easily abandoned promises made to others in favor of those granting more recent monetary favors. On the other hand, the Statesman group had shown themselves to be mere political trimmers and self-interested office-seekers. These were charges their various political opponents would continue to levy during the ensuing decades.

The very fact that the Statesman group's loan had come with the election's having been won, and at a time when the allotment of offices was being decided, was roundly criticized by the Bulletin group. To this latter faction, the behavior of their party rivals was implicitly dubious in nature. Similarly Duff Green's actions in accepting this loan with no twinges of conscience, was maligned as the act of a corrupt political leader. Because of the influence that Green had in Washington circles, especially with Vice President Calhoun, his endorsement of their various candidacies virtually ensured Henshaw, Dunlap and Greene appointment to their respective offices. These proceedings had, to Orne's mind, incited the rancor and astonishment of all true Jackson men in the city, and some in Washington as well. The disrepute that such a course brought to the

party was undisputedly damaging, he claimed. In blaming the Telegraph's editor for the course events had followed, Orne hoped to remove any major taint from Jackson and his administration, while firmly placing it elsewhere. Continued acceptance of this current situation in Boston, however, would serve to hinder the president's chances to achieve any kind of political gains in the city or state of Massachusetts in the collective mind of the Bulletin faction. Resolving this situation was their pledged goal at this time. They claimed to have little interest in the offices withheld from them. Their alleged desire was to rectify the iniquities in local party leadership in order to ensure future electoral success. Such a representation of events, of course, served to present their faction as the antithesis of the selfish-minded office-graspers of the Statesman group, as the best candidates for stewardship of Jackson supporters in Boston.⁷¹

At the same time, it was averred that in turning his influence toward the current Custom House clique in Boston, Green had completely abandoned his former associates and financial benefactors. After receiving the Statesman faction's loan, Green had returned the \$5000 investment to Ingalls. In addition to refusing the support of these men, and skipping over them for offices in the city, the Telegraph's editor had chosen the pages of his national organ to castigate these newly minted political outsiders. Denying the Bulletin's rendition of events, Green had claimed that it was the members of the Jackson Republican group, led by Dr. William Ingalls, who had attempted to bribe him. This testimony was made even though these men had pledged their financial support well before the election and the promises of the Statesman group. The most damaging charge made here, was that the reason Green officially broke from, and subsequently denounced the Bulletin faction, was the demands of the Statesman group. "What was the condition," asked Orne in his tenth "Columbus" letter, "expressed or understood, on which the loan was offered [Green]? Was it that you should break from your generous benefactor, return him his loan, denounce him and his friends, and impute his noble sacrifice in your favor to a motive of corruption? Did you, or not, after the negotiation, proceed to denounce the Jackson Republican party, for which before you had professed so much friendship and

⁷¹ Ibid, Oct. 19, Nov. 4, 1829.

respect?"⁷² According to Orne, Green had been convinced to return the five thousand dollar offering from the Jackson Republicans in order to gain the greater amount from the Statesman group. This relinquishment of the previous financial backing was done with few if any qualms. Green was now able to obtain a slightly greater sum. More important to this deal, was his ability to associate with and promote the interests of a group of like-minded and like-principled political leaders. Through his weighty influence with the president and vice-president, Green ushered the most important members of the Statesman faction into the city's lucrative and powerful government positions. In the minds of the Bulletin men, the corrupt political leaders of Boston had found their most appropriate patron in Washington in the person of Duff Green.⁷³

In addressing the beliefs of the Republican group regarding the United States Telegraph, its editor, and their respective connections to the Statesman clique in Boston, it is important to realize the ultimate implications of the charges that were being leveled against all three. Although the Federalist Jackson men made a hobby of illustrating the unprincipled nature of their rivals for Democratic Party favor, they were at the same time willing to note this group's affiliation with a set of immutable ideals. Their rivals were men interested in free trade, state rights, lack of centralized government and the basic tenets of a political system best described as republican. As such their ultimate interests, those that stretched far beyond the grasping of spoils of office in an Andrew Jackson-led administration, differed greatly from men who, it quite often appeared, abandoned the Federalist Party in name only. Equally as noteworthy, this ideological belief system put the Statesman group in line with a similar set of values espoused by Vice President Calhoun. Since Calhoun, as Duff Green's father-in-law and political idol, held the highest place of honor in the esteem of their chief political rivals, the Republican's faction's leadership came to see the vice president's interests as directly contrasting with their own. This realization came about despite the fact that many of their members had initially been attracted to the Jackson cause by the presence of Calhoun. At this later date, however, it was obvious that the Statesman group's leaders were intimately

⁷² Ibid, Sept. 28, 1829.

connected to Calhoun. Thus the vice-president came to be seen as a politician their faction could not endorse if they hoped to attain success while distinguishing themselves from their rivals.

In his “Letters to Columbus,” Orne made public the notion that the alliance of the men holding Democratic Party control in Boston with the South Carolinian and Duff Green, was more fully developed and hence more important than any political ties they held with the president. Calhoun had been the man who had brought them into the Jackson fold. He had been responsible for sending Green north to Boston in the summer of 1827 to seek the support of potential members to the campaign. In this endeavor, Calhoun’s hopes had not been to find men with primary loyalties to Jackson. Instead, the vice-president expected that potential Boston connections would come into the party due to a preconceived affinity with his own political ideals. This assumption was especially reserved for Henshaw and his cronies. In the words of the Bulletin, “The certainty of obtaining this party if their sacred pledge could make it certain, determined the policy of the Telegraph; while the different materials of which the Jackson Republican party was composed, and the independent character of the men around whom that party rallied, satisfied the intriguing printer, that they could neither be bought nor driven, to a premature decision on the prospective contest.”⁷⁴ This argument held that since Orne and his group would not commit to Calhoun, because their main interests were vested in the future of General Jackson as leader of the party, Duff Green had shunned them from patronage positions. More importantly, Green's interest in their intra-party rivals in Boston grew out of their initial connection to Calhoun and his ideology.

This realization seems odd to the current student of the period, but it is easier to understand when viewed in the contemporary context. Calhoun, as Adams’ quite reluctant vice-president and an obvious supporter of Jackson, was the most powerful symbol of the opposition ranks in Washington from 1825 through 1828.⁷⁵ Since the

⁷³ Ibid, Oct. 1, 1829.

⁷⁴ Ibid, Sept. 7, 1829.

⁷⁵ John C. Calhoun, 4 June 1826, 24 Dec. 1826, 10 July 1828, to Andrew Jackson, *The Papers of John C.*

Statesman group's political tenets committed them to an ideology contrary to that espoused by President Adams, their allegiances were quite naturally drawn to his most prominent opponent. Taking the alliance one step further, however, was the fact that Henshaw and his political allies did not merely attach themselves to Calhoun as the most readily available national leader through whom to oppose John Quincy Adams. Instead it is quite obvious, upon considering their words and deeds, that their connections to the vice-president ran deeper than the surface level. Their common political ideology was repeatedly noticed by their contemporaries. The Statesman clique as a result of their most basic beliefs, were natural allies of Calhoun. In fact, these ideological premises would lead them to become among his most loyal followers in the northern states during the coming two decades, with the exception of the interval following the Nullification Crisis.⁷⁶

Because of their rivals' overarching loyalty for Calhoun, the Bulletin presented the actions of Henshaw and his associates as disloyal to the president. Although refraining from blaming Calhoun for the current situation of party strife in the city, the former Republican faction nevertheless chose to highlight their own exclusive connection solely to the president above all others. In spite of their belief that the Jackson Democratic Party had been sacrificed to the interest of the vice-president by the Statesman group and Duff Green, the Bulletin would not directly blame Calhoun for this unfortunate circumstance. Because they chose not to abandon the current president for any favorite to succeed him, these men thought they were being persecuted by the powerful Democratic elements in their state. Although their blameworthy rivals remained strongly connected to him, Calhoun could not ultimately be impugned for such a course of events, they said. Their own pledge of allegiance to Jackson came despite

Calhoun, Vol. X: 110-111, 238-240, 395-97. Calhoun's commitment to Jackson is made quite evident from these letters to the future president as is his central place in the campaign. See also Remini, pg. 51-63.

⁷⁶ The Statesman group's affinities for Calhoun centered upon the concepts of liberty and republicanism. Henshaw and his associates seemed to have located in Calhoun the politician whose ideology accorded most closely with their beliefs. The importance of republican ideology has been addressed by several historians, most notably J. Mills Thornton, *Politics and Power in a Slave Society: Alabama, 1800-1860* (Baton Rouge 1978); Harry L. Watson, *Liberty and Power: The Politics of Jacksonian America* (New York 1990); Lawrence Kohl, *The Politics of Individualism: Parties and the American Character in the Jacksonian Era* (New York 1989.)

what had been viewed as a policy of appointments that slighted their own interests. Because of their status as founding party members, the Bulletin men averred that their position on a potential presidential successor could not be among the reasons for Jackson having overlooked them. They saw themselves as remaining aloof from the conduct of the Statesman group in that matter. Ultimately, they were trying to prove their primary loyalty to the president, in hopes of obtaining a redress of grievances. Their goal was the removal of the Custom House clique from positions of authority. That does not mean, however, that the Statesman group's position on this matter was one of more public political posturing. The evidence provided by the Bulletin men along with that of future critics of the Statesman faction, show the latter bloc to have been largely influenced by their sincere interest in the future of Calhoun. This political alliance was strongly connected to Duff Green and the United States Telegraph, and in accord with the political ideology that would later be termed "southern interest."

Chapter 3:

Solidifying Control: The Statesman Group Increases Its Grasp Over Local Party Affairs and Tries to Maintain Political Affiliation with Calhoun.

The direct link between David Henshaw's Custom House faction of Massachusetts' Democratic Party and Vice President John C. Calhoun was an undeniable fact during Andrew Jackson's first term as president. The South Carolinian and his son-in-law Duff Green had been largely responsible for engendering the strong support Henshaw, Nathaniel Greene and Andrew Dunlop had offered the president during his successful campaign in 1828. It was argued by many at the time and later that this political clique's fervent interest in the vice president and his political career superseded their concern for the Democracy's leader in the White House.¹ Due to their belief that Jackson intended to serve a single term in office, the leaders of the Statesman group thought their support for Calhoun, based mainly on the similitude of ideological principles, would bear further fruit by 1832.² Throughout the remainder of Jackson's first term, however, their latent favoritism for Calhoun was put to a severe test. Due to a succession of events and crises that pitted the nation's Chief Executive openly against his second in command, the Statesman group faced several important political decisions. If the group chose to follow Calhoun's lead and differentiate themselves from the course of the president, they risked losing their offices and the patronage-dispensing abilities that had brought a great deal of local political power and influence in Massachusetts. On the other hand, if they spurned their support for the refractory vice-president, Henshaw and his associates would abandon their ideological mentor. This was a difficult decision for a group that was political in nature, yet was strongly tied to the image and political

¹ John Barton Derby, *Political Reminiscences of the Democratic Party of Massachusetts* (Boston 1835), pg. 77-79; Henry Orne, *Letters of Columbus* (Boston 1829), pg. 14-15; *Boston Patriot and Mercantile Advertiser*, Aug. 17, 1831; *Boston Bay State Democrat*, April 11, August 2, 7, 1843.

² Derby, pg. 81-82.

program of John C. Calhoun. As a result of the importance of these considerations, the local party's leadership adopted a strategy of measured patience, ignoring or downplaying the well-known strife within the upper levels of the administration for as long a period as prudence would allow. Once this course of action was no longer tenable, they chose to let self-interest guide their actions.

In later years former Bulletin faction member John Barton Derby offered an interpretation of the Statesman group's sentiments during this crucial period. His pamphlet, entitled "Political Reminiscences of the Democratic Party of Massachusetts," was a scathing report on the conduct of Henshaw's faction during the initial stages of Jackson's first term. Here the claim that the Custom House group's intimacy with John C. Calhoun far superseded any interest they held in president Jackson's administration was most pointedly made. According to Derby, the Statesman group had little interest in the true merits of the Democratic Party. He portrayed them simply as scheming politicians, looking out for their own interests in the forms of patronage and party influence. Furthermore, their concern for the well-being of the Democracy in Massachusetts, as elsewhere, was limited to selfish interests. Connected to Duff Green and Calhoun as their means of ascent within the party, the clique's collective faith in the president was directly limited to his overarching ability to ensure their hold on power in the state. The real hope of men like Henshaw, Dunlop and Greene was for Andrew Jackson to retire from political life at the conclusion of his current term. Under the clique's ideal circumstances, the vice-president would inherit the position. Only then would this political group be allowed to declare publicly their true interest and support for Calhoun, the man they had wanted in office all along, in this rendition. Derby believed that the respective administrative crises over the John Eaton-Cabinet Affair, the Seminole War Correspondence Controversy, and the Nullification Crisis, had served to disrupt their well-laid plans. As a result the clique was forced to abandon Calhoun as a matter of self-preservation within the Democracy. In the wake of the changed circumstances within Jackson's administration, Henshaw and his associates were compelled to remake themselves as politicians in order to maintain the lucrative fruits of office. Derby and others in subsequent years continued to allege that this group had

never truly abandoned their interests in Calhoun, but merely had temporarily shelved their support for the newly disfavored vice-president out of political considerations. Such conduct seemed to indicate that they were not true Jackson men, merely interested office-holders hoping to maintain control. All the while they tacitly supported the maligned father of Nullification, in the years when that word in and of itself became tantamount to treason in the northeast as well as in most Jacksonian circles.³

While much of what Derby wrote can be described as exaggerated political rhetoric, there are elements of truth to some of his claims. In direct contrast to almost all other Jackson papers, the Statesman bided its time in admitting the developing rift between Jackson and Calhoun. The fissures soon to rend the administration began to emerge with the cabinet dispute known to historians of the period as the Eaton, or Petticoat Affair. Centered upon notions of honor and social decorum, the debate among the highest ranking officials in Washington and their spouses would ultimately pit the president and vice-president on opposite ends of a private dispute. The most important outcome of this imbroglio was the complete re-shuffling of the Cabinet, following Martin Van Buren's voluntary retirement from the Secretary of State post. Out of this ostensible instance of self-sacrifice, the New Yorker became Jackson's most trusted confidante. In essence, the Petticoat drama was the entering wedge for the "Little Magician" to gain influence with the president, while forcing Calhoun to the fringes of Jackson's circle of political power.⁴ While most Jacksonian newsheets were quick to fault the Carolinian for his lack of acquiescence in the wishes of the president during this incident, the Statesman ignored this disconcerting situation. Denying for as long as it feasibly could the struggle for favor emerging within the administration, the paper sought to promote the party as a wholly unified body.⁵

In order to accomplish this feat, its editors denounced any indication of a split under the Jacksonian umbrella as the work of scheming opposition politicians.

³ Ibid, pg 100-101.

⁴ The best recent account of the affair is John F. Marszalek, *The Petticoat Affair: Manners, Mutiny and Sex in Andrew Jackson's White House* (New York 1997).

⁵ Boston *Statesman*, Feb. 5, 12, 1831.

Characterizing claims of discord among Jackson men as mere political schemes, the paper noted: “The Opposition have affected great joy at the dissolution of the Cabinet, and proclaimed it a sure indication of their triumph. They have attempted to make the public believe that the Republican party, which placed General Jackson in the Presidential Chair, is divided; that different portions of it have taken opposite sides, and that the succeeding six years will witness its final destruction...”⁶ Furthermore, it was alleged that any nascent division alluded to in the ranks of opposition newspapers, were patently false. The Democratic Party as presently constituted was as strong as it had ever been under the aegis of its leader and would continue to strengthen in the foreseeable future. Or so the Boston Statesman told its readership.

Perhaps the best means of analyzing the Statesman clique’s approach to the emerging divisions within Jackson’s Administration is by comparing the reaction of other Democratic organs. In Boston this representation was very limited. The New England Palladium and Mercantile Advertiser was the only paper even arguably in favor of the Administration. Heir to Henry Orne’s Bulletin, with which it had merged in April, 1830, the paper had a somewhat confounding political affiliation. Although Orne retained his editorial role as part of this new concern, the Advertiser would inexorably move toward the columns of opposition to the president’s party throughout its three-year existence. Much of this hostility was directly tied to patronage squabbles and the failure of the city’s former Federal Jackson men to attain office at the expense of the Henshaw faction. During the Petticoat Affair and its immediate aftermath, however, the paper maintained a tone of sympathy toward President Jackson, if not his entire administration. Much of its increasing vitriol at this time was leveled at Martin Van Buren and not the president. Van Buren’s alleged duplicity during the Cabinet crisis and subsequent reshuffling, the paper claimed, had served to wound the character and ambitions of the vice-president. Ultimately the sequence of events surrounding the entire situation had caused a rift between Jackson and Calhoun meant to benefit the political designs of Van Buren. As original converts to Jacksonian Democracy through Calhoun’s campaign presence, Orne and his associates maintained their favoritism toward the South Carolinian when

⁶ Ibid, May 14, 1831.

compared to Van Buren. His interests, they noted, had been sacrificed by the manipulative designs of the New Yorker. At the height of the crisis, the paper noted, “To Martin Van Buren must the nation look, as the secret spring and mover, of the most oppressive measures of the Administration, and latterly as the late disgraceful dissensions of the Cabinet.”⁷ In highlighting the inner workings of the Jackson Administration, the Advertiser made public the very dissension between Calhoun on one side and Van Buren and Jackson on the other, that the Statesman took great pains to obscure. No denial of this division was necessary, reasoned these quasi-Democrats since the flaws of the party needed to be brought to light in order to root out their corrupting influences.

From the very first signs of strife within the administration, the Advertiser’s favoritism toward Calhoun would not allow it to blissfully ignore the developing split. As early as the start of the 1830 Congressional session, before the Cabinet shuffling, the paper raised concern over the treatment of Calhoun in administrative circles. By allowing Van Buren to steer the course of the president during the crisis, the paper averred, the Carolinian was allowing himself to lose favor in the party and among voters. If his lack of assertiveness continued, it was facetiously said of Calhoun, “for all purposes and effect he may as well never return to Washington.” In the face of allegedly corrupt men like the current secretary of state, the vice-president needed to find the “courage and firmness necessary to the effort and course of conduct demanded by the emergency of the times and his own position,” the paper claimed. Lacking this sort of action, Calhoun risked becoming an outcast, unable to navigate the channels of political power.⁸ The Advertiser’s own lack of access to the corridors of patronage and power within the local Democracy allowed for this newssheet to criticize high ranking members of the administration in a way the Statesman could not. Thus early references to the rift, which was soon to become a chasm, breaching the Executive Branch at this time were more plausible to this paper.

The paper’s ties to the vice-president were also related to similar sentiments on at

⁷ Boston *New England Palladium and Mercantile Advertiser*, July 25, 1831.

⁸ *Ibid*, December 31, 1830.

least one key issue: free trade. In the fall of 1831, the Advertiser endorsed radical free-trade man Henry Lee for a Congressional seat. At the same time, its editors publicly denounced the evil nature of the 1828 “Tariff of Abominations.” Offering moderate support for the anti-tariff actions proposed in South Carolina, the paper went further on this issue than most Democratic organs were willing. Although largely hostile toward the administration on a variety of its policies and measures, the Advertiser sided with Calhoun on this matter. This accord came at a time when the Carolinian’s overall political ideology was becoming quite distinct from their doctrines, which were tinged with Federalism.⁹ Agreeing with the grievances of their anti-tariff cohorts to the south, the writers of the Advertiser hoped a more moderate course could prevail. They offered a constitutional approach to the developing crisis, calling a resort to the ballot box to redress all grievances over the matter of protective duties. Support for the electoral prospects of Lee was based on this legalistic concept. In the days before Nullification was taken to its extremity, the Advertiser urged the tariff dissenters in South Carolina to “persevere in their just opposition to the insufferable tyranny, and they will find before long powerful allies in New England, who will not nullify, but who will resist unjust oppression.” Implied in this sentiment are their deeper grievances against the course of the administration, and especially against Van Buren, who the paper purported to be the author of the Tariff of 1828. While unwilling to come aboard for the turbulent entire ride that would end with the nullification of the 1828 and 1832 Tariff Legislation, and subsequent threats of disunion, Henry Orne and his Federal Jackson associates were not quite willing totally to abandon the cause of the man who had originally pulled them into the Democratic party. Even after they had for all intents and purposes left party ranks behind, original loyalties remained. Tacit support for the ideology of Calhoun, or at least for similar ideals, very likely was a part of their message.

The vitriolic nature of this paper’s continued statements about Van Buren served as further indication that these former Democrats maintained ties to the vice-president. In fact it is likely they viewed his political career, which now saw him a sudden outsider to circles of power, much as they did their own. Just as less worthy Jackson men in Boston

⁹ Ibid, October 20, 1830.

had attained patronage posts, the unsavory Martin Van Buren had earned the President's favor at Calhoun's expense.¹⁰ In light of the duplicity of the Magician, Calhoun was painted almost as a sympathetic figure, a babe in the woods. Tracing Van Buren's political career, the paper stated:

"In the first place, he formed a league with the Calhoun party, to which he had for years been the most violent opponent. The object of this league was to put down the late administration. For this purpose, the Van Buren men united themselves to the partisans of the vice-president, and having elected Jackson, they shared the great offices, among them and their followers. Having thus embraced as friends, it was supposed by the followers of Calhoun, that they would support each other as such. It was the policy of Van Buren to denounce all public officers, who had been opposed to the election of Jackson...When he had succeeded in organizing so extensive a corps of public officers in his favor, he proved treacherous to his new allies, and turned his intrigues against Mr. Calhoun, with a view to supplant him as a candidate for the Presidency. His intrigues resulted in a quarrel between the president and vice-president, and Mr. Calhoun's 'Appeal to the Nation.'"

Simultaneously, the Globe, Van Buren's organ, was re-located from Albany to Washington. The Advertiser claimed this move was made in order for the paper to have better access to the seat of power to promote the cause of their favorite for administrative attention. This ploy seemed to have succeeded, to the disgust of the Boston paper's editors. As disreputable of a paper as the Globe was alleged to be, it seemed the perfect match for the character of the man it was created to represent. "What can we think," asked the Advertiser, "of a candidate for public favor, whose claims are brought forth by such an instrument!" The question quite obviously was rhetorical.¹¹

This rendering of affairs in the nation's capital was unusual for any newspaper to present at the time. Painting the politically astute and personally brilliant Calhoun as the weak and beguiled partner in this sordid affair was a novel approach. The main point of their constant harping on the malicious designs of Van Buren was to elucidate his plot to take over the vice presidency, thereby gaining control of the reins of the Jackson party. Noting the course that the Globe, Albany Argus and other papers closely affiliated with Van Buren had taken, the Palladium and Mercantile Advertiser attempted to detail an alleged plot for its readers. From the social relations that led to the division of Jackson's

¹⁰ Ibid, July 25, 1831.

Cabinet, to the correspondence, down to his own rejection as ambassador to Great Britain at the hands of the vice-president, Van Buren came across here as a man leading the Democracy to ruin. Indeed his maneuvering was claimed to have caused the “more respectable portion of the Jackson party to go home disgusted; many of them have avowed their opposition, and many more will oppose the re-election of a president, who has shown himself so utterly incompetent to discharge the duties of his office.”¹² The pledged hatred that this paper had for the so-called “Magician” was evident in every article written about him. Substituting much of the wrath towards Jackson, which would commonly be expected of an emergent opposition paper, this weekly remained on the assault against Van Buren. At the same time the Advertiser continued to contrast the former and current favorites of the president, respectively Calhoun and Van Buren, for the remaining four years of its existence.¹³

Any sympathies the former Federalist Jackson men associated with the paper held for Calhoun dissipated with the approaching crisis over the nullification of national tariff duties. Even an anti-tariff newspaper like the Palladium and Mercantile Advertiser could not stomach the idea of nullifying a federal law, no matter how questionable its merits. While the paper still lamented the indefensible course the administrative party had followed in the re-election of Jackson along with their personal *bête-noir* Martin Van Buren as his second, the perceived threat to national authority and the federal union symbolized by the looming Nullification controversy, came to obviate much of that political animosity. Indeed, it was the same admiration that these men had for Calhoun that engendered their incredulity over his course of action during this political calamity. As the Advertiser's December 11, 1832 editorial stated, “It is truly astonishing that a man who is the master of such potent language [as that utilized in his address to the nullifying convention in South Carolina], should be the slave of such monstrous and absurd sentiments.”¹⁴ Former supporters of the man along with all true-minded lovers of

¹¹ Ibid, July 25, 1831.

¹² Ibid, August 3, 1832.

¹³ The *New England Palladium and Mercantile Advertiser* would continue publication until the end of 1834. During the course of its remaining existence its presentation of Van Buren as the main political enemy would remain one of its editor's most prominent issues.

¹⁴ Boston *New England Palladium and Mercantile Advertiser*, Dec. 11, 1832.

national union were beside themselves, the paper noted. Under such circumstances it was impossible to offer any sort of commendation of the Carolinian statesman, even the limited sort appearing in their pages during the past few months. In that vein, the paper chose to give a grudging endorsement of the president's December 10, 1832 Congressional address. It stated that "The short paragraph relating to South Carolina is perhaps as judicious as any part of the message." Thus like many of its national counterparts the Advertiser decided to side with the president in the matter of preserving the authority of the constitution against the cause of extreme state rights. Despite this momentary support of Jackson's policy, however, the paper continued on its anti-administration course with Van Buren more often than not serving as the ritual whipping boy in their diatribes.

Compared to the Statesman's continuing statements that no rift existed between the three principals in this alleged dispute, the Advertiser's remarks on the impending split within the party appear prescient. However if one considers the fact that many political insiders in the Capital along with many newspapers regularly reporting on the situation knew of the inherent differences between the two strong-willed members of the executive branch, it is not particularly surprising that this Boston paper was announcing the rift by the end of 1830. This realization also helps to illustrate the delaying tactics employed by Henshaw and Greene in the pages of the Statesman. Though in fact they understood the political landscape, their obvious modus operandi was to ignore the differences between Jackson and his vice-president. Instead, they consciously decided to emphasize the unity alleged to be present among all important administration members. Highlighting the obvious republican tendencies of all men involved in the continuing drama, the paper repeatedly denied that any existing or pending problems could not be amicably resolved. This tactic was followed most likely in hopes of delaying the time when the Custom House leadership would have to make a personal commitment in the affair.

Their delay in acknowledging any crisis within the administration was unusual for any Democratic organ. It is obvious that the Statesman held off on reacting to what they

knew to be the case out of self-interest. They must have been aware that Calhoun and his followers within the administration were the proverbial odd men out and would soon be publicly exposed. Hoping to avoid comment for as long as possible, however, Statesman editor Nathaniel Greene did as much as possible to misrepresent facts to his readership. At the same time David Henshaw in the Custom House put on the best possible face during an unsatisfactory situation. Behind the scenes, though, it is apparent that there was a general confusion on when and how the Statesman leadership was to change its tune. The best these men could do was to hope that something would come about to reunite the two Democratic Party leaders. Short of that, if harmony of a sort could be preserved until the end of Jackson's term, it was quite possible Calhoun still had a chance to inherit the presidency as Jackson's originally tabbed successor.¹⁵

In order to postpone publicly taking sides on the division within the administration, the faction continually denied that any strife between Calhoun and Van Buren existed. The paper claimed that these two political magnates were eminent men and Republicans and no true party member should be required to express a preference between them, "without any dereliction from [party] principles."¹⁶ This public refutation came at the same time that other papers were publishing accounts of the split within the executive department on an almost daily basis.¹⁷ Despite such expressed beliefs and protestations on the part of the Statesman that ultimate accord existed within administration ranks, the clique's leadership knew their interests ultimately lay with Calhoun. They also were aware that since Jackson was moving to separate himself from their political leader, a major dilemma was on the horizon for the clique.¹⁸

In accordance with this policy of blissfully ignoring problems in Washington, the

¹⁵ Arthur B. Darling. *Political Changes in Massachusetts, 1824-1828: A Study of Liberal Movements in Politics* (New Haven 1925), pg. 79-80. Darling first raised this interpretation and his rationale remains sound after reviewing editions of both the Boston *Statesman* and *Morning Post* during this period.

¹⁶ Boston *Statesman*, March 19, 1831.

¹⁷ For local contrast see Boston *New England Palladium and Mercantile Advertiser*, Dec. 31, 1830, July 8, 25, 1831; Boston *Columbian Centinel*, Jan. 5, 19, Mar 5, Apr. 30, May 14, Aug. 20, 1831; Marcus Morton 7 Mar. and 9 Mar. 1831, to John C. Calhoun; *Marcus Morton Letterbooks*, MHS . In these letters Morton discusses the dilemma that Calhoun faced with his developing rift with Jackson and advised the vice president to temper the public nature of his responses to the president.

¹⁸ Derby, *Political Reminiscences* (Boston 1835), pg. 100-101.

paper refuted the charges of different newsheets on the matter. While other papers noted the re-location of the Globe, Van Buren's organ, to Washington as a means of establishing a difference between the supporters of the secretary of state and Calhoun within the administration, the Statesman attempted for a time to dispute that notion. The editor posited his belief that both the Globe and Duff Green's United States Telegraph existed for one reason: "to support the re-election of Andrew Jackson, the candidate of the republican party." The paper added, "We trust that they will in all future contests with the common enemy, aim to preserve the union and strength and glory of the republican party."¹⁹ Thus, these papers were to act in conjunction to protect and promote the interests of all men who supported the republican principles of Jackson's entire party, not to divide their opinions between different factions. It was also confirmed that this unified support was to continue for an indefinite amount of time. In the columns of the Statesman, the concurrent presence of these two Democratic organs in the nation's capital was no temporary exigency. Instead, the combined force of these newsheets would help to offset the greater capital investments of their concerted enemies throughout the country. This was the interpretation of events offered by the Custom House group in Boston, directly contrasting with the evaluations of the majority of national Democrats.

The Statesman group attributed reports of an administrative split to enemies of the party. Instead, it claimed the Democracy should take heart from the strength of its leaders, even if its collective talent was manifested in strong-willed statesmen who clashed due to respective personalities. "We must not suffer the enemy to sow the tares of division in our field," stated the Statesman. "We should rejoice in the fact that we have so many great men deserving the confidence of their country, and should cherish the fame of each of them." The blessings to be derived from the overall strength of democratic ideals and the wisdom of those promoting them on the national scene, was not to be scoffed at and certainly not a cause for concern. Regarding the national party organs, the Statesman told its readers to take comfort in the fact that "we [now] have but two able champions where we had but one [before the Globe] fighting single handed with

¹⁹ Boston *Statesman*, Feb. 5, 1831.

great ability and success the battles of the people against the aristocracy.”²⁰ Far from being indicative of any divisiveness in the administration, then the Globe and Telegraph were both able champions of the proper cause and as such, worthy tools with which to combat the tainted principles of the opposition. Where the Palladium and Mercantile Advertiser along with other papers across the country, had pointed to this situation as foretelling the demise of the party, the Statesman chose to portray it as indicative of a strong central organization, one dominated by sometimes disagreeing but always resolute and able leaders like Martin Van Buren and John C. Calhoun.

In fact the paper further noted that the current vice-president had publicly approved of Jackson’s re-election, unopposed by any other Democrat, including himself. Similarly, Duff Green’s paper proclaimed its intention to promote the extension of Jackson’s presidency. At the same time, the Boston Statesman derided any party member or news organ that did not approve of this course. Van Buren’s seemingly selfless decision to step down as secretary of state in hopes of preserving administrative harmony, was offered as additional evidence that all was well with the Democratic Party. Editorial opinion from the Globe seemed to support this belief that the recently replaced Van Buren had no interest in presenting himself as a presidential candidate. His intentions on the matter of Jackson’s eventual successor, however, were certainly much more questionable. The Statesman remained silent regarding this issue. Perhaps its editor and his associates maintained a lingering hope that in the end the president would stand by his original pledge to step down after one term in office, leaving the Democratic nomination to his previously assumed successor. More likely the Custom House faction had already begun to see the writing on the wall. It was becoming increasingly more evident that despite his initial intentions, the president would once again stand for office, thereby dashing what hopes they may have entertained of Calhoun’s ascension. At any rate, during the height of the “Cabinet Controversy”, the clique seemed in no position to question the Democratic candidate in the next presidential election, be it Van Buren, Calhoun, or the president.²¹

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Washington *Globe*, May, 14, 15, 1831.

Following the simmering tensions between the president and his vice-president evident in the Cabinet affair and nascent rumblings over Nullification in South Carolina, the rift in the Executive branch became increasingly apparent during 1831. While Calhoun's loyalties to Jackson were still proclaimed loudly by the vice-president's supporters, the publication of documents relating to Jackson's actions during the Seminole Controversy of 1818 served to drive a permanent wedge between the two men, thereby placing the Custom House faction in an unenviable and tenuous position. Their trepidation in offering overt support to either of these Democratic figureheads for some time during the epistolary controversy further indicates a tacit level of support for the Calhounite faction of the party on national affairs.²² Only when it became inevitable that Jackson would stand for reelection and further ambivalence on the presidential issue would place their very livelihoods as office-holders in the Bay State at risk, did they publicly endorse the president. In the process the faction temporarily abandoned Calhoun. Their obvious vacillation on the matter, however, indicates the difficulty these men had in coming to the conclusion that most Democrats were so ready to make.

During 1818, while Calhoun was serving his first term as James Monroe's Secretary of War, General Jackson had become embroiled in an invasion of Spanish Florida that soon would escalate to the level of an international incident. Following several incursions into Georgia by groups of Seminole Indians residing in the loosely governed Spanish Florida Territory, U.S. forces under Jackson's command set out to chase these Native American interlopers back into the swamps of the region. In the process of this policing action, the American military was forced to cross a national frontier, thereby entering Spanish territory. Once in Florida, Jackson without governmental permission took it upon himself summarily to execute two British traders. This decision was made because of his belief that these men, Robert Ambrister and Alexander Arbuthnot, had been promoting Indian interference in the United States, most especially the kidnapping of American slaves. Additional charges of their having armed the Seminole intruders were also brought. Calhoun, along with most of the Cabinet,

²² *Boston Statesman*, Feb. 23, Mar. 26, 1831.

joined in protesting against the general's actions. Official censure and even court-martial proceedings were called for, but they were not pursued, largely at the behest of Secretary of State John Quincy Adams. Nevertheless Jackson, often thin-skinned about criticism of his military actions, was especially sensitive about this incident. His assumption that Calhoun had stood behind him throughout the matter, informed much of his subsequent tendency to trust the Carolinian implicitly in most political and public affairs. While the other divisive issues within the early years of Jackson's presidency were brewing, this belief in the earlier loyalty of his vice-president kept the president largely at bay.²³

As Calhoun's enemies within the administration and elsewhere sought a way to engender a permanent split, thereby enhancing their own access to Jackson's favor, they undertook to shed light upon the vice-president's actual feelings as a member of Monroe's cabinet. Therefore it was arranged for Jackson to see a letter written by former Secretary of the Treasury William H. Crawford detailing Calhoun's actual feelings and actions during the Seminole Controversy. Needless to say with these newly introduced facts, the president became furious and nearly instantaneously abandoned his remaining regard for Calhoun. An exchange of letters between the two men followed, during which Calhoun refused to relent or back away from a commitment to his known principles.²⁴

In April 1831 the vice-president published the correspondence between himself and Jackson, in order to make the issue a matter of public record. By presenting these written discussions to the public Calhoun hoped to allow the reading populace to decide where they stood on the issue. It is evident the Carolinian assumed that most would see his honorableness in the matter and possibly abandon support for the president as a result. If this goal had been achieved, it is possible that the vice-president's widely noted ambitions to succeed Jackson as Chief Executive during the 1832 campaign could have come to fruition. At least it is quite probable that is what dictated his course in the correspondence controversy. Whatever his reasoning, the publication of these executive

²³ John Niven. *John C. Calhoun and the Price of Union: A Biography* (Baton Rouge 1988), pg. 122-125 ; Duff Green, *Correspondence Between Andrew Jackson and John C. Calhoun, president and vice president of the United States, on the subject of the course of the latter, in the deliberations in the Cabinet of Mr. Monroe, on the occurrences in the Seminole War* (Washington, D.C. 1831).

letters was a tactic that engendered a good deal of outrage toward Calhoun on the part of most Democratic Party members. Nearly all public men pledged to the administration's course viewed Calhoun's stratagem as a sure-fire way to divide the national party between its nominal leaders. As such, the correspondence matter seemed an unnecessary and certainly unwelcome development. Calhoun was directly blamed for playing into the hands of the party's chief rivals, thereby undermining its national effectiveness.²⁵

The Boston Statesman, for its part, was not so quick to denounce Calhoun's actions. In fact, it is quite possible that the Custom House faction welcomed the controversy for their own purposes. As Calhoun men at heart, they were convinced of their hoped-for candidate's innocence in the matter. This incident could have represented a chance to place the Carolinian above the "Old Hero" and at the head of the Democratic Party. Since it had been assumed by Henshaw and his ilk that the current vice-president would be the next Democratic presidential candidate, the unique insight into past conduct offered by this issue could be utilized to validate his fitness for the post. If he were seen to be even more virtuous than the nation's ultimate Democrat, there could be no question of his viability as a successor to Jackson. Offering evidence of this point of view is the fact that while other Democratic papers published much of the correspondence with editorial opinions favoring Jackson in the matter, Greene simply reproduced the letters without any commentary. It can be assumed that this approach was taken for the exact reason that Calhoun wanted the letters publicized. Thinking that the circulation of these documents would exonerate their favorite in the eyes of impartial citizens, the Statesman followed the course prescribed by Calhoun. They offered the letters to their readership while withholding judgment and offering no endorsement of either party. Once the questionable actions of the president were before the public, they hoped that the vice-president would be vindicated. This outcome would allow for him to resume a venerated position among the ranks of the nation's eminently virtuous republicans.²⁶

As a Jacksonian paper, the Statesman was obligated to publish the Jackson-

²⁴ Niven, pg. 123-125.

²⁵ Ibid.

Calhoun Correspondence in full. In the edition which printed the letters, the paper refused to offer any opinion on the merits of either side in the controversy. Instead an introductory column prefaced the interchange, stating:

“The ground of this correspondence is exceedingly simple. From various causes it seems that General Jackson had always entertained a strong impression that Mr. Calhoun, during the agitation of the question growing out of the Seminole War, had approved and defended his conduct. During the last year, he received information of a contrary character, a copy of the letter containing which was immediately transmitted to Mr. Calhoun, enclosed in one asking if the allegations were correct. Mr. Calhoun replied, admitted to the part in the cabinet debates alluded to, but contended that he had never sought to conceal his views, nor create an erroneous impression. So far as the first two officers of the government are concerned this is the statement of the whole question. It is a mere matter of personal difference—Gen. Jackson entertaining on the one hand, an opinion that Mr. Calhoun has not dealt openly and sincerely with him; and Mr. Calhoun, on the other, endeavoring to show that he had never said anything to authorize the impression that Gen. Jackson had entertained of the part taken by the vice-president as a member of Mr. Monroe’s Cabinet.”²⁷

While the editor’s note defended the actions taken by Jackson during the 1818 incident, maintaining that without proper instruction he did what was expected of him as a commander, it did not lay any blame on Calhoun for the present controversy. This endorsement of Jackson was very understated. At a time when other Jackson papers were standing fully behind the president and questioning the motives of Calhoun both during Monroe’s administration and in the course of publishing this correspondence, the Statesman’s reaction appears in hindsight to have been even-handed.²⁸ Upon further review, however, it becomes easy to understand why such a path was followed. It seems as if the Statesman’s editor, along with the other prominent men in the Custom House clique, believed that the publication of this correspondence would serve to exonerate the vice-president from all implications that had been made by political opponents. This result was more important to them than following the approach most likely to ensure temporary party harmony. It was alleged by the Statesman group’s contemporaries in

²⁶ Boston *Statesman*, Feb. 21, 1831; Derby, pg. 102-103.

²⁷ Boston *Statesman*, Feb. 21, 1831.

²⁸ Duff Green’s *United States Telegraph* was of course the notable exception to this rule. The administration paper made its favor for Calhoun known during the Correspondence affair, coming out on the side of the vice president in a very public manner. Its behavior on the matter offers a direct contrast to other Jackson sheets and serves to place the *Statesman’s* reaction somewhere between both poles; Merrill D. Peterson. *The Great Triumvirate: Webster, Clay, and Calhoun* (New York 1987), pg. 190.

Boston that the paper's ultimate hope in making public the exchange of ideas and testimony between Jackson and Calhoun, was to shed favorable light upon the conduct and motives of the latter. If he were allowed to be judged in the court of public opinion, the Custom House men felt that the *Carolinian* would reclaim his formerly venerated position in the minds of the paper's Democratic readership. Such reasoning also explains the lack of editorial commentary in the pages of the Statesman regarding this administration debate. Since as a Democratic organ any commentary on the matter would most likely have required public approval for the course followed by the president, this unwonted silence is telling. At the very least the Statesman's ostensible objectivity represented a neutral course. Anyone privy to the sentiments of the clique, however, knew it to be indicative of their continued allegiance to John C. Calhoun.²⁹

Indeed, the fact that Boston's Democratic Party organ did not come out solidly behind the president makes it apparent that the paper had something to lose by choosing one side of this issue. Reacting against the actions of the vice-president would have been contrary to their political interests and democratic ideology. Hesitating from even offering a critique of his actions as a Cabinet member over a decade before, the Statesman noted that it was wholly unwilling to speak ill of Calhoun. Concomitantly, coming out against Jackson either for his actions during the Seminole Incursion or his reaction to the correspondence controversy would have been counterproductive. As true party men the *Statesman* group could not denounce their chief. It did not matter where their real interests might lie. After all, these were men who had firm control of the patronage offices in Boston. These offices had been dispensed at the behest of the national administration. It is important to remember that Jackson, not Calhoun, headed this government. Ultimately the president was responsible for their collective hold on these lucrative positions. Thus it made a great deal of sense to remain mum on the controversy for the time being.

On the other hand, refraining from any sort of favoritism toward the president in this matter was still curious behavior for the city's Democratic organ. At a time when

²⁹ Derby, pg. 104-105.

newspapers were expected vehemently to support their party leaders, the lack of any overt effort to do so in this case raised suspicions in many eyes and would lead one to surmise one of two things. Perhaps the Statesman and its proprietors were among the most objective men in this most partisan age. It was possible they were willing to wait out the crisis to let the public decide the merits of each side in the struggle. The second and more valid analysis is that Henshaw, Greene, Dunlap and their cohorts simply had too much to lose by strongly backing the man of their choice. As the patronage wing of the party in Massachusetts, the Custom House men could ill afford to provoke the anger of their main benefactor, President Jackson. At the same time, they had ridden into the party behind the standard of the vice-president and shared his political ideology. Although certainly Democrats and now Jackson men, the clique held a special interest in the future of John C. Calhoun. They remained tied to his fortunes, hoping against hope that the Carolinian would become the successor to Old Hickory. Thus by mid-1831, they were at a loss on how to proceed. Refraining from the public announcement of any opinion on the matter seemed to be the only acceptable course of action at the time. Actions of later years seem to indicate that Henshaw and his group never lost their particular interest in Calhoun's political ambitions. For the time being and in the immediate future, however, political necessity forced them to remain silent and eventually to back away from overt support for the Carolinian during his struggles with Jackson.³⁰

The rationale that informed the silent approach of the Statesman faction was verified in the correspondence of the influential Democrat Marcus Morton at the height of the correspondence affair. Morton, who throughout the life of the Jacksonian Democracy in Massachusetts would be the party's annual gubernatorial candidate, was an ancient friend of Calhoun. Writing to the vice-president in March, 1831, he admitted that the vast majority of Boston's Democrats supported the actions of the Carolinian with regard to the correspondence. Whether this wide-spread favorable opinion was due to inherent deep-seated ideological similarities or a collectively objective belief in his correctness in the matter remained unstated. Despite this judgment in favor of Calhoun,

³⁰ Darling, *Political Changes in Massachusetts* (New York 1925), pg. 80-81.

however, representatives of the party in Massachusetts were unable to endorse his course for political reasons. According to Morton,

“The Administration having been brought into existence by the voice of Democracy; having been founded and in most respects conducted on Democratic principles, there is a strong desire on the part of the Democrats, notwithstanding its mistakes and errors to sustain it...It has become so identified with the Democratic Party that it is difficult, if not impossible, to sustain the one without the other. The president cannot be separated from the Administration. The Administration cannot be separated from the Democratic Party. And the friends of the latter feel constrained to support the former.”³¹

Since General Jackson was the regular representative of the party, and it was rationally believed his removal would lead to its defeat at the polls, Morton claimed he and his associates were unable to do anything for the cause of the vice-president at the current moment. Thus, unable publicly to endorse the man who they actually supported in this matter and wished to be the future leader of the Democracy, those on the inside of the party had no choice but to fall in line with the dictates of the national administration. The Statesman out of necessity was forced to back the actions of the president. Although this course was not immediately followed, and indeed was eschewed until the latest possible moment in hopeful anticipation that the issue would remove the necessity for its execution, in short order the Statesman group would be forced to abandon Calhoun. For office-holders and true believers like David Henshaw, this realization was a bitter and unwelcome pill to swallow.

On this matter Morton was willing to go along with the approach followed by the Statesman clique. Although he was not part of the Custom House leadership of the Democracy in Massachusetts, he was a Calhoun man during the party's initial period. In the Correspondence matter and most others of the early period of the Jackson administration, Morton showed his support for the vice-president.³² According to most accounts, this favoritism ran even deeper than his sentiments for Jackson. As old friends from Yale College days, Morton and Calhoun had formed an intimate connection. For a time this relationship carried over to many of their common political beliefs. Their

³¹ Marcus Morton, 7 Mar. 1831, to John C. Calhoun, in *Marcus Morton Letterbooks*, MHS.

³² Marcus Morton, 16 Jan. 1830, 7 Mar. 1831, to John C. Calhoun, in *Marcus Morton Letterbooks*, MHS.

shared sentiments did not, however, apply to all ideological arenas. Morton abhorred the institution of slavery, a position nearly diametrically opposed to that of Calhoun. As a one-term Congressman during the 1819-1821 legislative sessions, he had three times voted against admitting Missouri as a slave state. His anti-slavery sentiments would flare up again in several public instances over the next two decades, before his eventual split with the Democracy during the Mexican-American War.³³ This severance came about almost exclusively due to the party's platform regarding the expansion of the institution to the newly acquired territories. During Andrew Jackson's initial years in office, however, Morton continued a fruitful correspondence with his old friend and political mentor Calhoun. This exchange of letters would last until the aftermath of the Nullification Crisis in 1833.

During the Correspondence controversy he thought his friend to be wholly in the right. Because of this belief, Morton was not averse to demeaning the president in their private discourses. Questioning the control that Jackson had over the party, Morton noted that his lack of political acumen threatened the well-being of the entire national organization. Blaming the president for the several offices granted to former Federalists, Morton predicted that the association of such men with the party would taint it in the minds of all right-minded Democrats. This criticism seemed to have been curious behavior indeed for an original Jacksonian. The explanation for his ability to issue such negative comments toward the president, is rooted in the knowledge that his original affiliation with the party was through the man he was writing. Despite their later split, largely due to Morton's reading a concern over slavery into the actions of the Nullifiers against the Tariff, the initial connection between these two men was very real. This association offers further evidence of the great impact that Calhoun had upon drawing men into the Jackson ranks during the original period of that party's formation, despite the fact that most of them abandoned him for strict support of the president in the years to come.³⁴

³³ Jonathan Earle, *Jacksonian Antislavery and the Politics of Free Soil, 1824-1854* (Chapel Hill 2004), pg. 112-134.

³⁴ Morton, 7 Mar. 1829, 13 Apr., 12 Jun. 1830, to Calhoun, *Marcus Morton Letterbooks*, MHS; Darling, pg. 81.

In contrast to Morton's and the Statesman group's accord in dealing with the controversy, John Barton Derby later charged that their course of action was nothing short of traitorous. Derby, a former Federalist who had joined the Jackson ranks out of contempt for John Quincy Adams, in later years published a political tract that dealt with the machinations of the Custom House clique during the first Jackson Administration. This document, entitled "Political Reminiscences," alleged that in refusing to stand up for their political chief, Henshaw and his associates had abandoned all accepted beliefs of true party adherence. Their initial hesitance, he stated, was attributable to a suppressed sense of glee that a long awaited breach in the administration could finally come to the fore. Instead of hoping to keep the party united, these men were determined to sit idly by while the rupture between the ranks of Van Buren supporters and men more prone to endorse Calhoun took place. Believing beyond a doubt in the righteousness of the latter's cause, they truly felt that time and public opinion would prove their notions correct. Derby charged the Custom House men in so doing with having abandoned Jackson, the one man who had favored them so much through his patronage and endorsement of their actions.

Responding to the detestable actions of the party's local leadership, Derby and his political associates helped form a rival group in the city, composed of many of the old Bulletin faction membership. The fact that they were willing to set up a cohort of men opposed to the established leadership of the Jackson party points to the ideological differences between these two Democratic factions. Though Derby and his associates would become Whigs in a few years' time, their position as original members of the Jackson party in Massachusetts proved their loyalty to the cause in its initial years. The fact that they became disgusted with the course that the Custom House clique was following at this point raises important questions about the loyalty of the latter group to President Jackson. Derby alleged that Democrats outside of the Custom House orbit were well aware of the political esteem that the group held for the vice-president. With their connection to Calhoun a matter of record for political insiders, the clique found itself in an untenable situation as his relationship with the president worsened. Any

further support for Andrew Jackson's rival would raise significant questions about their allegiance to the president and fitness to hold political office in Massachusetts. Thus, because of their increasingly questioned affinities to Calhoun at a time when such a position was beginning to appear traitorous in the eyes of many Jackson men like Derby, the Statesman group found itself at the crux of a major dilemma.³⁵

Responding to the criticisms of the former Bulletin men during this period of rising trouble within the administration, the clique turned to a tried and true approach. The paper adopted the strategy of presenting their opponents' criticisms as part of a Federalist ploy to regain control through subversive means. Nathaniel Greene charged Derby with essaying to sunder the state's Democracy in order to weaken the Jackson administration. Once this result took effect, it was alleged, Derby and his cohorts would reap the benefits of the defunct Democracy to help their Federalist friends attain power. Taking vindictive joy from the strife occurring within the administration and laughing at every stage along the way, these men, Federalist Democrats and true National Republicans alike, were presented as the real culprits in the sordid affairs rending Jackson's closest adherents. It was their prying involvement in what should have been an in-house Democratic spat that had caused the whole controversy to take on increasingly fearful proportions. Such accusations concurrently promulgated during the early days of the tariff dispute and nascent South Carolina Nullification campaign can be largely interpreted as an attempt to deflect attention from the real issue at hand. The Statesman labeled men outside of their cohort in Boston as National Republicans. It was such men as these who were directly responsible for helping to widen the rift that was threatening to sunder the party, thereby severely hampering the national political career of both the president and Vice-President Calhoun. Whether the clique knew or suspected what the consequences of these major issues for their favorite would be in the initial years of Jackson's presidency is uncertain. What they were sure of though, is that the tide of popular opinion forming against the vice-president had to be staunched in one way or another. Leveling charges against the "opposition party", meant as National Republicans and those not connected to themselves within the Democracy, for helping to foment the

³⁵ Derby, pg. 114-116.

difficulties, seems to have been a somewhat effective rhetorical device given the approaches open to them at the time.³⁶

Blaming unprincipled newspaper editors and self-interested politicians for the troubling public discord within the administration, the Statesman lashed out in retribution. Editor Greene claimed that all who took pleasure at the struggles of the administration on the “Correspondence Controversy” were outright traitors to the well-being of their country. Such carping critics, it was noted, were men who prospered more in the struggles of others than in their own successes. In local circles, however, such behavior was even more evil and dangerous. Conjuring up images of the Hartford Convention and the disunion sentiments that this event seemed to connote, the paper reserved the harshest words for National Republicans, or “Federalists,” members of their own party among their peers. It was noted of such men who were seeking to promote the image of irreconcilable strife between Jackson and Calhoun, “Their paltry, vindictive joy reminds us of their more criminal conduct in former days.” The Statesman claimed that true republicans should regard such men, “with no other means than of pity and contempt.” Though such evil designs could and were being essayed, they would remain unworthy of note, the Statesman averred. As long as the party stuck together and realized that this was no time to be projecting future candidacies or preferred successors to Jackson, all would work itself out in the proper manner. Moderation and delay were the obvious tactics to be advised here. Thus by not jumping to conclusions over Calhoun, Jackson, Van Buren and the projected courses each man was likely to follow, the party would remain strong. Denial of the obvious discord seemed the prescribed antidote to the festering animosities building up in the administration.³⁷

In August, 1831 at a meeting of the Jackson supporters of the city of Boston, held at the Old State House and chaired by Postmaster Nathaniel Greene, a resolution was proposed censuring the course followed by Duff Green and the Washington Telegraph during the Correspondence affair. Although several members present supported the

³⁶ Boston *Statesman*, March 12, 19, 1831.

³⁷ Boston *Statesman*, March 26, May 14, 1831; Portland (ME) *Eastern Argus*, March 20, 1831.

measure, Greene was able to utilize his influence along with the political power of the party leaders. As a result this proposal remained on the table. According to a reporter at the gathering, the motion was blocked mainly in hopes that Green's Telegraph would revert to the Jacksonian standard once the dispute with the vice-president had been resolved. Of course in holding out hope for an amicable resolution, the Custom House wing of Massachusetts Democracy was exercising more patience than others in the city and nation had. It is quite apparent that their desire to remain attached to Calhoun as a patron for as long as possible played a large role in this hesitance to offer any condemnatory words against him. This incident however, proved that not all local Democrats shared their temporary sentiments on the matter.³⁸

Indeed the Custom House group was not ready to give up their loyalties to John C. Calhoun just yet. In the pages of the Statesman the party's leaders had publicized this aforementioned meeting as having been scheduled to occur on Wednesday August 15. In actuality, it was scheduled for the thirteenth of the month. Derby later alleged that this error was an intentional false notice. To his mind such a technique was a "common trick of the party," indicating that the Democracy's controlling faction had utilized such deception in the past in hopes of maintaining their stranglehold on the party's affairs. The clique's ultimate wish, he continued was to dominate this gathering by ensuring that voices opposed to the course of Vice-President Calhoun were absent. Once this local conclave took place, the Statesman group was supposed to arrive with pre-printed ballots containing the names of hand-picked candidates, he said. They had also instructed their associates to hiss at "refractory" men who supported Jackson's continuing as president beyond 1832. Over the protests of the majority, Greene was rushed in as chairman in hopes of his being able to control the meeting.³⁹

In the course of the meeting, several resolutions by James Jackson, close political associate of Henry Orne and John B. Derby, were proffered. Among them was one nominating the president for a second term. Another denied public support to any "non-

³⁸ Worcester *Palladium and Commercial Advertiser*, Aug. 18, 1831.

³⁹ Derby, pg 109-111.

Jackson man” for public office. Interpreting such resolves as an indictment of Calhoun supporters, Henshaw vehemently protested their acceptance by the convention. He represented James Jackson’s suggestions as “a firebrand” thrown to disrupt “the Jackson Party.” While his critics would question David Henshaw’s support for the president due to this reaction, he had alternative motives for such dissent. Despite his claims of desiring to allow President Jackson to decide his own electoral course, Henshaw and the Statesman clique had their own concerns. Ultimately the Custom House group was worried about the ever-increasing gulf between the president and vice-president. The Collector was hoping to avoid any public commitment of the Massachusetts Democratic Party to Jackson’s candidacy. Such a resolution as offered here, he reasoned, would damage Calhoun’s prospects in Massachusetts. Additionally, Henshaw was looking to block any future withdrawal of support for Calhoun men for appointment to state political offices. Despite the significant efforts of Greene and Henshaw, all of James Jackson’s measures were approved by the meeting. In turn many of the wishes of the Custom House faction were denied, in defiance of the power they held within the party. With the course being followed by Calhoun, viewed by most as contrary to the wishes of the president, it is easy to understand why the Statesman’s grip on the party was considerably lessened, at least in this instance.⁴⁰

Events occurring in the immediate aftermath of this Old State House meeting served to further undermine the perceived loyalty of Henshaw’s faction for the president. Perturbed by the lack of control he was able to maintain over the previous conclave, the Head Collector decided to wield his substantial patronage powers to chasten refractory members of the local Democracy. Following his failure to block the resolutions and the subsequent decision of Jackson to run for re-election, thereby disappointing the hopes of Calhoun for the top spot in the party, Henshaw took out his rage upon subordinates at the Custom House in Boston. This resentment manifested itself in the firing of a weigher said to be an outright supporter of Andrew Jackson’s re-election. At this time, the Statesman group was still clinging to its hopes that Jackson would refuse a second term. The president's movement toward Martin Van Buren’s political orbit was seen as a path

⁴⁰ Ibid.

likely to be followed even more fully in years to come. To the Statesman group's minds, individuals who advocated a continuation of Jackson's presidency were either overtly or implicitly endorsing the designs of Martin Van Buren within administrative circles. Therefore, this unfortunate Custom House employee was meant to serve as an example to others within the local organization that the clique would attempt to utilize its patronage power to dictate the course of party sentiment. Henshaw through his words and actions, threatened any subordinate with termination who did not support the interests of Calhoun. Or so enemies of the Custom House alleged.⁴¹

Since a substantial percentage of Massachusetts Democracy was in favor of retaining the president as the candidate for the top office, the power wielded by the Custom House leadership led to a deep rift in the party. With the removal of Calhoun confidant Samuel D. Ingham as Secretary of the Treasury, the reshuffling of the Cabinet, and the continued marginalization of Duff Green in Washington, opposing wings of the Democratic Party had been established. According to Derby writing at the time, "The reign of illiberality, selfishness and 'vaulting ambition' [had] ceased, and the president has collected around him a Cabinet of patriots of the like spirit with himself...Let the true test be "are you in favor of the re-election of Jackson and opposed to the election of his enemies."⁴² Derby and his associates in Boston considered the Statesman group among those in the latter category. Critics called Henshaw and his clique Calhoun men who masqueraded as supporters of the president in hopes of maintaining his favor in the forms of office and patronage. Increasingly to many in Massachusetts, their long-term allegiances to Calhoun made it questionable whether these individuals remained loyal to Jackson's cause.⁴³

Perhaps the most intriguing charge brought against the group came in a letter from Derby to Amos Kendall regarding the now infamous August 15 nominating meeting at the Old State House. In this piece of correspondence Derby claimed that the clique ultimately had hoped to proffer Calhoun as the nominee of the Democratic Party in the election of

⁴¹ Ibid, pg. 117-118.

⁴² Boston *Workingman's Advocate*, August 12, 1831.

1832. This was the impetus behind their slate of candidates represented on pre-printed ballots, their great desire to have Green head the meeting, and repeated insistence that all measures contrary to their wishes portended the doom of the party. Derby hinted at a sense of relief that the meeting did not turn out differently, as the outcome desired by Henshaw would have greatly damaged and perhaps even ruined the party in the state saying,

‘That we have done right we are confident. Not a doubt exists in our minds that our leading men were deeply implicated in the Calhoun conspiracy, detected at Washington, and we were not to be made the tools of that conspiracy in this quarter. We were convinced that there was a concerted plan in case the Western elections had been averse, to attempt the nomination of Mr. C. as President or Vice President for the third time. Our resolutions were framed to meet this plan, and for exposing it to defeat. It has been done; the party in this state is now on Jackson ground; the country is grateful to us for dispersing the cloudy mysteries of our city politics; we are now confident and united.’⁴⁴

Further testimony of wide-spread support for Calhoun within the city was offered by the Boston Patriot and Advertiser. This newsheet claimed that at another recent Democratic meeting, Calhoun supporters had outnumbered ‘true Jackson men’ by a ratio of ten to one.⁴⁵ If this charge is at all reliable, it would indicate the vast majority of those present, and by extension a large number of the state’s Jacksonians, were in favor of Calhoun as the president’s successor either in 1832 or 1836. This proclivity for Calhoun, the paper hinted, showed the true designs of Massachusetts Democratic leaders. They were not Jacksonians but Calhounites. Considering this interpretation, it is not difficult to understand why Derby felt that by defeating the designs of Greene, Henshaw, and other party magnates, his group had gained a major victory for the party in Massachusetts. They had chastened the power-hungry Collector and his ilk, men who seemed to be working against the best interests of the party by drumming up mass support for a vice-president seemingly at odds with the nation’s leader. Once Jackson’s future course was certain, Derby hoped the Calhoun movement would be put down. Due to their leanings, it is doubtful that the Custom House faction shared these sentiments.

⁴³ Derby, pg. 115-119.

⁴⁴ Derby, 1 Sept. 1831, to Amos Kendall, printed in *Political Reminiscences*.

In the minds of former Federalist members of the Boston Democracy, this tacit alliance with Calhoun represented a ‘shameful abandonment of the President.’ Hence a second political faction was formed under Derby’s guidance. Named the Hickory Club, this new organization came to being in the fall of 1831. Among its members were prominent Boston political men such as James McNeil, Samuel Dexter, John James, James Gooch, William Little, and Benjamin Norton. While the Statesman clique continued to cling to Calhoun, this new faction vociferously voiced its interests in favor of the president in all matters regarding his administration. These men considered no alternatives to his words, deeds or actions as leader of the national Democracy. Responding to the attacks of this nascent political group, Henshaw sent letters to Washington accusing Derby of undermining the leadership of the party in Massachusetts through his inflammatory public charges. Despite Henshaw's efforts to continue privately supporting of John C. Calhoun, however, this open warfare placed a great deal of pressure upon him and his Custom House men. Because of their position as political office-holders and patronage men, it became harder and harder to resist the pull toward absolute membership in the Jackson ranks, and concomitant abandonment of the vice-president. As it was made more evident that Andrew Jackson would stand for a second term, thereby dashing the hopes of Calhoun’s candidacy, the Statesman’s position became completely untenable. To this point, however, when the remote possibility remained for their political idol to ascend to the Chief Executive post, the clique remained publicly non-committal on the issue of presidential endorsement.⁴⁶

With the Statesman tacitly maintaining its connection to Calhoun, the leaders of the Hickory Club continued to protest vehemently against the party’s leadership in Massachusetts. The Custom House group’s moderate approach to the tariff matter engendered a great deal of hatred from the former Federalists who by and large made up the new political entity. Derby, as the Club’s spokesman, publicly wondered how Massachusetts Democracy had not been tainted by Calhoun sentiments, considering the influence Henshaw and his closest associates had over its organization. That the party

⁴⁵ Boston *Patriot and Mercantile Advertiser*, August 17, 1831.

⁴⁶ Derby, pg. 108.

had been able to withstand the selfish efforts of its leaders to place the name of the vice-president above Jackson's proved to Derby and his associates the strength of the president in Massachusetts and Calhoun's corresponding weakness. However, the efforts of the Statesman group did have resounding negative effects, according to their chief opponents. In withholding their outright support for the president, while reserving a good deal of their efforts for Calhoun, the party's local leaders had managed to disgust many others who would otherwise be ardent followers of the cause. Espousing the interests of the Carolina statesman over those of President Jackson, the Custom House faction had managed to keep potential supporters away from the party. The fact that Henshaw with fifty-three men directly under his control as disbursing officer of patronage and offices at the Custom House, was unable to formulate a more cohesive and formidable political entity in the state, seemed proof enough to Derby that his lack of dedication for Jackson had an attenuating effect on Massachusetts Democracy in general. Thus in forming the Hickory Club, Derby and his cohorts hoped to give the voters of Massachusetts another organizational resource.⁴⁷

The realization would lead one to believe that Federal Jackson men who organized the Hickory Club and were originally brought to the party by the presence of Calhoun in the administration had changed their tune by 1831. Such a pronounced modification of sentiment came about due to two possible scenarios. Perhaps the former Federalist Democratic men truly had formed an unbreakable bond with Old Hickory during his time as Chief Executive. If this were the case, his increased hostility toward Calhoun would have automatically led them toward disfavoring of the vice-president. The other possibility was that these men were making a shrewd political decision. Since Calhoun appeared to be losing popularity both nationally and in Massachusetts in light of recent circumstances, these aspiring political leaders may have seen an opportunity to enhance their ability to gain power. Speaking out against Calhoun's supporters while bolstering the president, the Hickory Club's leaders may have expected to win the favor of Boston's Democratic majority. By procuring constituents from among the former associates of David Henshaw, they may have expected their administrative loyalties to

⁴⁷ Ibid, pg. 108-112.

help deliver long sought after appointed posts from the party's ultimate leader. In either case the utilization of John C. Calhoun as a tool with which to bludgeon their Democratic opponents, was an unmistakable consequence of the public proclamations and endeavors of the Hickory Club in Boston. Their respective views on the South Carolinian continued as the major wedge between the leadership of the party in Massachusetts and its most vocal opponents.

No issue would illustrate the obvious differences between the Statesman group and all others in Boston as prominently as the debate over South Carolina's nullification of the Federal Tariff laws. It was also the single most important matter dividing Calhoun and Jackson. The true interests of the Statesman faction played out publicly during the denouement of this crisis. Its initial reaction to Nullification further separated the group from the normal channels of the national Democratic Party. The threatened rejection by South Carolina of federal law with its implied consequence of disunion came to set the already splitting factions of the administration in Washington against each other. Out of this dispute, the ultra-union stance of the president ultimately gained the support of the majority of the nation's Democrats, especially in the North. However for much of this time period, the Statesman continually came down on the side of those in South Carolina protesting against the constitutionality of these duties. Beginning with the introduction of the 1828 Tariff itself and continuing through the congressional debates focusing largely upon the doctrine of nullification, state rights, and the justice of protection to American industry, the paper offered opinions that were at variance with most of their region. At the same time, its' more favorable attitude toward Calhoun perturbed many administration supporters.

While remaining publicly pledged to the leadership of the president, the paper continued to hold out for a modification of the tariff. The Custom House faction's leaders hoped for a quiet passing of the strife that threatened to remove their favored candidate from the ranks of the administration and party itself. Although in the end their wishes were not fulfilled and a situation nothing less than disastrous to their initial interests took place, the moderate stance of the paper allowed it to emerge from the crisis

with its patronage intact. During the proceedings, however, the Custom House faction was forced to turn their public interests away from Calhoun. In turn they decided out of political necessity to endorse strongly the course the president had deemed prudent to follow, that of upholding the union at the temporary expense of tariff reduction. By the conclusion of the Nullification controversy in early 1833, the Statesman and its newly established daily offering, the Boston Morning Post, repeatedly denounced the course followed by the nullifiers of South Carolina and oftentimes Calhoun himself.

Because of the fact that David Henshaw and his closest associates came into the Democratic Party largely as free trade men, it is not surprising that they publicly advocated a modification of the Tariff of 1828 during the initial months of Jackson's presidency. Assuming, like many in the party, that the president's pronounced support for a judicious tariff implied a future reduction of duties, the Statesman group seemed to have little concern over the issue. Simply put, these men figured that the difficulties over the Tariff bemoaned by many would be solved within a relatively short period of time. Responding to the new president's inaugural speech the paper noted, 'the advocates of an exclusive tariff...cannot expect protection at the expense of commerce and agriculture.'⁴⁸ The paper attributed the 1828 tariff to the designs of northern National Republicans. Interested in the promotion of their own parochial interests, these men had imposed protective duties on the nation at large, it was claimed at the time. Thus the Statesman embarked upon a course that involved continually claiming the true patriotic interests of the country to have been intertwined with a reduced import duty. Politicians who had acted contrary to those wishes were many times labeled as heirs to the selfish, sectional politicians who had formulated the Hartford Convention. High Tariff men were equated to 'Blue Lighters' in the colorful terminology of the day. It was up to the pure-minded, disinterested Democrats of New England to reveal the nefarious ways of these outcasts who had tried to drive a wedge between patriots in different sections of the country in hopes of creating a circumstance favorable to their own political benefit. The supporters of a higher tariff law were portrayed as being the ultimate threat to national unity. Conversely, the Statesman claimed that the southern men protesting the injudicious

⁴⁸ Boston *Statesman*, March 11, 1829.

nature of the Tariff of 1828 were true patriots, who had the best interests of the United States in mind. The Statesman hoped to convert its readers to the notion that the blowhards who favored the policy of protection within their midst had to be ignored for New England to resume its proper relation to the rest of the nation. Such an assertion was in direct contrast to rival politicians and newspaper men. These allegedly misguided men called the resistance to duties in the South, and especially South Carolina, dangerous to the interests of the country.⁴⁹

During the initial months of Jackson's presidency, the Statesman repeated its claims against the lack of national interest among many politically-minded New Englanders. Questioning the region's patriotism and dedication to the union, the paper regularly reminded its readers of the role that Massachusetts had played in the War of 1812, most especially during the Hartford Convention. Denouncing 'Federalists of 1814' within their current political circles, the editors sought to represent men who had supported many of the centralizing policies attributed to John Q. Adams, Henry Clay and their beloved 'American System' as unreconstructed opponents of the country's truly loyal men. This criticized group, composed of both National Republicans and misinformed Democrats, were of the very same mold as those who had threatened to remove the entire northeastern portion from the rest of the nation twenty-five years earlier.⁵⁰

On the flip side of this equation the South as a geographic entity was worthy of commendation. Repeatedly referring to that region as the bulwark of patriotic sentiment and a strong pillar of national spirit, the Statesman displayed its favor to the men and politics most prominent in that geographic location. Thus the paper and its supporters during these years made very public an affiliation with southern interests.⁵¹ However, it is important to note their intentions in doing so. Greene's Statesman took great pains to

⁴⁹ Ibid, Mar. 27, 1829.

⁵⁰ Ibid, Aug. 22, Sept. 26, 1829, Aug. 14, 28, Sept. 11, 1830.

⁵¹ This type of depiction of the South was repeated quite often by the *Statesman* and later *Boston Morning Post*. It seems to accord well with the literary representations depicting northern admiration for southern characteristics and traits that are discussed to great length in William Taylor, *Cavalier and Yankee: The Old South and American National Character* (New York 1961.)

show that the ideals and values of the South were representative of those of the nation. Juxtaposed to this depiction, the history and current sentiment prevalent in their own region was portrayed in a most negative light. Utilizing much of the same imagery employed in the initial months of the administration's rule, the paper carried on its assault against Blue-Light Federalists with renewed vigor.⁵² In making the comparison, the clique hoped to remove the onus of disloyalty from those protesting the tariff in South Carolina. Reorienting the argument to present the men vilifying anti-tariff Southerners as truly disloyal, the Statesman endeavored to show the commonalities between the real Democrats of Massachusetts and their associates in the South. Thus, their ultimate argument was that all followers of the 'Old Republican' creed should unite across regional boundaries. True believers in Massachusetts had more in common with their compatriots in South Carolina than with neighbors who espoused Federalist-type doctrines.⁵³ Behind this public presentation of course, lay the realization that the Custom House men were closely allied with the interests of John C. Calhoun. He, above all others, was the politician whose ideology represented the ideals they wished to promote in the pages of the state's Democratic organ.

These ideas were taken to their extreme. The Statesman sought to turn the tables on the critics of South Carolina's opposition to the tariff and its subsequent threats of disunion. The organ made the claim that the true disunion men were those self-same Federalist-minded men of the North, who during the previous war had attempted disunion at Hartford. Oftentimes the clique sought to accuse these northern, allegedly sectionalist leaders of fomenting discord by many of the same methods previously utilized to turn New Englanders against the administrations of Jefferson and Madison. In each case these men had similar aims. The years 1814-1815 had seen them willing to turn the region against the nation's otherwise patriotic efforts to resist the British. Now these political enemies of the country hoped to foment hatred toward their just-minded southern brethren, thereby engendering sectional strife. Again disunion was the ultimate desire of these unprincipled individuals. But it was not merely the prosecution of an unreasonably

⁵² Boston *Statesman*, Feb. 12, 19, 1831.

⁵³ Boston *Statesman*, March 12, 1831.

high tariff by which these interested politicians were hoping to bring about national discord. More devious and offensive means were also involved in the process. The accusations of the clique included claims that ‘the present projects of the Northern federalists are only their old Hartford Convention political projects, vamped up, and all their interference in the concerns of other states, their Indian and Negro troubles, and their misrepresentation of the views of portions of our Country, which have in all periods of our history been patriotic, are with a view of creating unfounded jealousy in the minds of the people of the North against the South and West, and to lay the foundation for rearing anew the grand New England federal edifice commenced as Mr. Adams informs us, when Louisiana was acquired, and which was demolished by the peace of 1814 and the Battle of New Orleans.’⁵⁴

In this matter it would appear that those contemplating and arguing in favor of nullification of the current tariff were not to blame for the ensuing controversy, in the mind of the Statesman. Instead, it was the politicians plotting for a consolidated government, against the rights of the states and in favor of the mere interests of New England, who were culpable for the emerging difficulties. The same individuals who protested vehemently against the Louisiana Purchase as a measure that would make their region comparatively weak, remained wedded to parochial inclinations. As a result, in the current instance, they had decided to do all possible to undermine the interests of the South. This course had led to misrepresentations of the actions of those protesting the tariff. Thus, in these arguments over the course that was most patriotic in nature, the Statesman found fault with many from their own region. They were accused of possessing selfish designs, hoping to sabotage the union by reacting negatively to measures that were merely regulatory in nature. With the ultimate loss of southern prestige related to the divisive use of Nullification, these Federalists in disguise planned to force the image of New England on the rest of the nation. Thus in deflecting criticism against the course of South Carolina, by emphasizing the unjustness of the posturing of New Englanders, the clique hoped to show that the sons of their region did not display an

⁵⁴ Boston *Statesman*, Feb. 19, 1831.

aptitude for patriotism. Ironically enough, it was the same nullifiers who later would be demeaned as the greatest threat to national harmony who were now glorified as representing the ideals of a region steeped in patriotism against those of a clime tainted by Federalism and disunion.

While the Statesman group did not represent Calhoun's only allies in Massachusetts during the early stages of Jackson's presidency, they continued to support the political course of the Vice president longer than any other faction. The Bulletin clique, first introduced to the Democracy due to their favoritism for Calhoun, was continuously frustrated by his attachment to the Custom House group. Because Calhoun had helped this group attain local prominence, the faction of Orne, Lyman, Ingalls and Derby began to regard the vice-president with much displeasure. Though initially supportive of free trade and lowering the Tariff of 1828, they gradually moved away from the course followed by South Carolina and its staunchest representative. Beyond their stance on political matters of the day, however, the Bulletin men's weakened attachment to the Carolinian was most likely due to a glaring lack of an ideological similitude. Because they were Federalists at heart, men who favored centralized government, Calhoun's state rights notions were undoubtedly enough to raise doubts about his broader political beliefs. With the nearly total capture of Calhoun's attention by Henshaw and his associates, the Federalist Jackson men began their disassociation from the vice-president. Their animosity for Duff Green and his United States Telegraph, begun in the initial days of Jackson's administration, served to further inform the movement toward exclusive support of Andrew Jackson in the battles with his second in command.⁵⁵ Having lost their veneration for Calhoun's purported aura of respectability, while temporarily gaining respect for Jackson, these former Bulletin men had completely abandoned their old ally by 1831.⁵⁶

For its part, the Statesman clique's association with Calhoun went beyond any notions of respectability that he brought to the party. As true believers in what came to

⁵⁵ Boston *Bulletin*, Aug. 10, 13, 17, 20, 26, Sept. 12, 17, 1829.

⁵⁶ See Boston *New England Palladium and Commercial Advertiser*, Mar.-June 1831.

be known as 'southern ideals', they had a vested interest in his continued political success. Thus it was not merely out of self-interest or political posturing that they continued to defend political ideals seen in Massachusetts' political climate of the time as antithetical to their region's interests. Using the notion that New England parochialism represented a dangerous ideology, these men came to emphasize the nationalism inherent in their own political prescriptions. They argued that the measures presented by others as favorable to the South, actually benefited the nation at the expense of no one particular group or locality. A common mode of approach in publicizing this allegedly nationalist ideology was to juxtapose the morals and intent of southern politicians with their more local counterparts. During the initial stages of the issue over the tariff it was often pointed out that political leaders from their own region were largely responsible for unfairly burdening their countrymen to the south. At the same time that northern congressmen were increasing their accusations that states-right advocates in the South threatened the sanctity of the union through their public views on decentralized government, the Statesman repeatedly pointed out the hypocrisy of such claims. Alleging that the measures advocated by northern politicians were actually driving otherwise just-minded southern men toward their increasingly rancorous public stance, they hoped to point to flaws in opponents' reasoning.

At the same time it was noted that southern legislators did not favor separation of the states. Their interests lay in protecting constituents' rights, along with preserving national unity. In May, 1830 the paper noted, 'Almost every Southern member of Congress who has spoken during the past winter, has given 'demonstrations strong as proof of holy writ,' of attachment to the Union, of firm adherence to State rights and of all the prominent doctrines of Jeffersonian democracy. They have contended with energy for a just distribution of the burdens of government, for general encouragement of commerce, agriculture and manufactures, for a diminution of taxes, a speedy extinguishment of the national debt.' On the other hand the northern counterparts of these congressional leaders had, 'advocated the reverse of all these things, and announced, or at least virtually supported, the monstrous doctrine that a 'national debt is a national blessing.' It is nothing new to find federalists trying to alienate Northern democracy

from their natural allies in the South.’⁵⁷ The clique attempted to point out that it was not only the issue of the tariff but in all matters involving the national government that scheming political leaders in the North tried to undermine their southern associates. Unfairly advocating provincially-minded, sectional legislation, northern senators ultimately sought to drive their southern opponents to react violently, thus threatening the union. Arrayed against these dubious members from the Statesman’s section of the country were valiant men fighting not just for their own local interests, but for the betterment of the nation as a whole. At least that was how the paper presented this situation.

Since the Statesman faction favored many of the same republican and state rights ideals as the vice-president, they were very interested in his fortunes as a politician. Hence his political future was always at the fore of their thoughts during the burgeoning controversy and split with Jackson. Because the president had declared his original intention to serve one term before vacating his office, the paper held out great hopes that Calhoun would gain the favor of the party and step into the place of Chief Executive. This desire to see Calhoun become president partially explains the Boston Democratic organ's tardiness in publicly admitting that any rift existed in the administration. During the developing controversies their favoritism for Calhoun was evident to many contemporary observers in Boston. While the pending issue of nullification and the vice-president's role in the ensuing clash was becoming better known to many Americans, the Statesman chose to keep its opinions unknown. Thus, when the Democrats of Boston held their annual dinner on the anniversary of the Battle of New Orleans on January 8, 1831, the paper ignored the presence of any split within the party. In its pages following the dinner, several toasts to the honor and health of Martin Van Buren were omitted. At the same time Henshaw and his associates were alleged to have been ‘confounded by the annunciation of General Jackson as a candidate for the re-election.’⁵⁸ Despite the realization that the president intended to continue his political career, however, the clique’s leaders did not immediately abandon hope for their favorite. Following the

⁵⁷ Boston *Statesman*, May 3, 1830.

⁵⁸ Derby, pg. 102.

instruction of Duff Green, they chose to remain neutral until the moment when Calhoun should prove able to rise in public favor, as a result of his righteous stand against the president. Due to the nationally unpopular course that Calhoun and his South Carolina cohorts would follow in the Nullification Crisis, however, the general public favor of the faction's favorite would never come.⁵⁹

Perhaps the most interesting and instructive manner in which the Statesman's affinities for the political ideology of Calhoun were shown, occurred during the Hayne-Webster debates of 1830. These verbal exchanges originally pertained to the issue of opening up western lands at reduced rates. In a short time, however, they turned to the day's primary issue, a battle over the merits of state rights and Nullification. The common story goes that Calhoun, presiding over the Senate, directed Robert Hayne, a fellow South Carolinian, in explaining the merits of interposition originally espoused by Jefferson in the Kentucky Resolution of 1798. Thereafter the senatorial debate evolved into one fought over the nature of the union. Webster argued that the national government had been founded upon consolidated, public consent. Hayne contended that the states and not the body of American citizens formed the original members to the convention. As such these entities had the right to stand up to the federal government during times of injustice.⁶⁰ This congressional dispute quickly became one of the more publicized debates in the country's history. Most newspapers quickly published transcripts of the dueling speeches for the edification of the reading public. Due to the political nature of papers at this time, all but the most neutral organs would offer editorial commentary on each speech upon its publication. These comments on the debates helped to record the opinions of different groups across the nation. Not surprisingly in National Republican dominated Massachusetts opinion favored the arguments of their own senator, Daniel Webster. Equally unsurprising, however, was the fact that the Statesman offered no words of encouragement to the Massachusetts senator, indeed scoffing at his notions on the origins of the union. Supporting the ideology that would lead to nullification, the paper chose to stick to its extreme state rights doctrines. In the process

⁵⁹ Darling, pg. 80-81.

its authors further indicated where the ruling clique's true interests lay.⁶¹

Emphasizing the fact that the Statesman faction leaned toward the feelings of the representative of South Carolina, Calhoun's proxy in this matter, was the fact that Webster's speech was not even printed in the paper. Thus the words that schoolboys across the northern part of the country were said to have repeated for decades on the values of union and the common origins of all Americans, were deemed unworthy to appear in the Statesman's pages. On the other hand, Hayne's opinions were not only printed but were greatly praised for their accuracy pertaining to the matter at hand. His stance on the rights of the states and repeated warnings against consolidated government accorded well what the Statesman held dear as a founding ideology. The support for Hayne on the part of the Statesman was further evidenced by their publication of a letter he had sent to their affiliated paper, the Maine Eastern Argus. That the Boston Democratic organ printed this letter in full is not surprising, as it almost perfectly sums up the attitudes of the clique themselves on the matter of political ideologies and sectionalism. It read:

'I must consider myself as truly fortunate, while vindicating the principles and conduct of my own constituents, of having conciliated the esteem of so respectable a portion of my countrymen, as the 'Democracy of New England.'-May we not hail this as an auspicious omen, foretelling the final extinction of those feelings of jealousy and distrust, which have too long unhappily prevailed among the different branches of the great American family. It is not party spirit which I condemn. But I would abjure parties founded merely on geographical divisions and nourished by sectional jealousies. However much we may deplore the excesses of party, especially when carried so far as to embitter the relations of private life, there is much ground to apprehend that, when parties shall be extinguished, the days of our liberty will be numbered. But to render this spirit subservient to any great or valuable purpose it must be based on principle.-We must look beyond the elevation of men,--we must discard sectional prejudices, we must trample under foot, mere local interests and devote our efforts zealously and honestly to the support of those great fundamental truths, which are indispensable (in the language of the framers of the constitution) to 'form a more perfect union, establish justice, ensure domestic tranquility, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity.'

Be assured, sir, however the conduct of your Southern Brethren may have been misunderstood or misrepresented, it is an object dear to their hearts to cherish the most cordial friendship with their brethren, both of the East and the West, to bind the several

⁶⁰ Merrill D. Peterson. *The Great Triumvirate: Webster, Clay, and Calhoun* (New York 1987), pg. 172-179..

⁶¹ Boston *Statesman*, Feb. 6, 20, 1830.

parts of the country more closely together, by the ties of common sympathies and mutual interests, and by the still more enduring bond of *common principles*. We trust and believe that there are principles, in support of which, all genuine republicans may unite, in whatever quarter of the Union their lot may have been cast; and by whatever party names may heretofore have been distinguished;--such are the principles originally promulgated by Jefferson, and consecrated by his life and example. If I were called upon for a confession of political faith, I should say, in the language of Mr. Jefferson, 'that I consider it as the sum of good government; that it should be wise and frugal; that it should restrain men from injuring each other, leaving them otherwise free to regulate their own pursuits of industry and improvement--and that it should not take from the mouth of labor the bread it has earned.' And if required to indicate the true 'American policy,' I should answer in the inspired language of the same great apostle of Liberty, 'Peace, commerce and honest friendship with all nations, entangling alliances with none; the support of the State Governments in all of their rights as the most competent administration for our domestic concerns, and the *surest bulwark against anti-republican tendencies*; the preservation of the General Government in the whole constitutional vigor, as the sheet anchor of our peace abroad, and safety at home; economy in public expenses, that labor may be lightly burdened, and the honest payment of public debt.' And now, my dear sir, may not every genuine lover of freedom throughout the land be rallied to support of such principles? If so, the liberty, the happiness and the union of these United States, will be established on a foundation never to be shaken.--Departing from these landmarks, the vessel of state, will be at sea without a compass or rudder, and when exposed to the fury of the political elements, and driven perhaps on a lee shore, with breakers ahead, the most skilful pilot may be unable 'to weather the storm.'⁶²

The Statesman gave its wholehearted endorsement to this call for supporting the doctrines of republican government above all regional or local interests. Such support does not seem to have been motivated by political interests, despite what critics then and since may have thought. Disputing against the political ideologies of such men as David Henshaw, Nathaniel Greene, Thomas Dunlap and others of the Custom House clique would seem to be a questionable exercise. These men were politicians first and foremost, sometimes putting self-interest above their prescribed principles in order to enhance opportunities for gain, office or patronage. That being said, they were Democrats to the core of their being. Despite their collective engagement with associations and principles that would later become anathema to the party, most particularly corporate interests, state banking, and internal improvement projects, the prominent ideology that comes across throughout the writings and editorials of these men is that of old school Jeffersonian republicanism. State rights, lack of consolidated government, protection of individuals,

⁶² Boston *Statesman*, Jun. 13, 1830, reprinted from *Maine Eastern Argus*.

and federal restrictions were all core elements of their political philosophy. Often times these interests had come under fire and would continue to be criticized as showing favoritism toward southern institutions and interests, namely slavery and free trade. The clique's enemies commonly accused them of sacrificing the interests of their constituents to alleged southern masters. To Henshaw, Greene, Dunlap et al., however, these maligned policies did not have as much to do with upholding the values of a certain portion of the nation, as they did in protecting and expanding the area safe for republicanism. In this endeavor they saw their hopes best represented by the political ideals and public career of John C. Calhoun. Thus, these men were Calhounites not merely for their own political fortunes, though that certainly was a subsidiary concern, but mainly for the very ideals he espoused.

As a result of their core beliefs, it is evident that the words and notions propounded by Hayne best summed up their understanding of the proper course of political action to take in order to ensure preservation of the best system possible. State rights doctrine offered the best chance to enhance the lives of Americans in all sections of the union. For the Custom House clique, opposition to Webster and his consolidating notions was based on national interest and harmony. As such it had no sectional implications. That was the way Statesman writers, Custom House clique members, Hayne, and Calhoun all understood the situation. Comprehension of this principle is thus essential to any analysis of their collective political ideology.

Perhaps as intriguing as the paper's approach to Hayne's speech supporting the doctrines of nullification was the inclusion of an editorial opinion regarding a subsequent speech made by Senator Levi Woodbury of New Hampshire. Hoping to illustrate the connection that New England held with their Carolinian counterparts, the Statesman chose to emphasize the words of this northern spokesman for state rights. In this matter the clique's most powerful local ally was presented as the defender of the true democratic feelings of their region. These more representative sentiments had been sullied by Webster's Federalist-minded rants, the paper claimed. Additionally, the Statesman averred Woodbury had done well by the Democrats of his region, representing their

interests in a proper manner. Proving to others that New England men did not necessarily hold sentiments that worked against national interests and in violation of proper Jeffersonian ideals, the senator had more than stood up to Webster in his defense of the constitution and the rights of individual states to oppose it, the paper claimed. Noting how Woodbury had confronted the erroneous ideas of his fellow New Englander in this instance, the Statesman alleged ‘the argument of Webster in favor of broad constructions of the Constitution, those ancient favorites of federalism, has been crushed by the power of truth, wielded by the clear hand and honest heart of the Senator from the Granite State. The attempt to show those opposed to consolidation to be separationists, by a quibble; to assume for Mr. Webster, and the friends of consolidation, the title of friends of the union, on the grounds they advocate a consolidation of the union, is put down by showing that the whole course of the federalists has tended to produce a consolidation of all the political powers of the union, to the ultimate danger and indeed certain destruction of our republican institutions and of the original confederation , which was their basis.’⁶³

Once again it was the Federalist tendencies of men like Webster and not the threats of disunion on the part of the nullifiers of South Carolina that represented the largest political threats to those of the Statesman faction. Repeatedly during the next several months the charges of New Englanders protesting the actions of South Carolinians and Calhoun over the tariff would be labeled as the language of Hartford Convention adherents. Men like Webster and his cronies in Massachusetts simply hoped to push the South toward a course sure to end in disunion, thereby laying the blame for the struggles and strife that came out of this issue on the opposing side, Nathaniel Greene told his Democratic readership.

The Statesman went on derisively to applaud Webster for making public the very nature of his belief system, thereby helping to make clear the inferiority of such political doctrines when presented against those of true Democrats. By presenting the land-bill and thus the Senate debate with Hayne on the ‘old political ground,’ Webster had made refutations of his arguments that much easier for true Democrats to accomplish. Serving

⁶³ Boston *Statesman*, Mar. 6, 1830.

as the latter day representative of a maligned party slanted toward monarchical impulses, consolidated government, and the denial of state rights, the Massachusetts Senator allowed the public, both in New England and the rest of the Union, to understand what Daniel Webster actually represented. His was a brand of sectionalism and political selfishness at the expense of those who favored a more nationally balanced approach to the major issues of the day. As the editor exclaimed, 'We rejoice that Webster has attacked the Press and the feelings of the people of the Western and Southern states-in short that he has discovered his 'true' feelings and character, and come out in furious opposition to the patriot Jackson, as he did in opposition to the patriots Jefferson and Madison. For making battle on the old Ground, if nothing else, Mr. Webster deserves the thanks of the republican party.'⁶⁴ Thus Webster's stated interpretation, so favorable to many in their section, was said to present irrefutable evidence of the malignancy of his approach by the Statesman clique. Contrasted to those of Hayne, Webster's speeches made it obvious which side had the better part of this debate.

Continually beating the drum of the former traitorous behavior of New England's Federalist Party seems to have been the Custom House group's main strategy of deflecting attention from the politically questionable conduct of their partisans in South Carolina, most especially Vice-President Calhoun. While others fumed that what potential Nullifiers were doing in the Palmetto State constituted disloyalty and seditious behavior of the worst kind, the clique, especially through the pages of its organ, chose to highlight the incident that in their mind represented the most nefarious and traitorous conduct which the country had seen to date: the Hartford Convention of 1814. Thus, much as in the initial days of the Democracy's formation in Massachusetts leading up to Jackson's successful electoral campaign, the Statesman took up the issue of the past associations of many of those within the state who chose to come out vehemently against the conduct of opponents of the Tariff in the South, especially the men at the head of the Nullification movement. Questioning the wisdom of any man or men protesting against the behavior that in fact threatened to lead to confrontation with the federal government and perhaps even to secession, the paper made it a habit to bring up events of the past,

⁶⁴ Ibid.

comparing them to current circumstances in the South. Its interpretation of events at times even accused current 'federalists' of helping to foster the threatening situation, stepping on the necks of their financially oppressed countrymen of the South, in order to promote their own local interests in manufacturing concerns. Along with this notion came the claim that as consolidationists at heart, the critics of South Carolina hoped to see the rights of the states, defended most ardently in Calhoun's Exposition and Hayne's speech, rescinded through expanded federal power. Thus it was these critics and not the patriotic nullifiers standing up for the rights of local institutions and minority views, who were to blame if any rash actions resulted in the near future. Blocking out the howls of criticism against their compatriots to the south, by focusing on the alleged misdeeds of the enemies within their geographical midst, the faction hoped once again to quiet, whether temporarily or indefinitely, criticism of the actions of their political idol.

The Federal Jackson men adopted a wholly different interpretation of the Hayne-Webster debates. Their contrary views on the matter are made apparent when viewing the language of the Boston Patriot and Mercantile Advertiser. At the time of these rhetorical contests Orne's newly acquired paper was rapidly moving away from the tenets of Jacksonism. Most of their anti-Democratic rhetoric to date, however, had been leveled against Duff Greene and Calhoun, due to their alleged lack of support for Jackson. That trend continued through the period of debate over the origins of the union. As former Federalists their support for Webster, a man of like political origins, was not surprising. Carrying his notions a step further, the paper claimed the Massachusetts senator had earned the respect of even men who had different political affiliations from him. In their words he was a defender of the Bay State, abused by those of the school of Hayne, Calhoun, and David Henshaw. Implying the unfairness of criticisms of New England for having been unpatriotic in the former war and of the lingering doubts about the region's loyalties to national causes, the Advertiser made clear their appreciation for the strong words spoken in Washington by the senator. His positive stance for the region had earned 'the most unqualified approbation of this community. It was what was expected of him by his constituents.' Noting that this speech had drawn the ire of Duff Green's Telegraph, the paper went on to question that national organ's criticisms. Green, like the

Statesman in Boston, had lately brought up the old bugbear of the Hartford Convention. The Advertiser in turn pointed to the lack of pertinence of reviving that issue at the current time. Orne claimed that the city's true Jackson men were originally Federalists. Those men were now opposed to the unfaithful cabal of party leadership at the Custom House. By extension, Webster as a like-minded former Federalist politician could validly claim to hold republican principles such as their own. After all, it was noted, he had been elected by a Republican Legislature. Regardless of his political past, the actions of Webster had proven him to be the 'sufficient champion of New England, the East! The obnoxious, the rebuked, the always reproached East,' claimed the paper.⁶⁵

In supporting and defending the rights of New England against the malicious designs of men like Hayne and Calhoun, Webster had earned a ringing endorsement from this paper which previously had withheld any kind of support for his doctrines. In the process it offered an interpretation manifestly distinct from that adopted by its Democratic opponent in the city. Invoking regional preferences for its section, as opposed to the Statesman's call for a more regionally balanced approach to the issue, the Advertiser laid claim to the defense of the Northeast. In contrast the editors claimed their opponent's views were overtly favorable to southern interests at the expense of New England. Since local concerns are known nearly unanimously to trump support for more distant regions, the Advertiser's position seems more typical for a Boston paper of either political affiliation. Realizing this basic principle further makes clear that the Statesman held to a political ideology that went beyond self-interestedness. Contrary to what their political opponents at the time and later said, Henshaw's and his Boston affiliates' beliefs in this core group of doctrines far transcended their desire for patronage and office at any expense. They were wedded to republican ideals. These standards were associated most prominently with Calhoun's political program. Thus their belief in Hayne's argument illustrates support for state-rights and the unconsolidated government that he advocated.

Henshaw made his ultra state rights beliefs public knowledge in a political tract published in 1831. During a discussion of the constitutionality of the Tariff law of 1828,

⁶⁵ Boston *Patriot and Mercantile Advertiser*, Feb. 6, 10, 1830.

the Collector noted that actions of a consolidated Federal Government would threaten the very existence of the union as constituted by the founding fathers. This ‘Tariff of Abominations,’ because of its inherent regional and corporate favoritism, was throwing doubt upon the entire American experience. ‘If the protection of a particular article of home manufacture,’ Henshaw asked, ‘cannot be reconciled with the phrase in the Constitution general welfare, as applied to the states; how utterly irreconcilable must it be when applied to the whole people, when the employment of a few hundred of manufacturers is asserted to be before the general welfare, and therefore 13 millions of people must be taxed to enrich them?’⁶⁶ The grievances of the southern states against the protective duties necessitated a review of the acts, he demanded. Based upon the principles of national interest a requisite return to the tax rates of 1824 or even 1816 was suggested. Since the period of nascence for Northern industry had passed, the reason for the existence of a protective duty had expired as well, claimed the customs collector. As the current tariff laws seemed beyond the limits of legality, Henshaw called for a Supreme Court case to strike them off the record and rid America of their impending threat to the nation’s agrarian majority.

Directly making note of his accord with Hayne’s notions, Henshaw addressed the issue of state rights and the origins of the Constitution. In opposition to Webster’s ideas, he proclaimed the national compact was based on the agreement of individual states acting as separate entities. The sovereignty of each state was as important at the current moment as it had been in the days preceding the ratification of the nation’s originating document. ‘Before the adoption of the Constitution, the states composing the confederacy were each and all sovereign states. The constitution is a compact of the several states in their sovereign capacity as states. We know that it has been pronounced to be otherwise in a high place, by what some call high authority.’ Quoting Patrick Henry he went on to say, ‘If the states be not the agents of this compact, it must be one great, consolidated, national government of the people of all the states...If the liberty of

⁶⁶ David Henshaw, “*Review of the Speech of Harrison Gray Otis, Mayor of the City of Boston, Delivered at a Public Meeting of the Friends of the Protective System, In That City, In Support of the Nomination of a Friend of That System, For a Member of Congress. By a Citizen of Boston.*” (Boston 1831), pg. 21.

the people be maintained it will be by the preservation of state rights, and their salutary action on the attempted encroachments, corruptions and usurpation of the national government.⁶⁷ Henshaw next related this theme to the current tariff laws. In its tendency to raise the specter of consolidated government far beyond the scope of individual states, protection was a means of corrupting the original intent of the founders. Amendment to the current situation was necessary due to the unrepresentative nature of an act that worked against a majority of the people. Most particularly aggrieved were citizens inhabiting the agriculturally-based communities of the South. In Henshaw's opinion, when considering proposed legislative actions general interest was essential. 'The general welfare must mean the welfare of the whole, not the welfare of one part however large, nor promoting the welfare at the expense and injury of another party however small.'⁶⁸ In that it acted against the interests of a vast portion of the nation and to the advantage of a minority faction in one distinct region of the country the Tariff law of 1828 was unconstitutional, Henshaw claimed. Thus the doctrine of state rights necessitated its amendment or revocation out of justice to the ideals of all who believed in republican government. David Henshaw's language was almost an exact replica of that expressed by Hayne during his debate with Webster. More importantly, the utterances of both men mirrored sentiments that had been expressed by Calhoun regarding the constitutionality of the Tariff law and nature of the union on several occasions.

Like its powerful associate in the Custom House, the Statesman was unique in its self-proclaimed status as the only paper in the city not having a sectional bias. Opponents regularly charged this alleged neutrality with hiding an actual favoritism for policies that favored the South. What is certain is that the paper's publicized beliefs and political underpinnings were in no way biased toward the regional interests of New England. This conclusion is made apparent when perusing the pages of other newsheets. The repeated defense of New England as a region against alleged slanders from the South was commonly found in these sources. Particular emphasis was repeatedly given to the

⁶⁷ Ibid, pg. 30.

⁶⁸ Ibid, pg. 22.

malicious assaults of Hayne, Thomas Hart Benton and others against the region. Taken further, it seems as if these recurring justifications for New England's past and present conduct were largely undertaken to confront the opinions of the Statesman group itself. Because of its repeated criticisms against the loyalties of their fellow citizens, the Statesman predictably engendered much rhetorical venom. At one time or another, nearly all of the city's political papers denied charges of sectional sentiments and inherent lack of patriotism. In turn most of them sought to incriminate the morals and rationale of their opponent over many of its allegations. Responding to the clique's denunciations, the Boston Palladium and Mercantile Advertiser asked, 'Who are these railing accusers? Those of them who are in New England, are office-seekers, whose chance of success depends on their sycophancy; or office-holders, whose tenure of office is a treason to their countrymen, and friends and relatives.'⁶⁹ The Statesman group in return continued to vilify the conduct of its own state and region, as working against national interests and for their own selfish ends. Always included in such criticisms was an inherent support for measures most prominently endorsed by Calhoun and extreme state rights men who were now increasingly outside the mainstream of the Jacksonian Democratic Party.⁷⁰

Due to these public presentations it is safe to say that a quasi-sectional war was fought on the soil of New England during this time period. While most of the other papers in Massachusetts vehemently defended their own region, the Statesman argued for a different cause. In the minds of its supporters, the organ most effectively supported the interests of the union. To opponents on the other hand, these Custom House men were lackeys of southern politicians. For the Statesman clique the most effective defense they could offer the Calhounites was to deflect criticism from the nullificationists in South Carolina, most especially the vice-president, by continuing to beat the drum of past Federalist sedition to lambast their rivals. While others fumed that what potential Nullifiers were doing in the Palmetto State constituted disloyalty and seditious behavior of the worst kind, the Custom House faction chose to highlight the incident which in their

⁶⁹ Boston *Patriot and Mercantile Advertiser*, Mar. 2, 1830.

⁷⁰ Boston *Morning Post*, Nov. 15, 18, 24, 29, Dec. 12, 1831.

mind represented the most nefarious and traitorous conduct the country had seen to date: the Hartford Convention of 1814.⁷¹ Thus, as in the initial days of the Democracy's formation in Massachusetts, the Statesman took up the issue of past party loyalties. Three years earlier this matter was made public in order to keep Federalist-affiliated men from leadership positions in the party. At the beginning of the tariff controversy it was revisited in order to minimize the effect critics of South Carolina Nullification may otherwise have had. Questioning the wisdom of behavior seen to threaten the Federal Government and that might ultimately lead to secession, the paper made it a habit to bring up the past. Their interpretation of events would at times even accuse current 'Federalists' of helping to foster this emerging crisis. By stepping on the necks of their financially oppressed countrymen of the South in order to promote their own local interests in manufacturing concerns, the Statesman argued, northern protectionists had increased the probability of discord. Along with this notion came the claim that these men, in criticizing the actions of Calhoun and his fellow South Carolinians, hoped to impinge upon the rights of the states in order to further national consolidation. Such a desire explained their undignified response to Calhoun's Exposition and Protest and Hayne's speeches. Thus it was these critics and not the patriotic Nullifiers that were standing up for the rights of local institutions and minority views, who were to blame if any rash action resulted in the near future. Blocking out the howls of criticism against their compatriots to the south by focusing on the alleged misdeeds of their local enemies, the faction hoped once again to blunt any demeaning language against their political idol.

Although the Statesman and Post faction continued to make claims reviling the old 'Federalists' in Massachusetts while supporting those acting against the tariff in South Carolina, albeit tepidly at times, their public interests began to change when it became more obvious that the rift between Jackson and Calhoun was permanent and irreconcilable. This evolution was somewhat subtle at first. By the latter part of 1831, however, when the vice-president's association with the Nullification movement was well-established, further ardent support for Calhoun became an unacceptable position. As Jackson Party men the Statesman group was forced to join with other Democrats and

⁷¹ Boston *Statesman*, May 3, 1830, Feb. 19, 1831.

abandon the Carolinian. Despite the fact that the Statesman faction had been Calhoun men first and foremost, their obvious interests in maintaining office and control of the party in Massachusetts ultimately necessitated a public denunciation of his actions along with outright criticism of the entire Nullification movement. This disavowal through print was first undertaken in the form of a public disassociation from Duff Green and the United States Telegraph.⁷² Green had begun openly criticizing Jackson during the period of the Eaton Affair. Such an approach was tantamount to treason for the administration's organ in Washington in the minds of many Democrats. The Telegraph editor's close affiliation with Calhoun offers the obvious explanation for this otherwise questionable course of action. Like Henshaw and his Boston associates, Green had been a Calhoun man before he was a Jackson supporter. Unlike his Boston newspaper counterparts, however, his connections with the vice-president remained inextricable. As time would prove, theirs did not.

Once the Statesman began to question Green's loyalties publicly in the summer of 1831, the Telegraph responded in kind. Forced to retaliate, the Statesman's editor acknowledged his newspaper's original sentiments for Green. It was admitted that the latter had been the impetus for the clique's initially joining the Jackson ranks previous to his successful election. In the past Green had been 'esteemed by the Republicans of New England, as a firm, honest, and able advocate of their cause; as such he received their undivided support and admiration,' the paper reported. In turn the Democrats of New England had rewarded the editor by backing him for the post of printer to the House of Representatives, a position that he would have been unable to attain without such support. Due to the great services he had given the party, Duff Green would forever be remembered fondly by the Democrats of Massachusetts, claimed the Statesman. Iniquitous actions, however, had unfortunately followed his original organizational efforts. The paper alleged that in recent months, his Telegraph had strayed from the 'correct path' of democracy and adopted a tone dangerous to the party and the union. The Telegraph's repeated references to the strife within the administration, seemingly undertaken to protect Calhoun's interests, were troubling to the clique. These public

⁷² Ibid, Aug. 20, 1831.

acknowledgments were directly opposite to the approach Nathaniel Greene's paper had taken.

It was further noted that Green's tactics would tend to hinder all efforts seeking Andrew Jackson's future electoral success. Contradicting their private sentiments, the Statesman group claimed that ensuring a second term for the president should have been the sole pursuit of all Democrats at that point of time. Continuing their charges against Green, the paper stated that the true men of the party, unhindered by selfish interests, needed to unite behind the re-election. In the course of this action they would need to forget their own personal favorites as well as past injustices. Thus it was apparent that Green had chosen not to follow the prescribed path, hoping to gain further power by affecting the defeat of the president and the installation of his own favored candidate in the nation's top office. Hinting at Green's association with Calhoun and the possible permutations of the current political circumstance, the article objected, 'We cannot go the same political road as our old friend in amalgamating with Messrs. Clay's, Adam's, and Webster's friends...We go for the democratic party and its friends, at the head of whom is ANDREW JACKSON.' Of course, the paper at this time held out hopes for a different result than that stated. The initial criticisms of Duff Green therefore represent a sort of hedging of their bets, especially when considered in the context of Henshaw's and his associates' actual sentiments on the coming election.⁷³

The notable shift that had occurred in the paper's public stance toward the president, the vice-president and their respective merits, is made evident by the mention of the Statesman's role in the Calhoun-Jackson correspondence controversy of the previous winter. During the earlier period the Statesman had omitted any commentary on the situation, refusing to take sides or even to offer any kind of interpretation. Six months later their tone had changed. Claiming to have deemed 'the publication of this correspondence as injurious to the harmony of the Republican party,' during the controversy, the Statesman offered an opinion that had not been contained in earlier issues. In fact as noted above, a passive approach of simple reproduction of the

⁷³ Boston *Statesman*, Aug. 27, 1831.

correspondence for public perusal was the paper's chosen course, possibly out of expectation that by allowing the controversy to pass silently, the clique would be absolved of endorsing either contestant in the matter. The more valid interpretation is that the clique hoped this course of action would subsequently prove the prudence of the vice-president's action. In any case, the question of why the Statesman and its Custom House associates felt the need to change course and offer their own commentary on the issue at this time brings to light the evolution of their sentiments. This procedural change appears to have been purely rational in nature. The new course was strictly followed for the remainder of Jackson's presidency. It was at once a politically shrewd, if not particularly virtuous maneuver, for them to have made.

Although in their initial split from Green the Statesman clique held out hope for Calhoun's ultimate triumph, they soon came to realize the impossibility of that political aim. By the end of 1831 with public opinion strongly against Calhoun, it was time for an undeniable separation from the vice-president to be effected. Their shift in sentiment was very real, though not as radical as some critics would later claim with exaggerations such as '[the clique's] zeal for State Rights evaporated in a moment, and they suddenly perceived that Southern doctrines would be fatal to the union...so they abandoned Mr. Calhoun when his prospects became involved in clouds and darkness, and returned to their prostrations and adorations before the golden calf of political authority.'⁷⁴ It is certain that the faction's public appreciation for Calhoun had diminished if not totally vanished by the start of the election year. Sensing the tide against him the Statesman wisely backed away from any association with the clique's past political mentor. That did not mean their desire to moderate the excessive Tariff of Abominations had lessened, as it had not for Jackson either. Publicly they continued to support a reduction of those rates, however that could be accomplished.⁷⁵ The method of nullification, however, came to be increasingly vilified in their pages. Though once it had downplayed nullification as far less of a threat than the actions of the Hartford Convention Blue Light Federalists of

⁷⁴ Derby, pg. 115-116.

⁷⁵ Most notably in the introductory issue of the Boston *Morning Post*, Nov. 9, 1831. As will be discussed below, the *Morning Post* soon became the daily mouthpiece for the Custom House faction; see also Boston *Statesman*, Feb. 9, 1833.

1814, the paper increasingly equated state interposition with the actions of the Federalist Party during the winter of 1814-1815. While the paper did not indulge in any complete verbal thrashing of the Nullifiers, it persisted in questioning the merit of their course of action. Mitigating their criticisms by continuing to note the injustice of the Tariffs of 1828 and 1832, the Boston Statesman nonetheless placed the South Carolina radicals in the same column of unpatriotic actors as that of the oft-vilified Hartford Convention men.⁷⁶

The path through which a public institution can break ties with its former ideological central point without admitting to have changed attitude is not a well followed course. Yet this was the dilemma facing the Custom House faction during the entire intra-administrative conflict. Although they had come into the party as men closer in republican sentiments to Calhoun, the paramount allegiance of the clique as office-holders, patronage gainers, and ultimately Democrats, had to be with the president. Yet most of their fellow party men at the time knew the true allegiances of Henshaw, Greene, Dunlap and their political cohorts. As the divisions within the national party became more pronounced the clique faced direct assault from several quarters. Already maligned by such sources as the Patriot and Mercantile Advertiser and the Hickory Club, Henshaw and company must have felt the noose of anti-Calhounism tightening around their necks. As men who shared most of the same principles as the Carolinian, this had to be an almost unbearable situation. What to do became the question. There were two obvious options. First, the clique could continue to support the vice-president at the risk of engendering the president's disfavor, a path that Duff Green had chosen in Washington. This path could of course lead to their removal from office, loss of patronage, and fall from power in the Boston Democracy. As such it was not a viable option. The second choice was more appealing. It necessitated a wholesale movement away from association with Calhoun. Such a course could help establish the clique in a firmer placement within the president's inner-circles. Performing this change without seeming hypocritical was problematic, however. Their critics, Democratic and otherwise, would be waiting to pounce on the inconsistency of the local party leaders in such an instance. Therefore the

⁷⁶ Boston *Statesman*, Jan. 26, Feb. 9, 1833; Boston *Morning Post*, May 23, Jun. 22, Aug. 13, 1832

Statesman faction needed a well-thought out strategy.

The most significant step taken by David Henshaw and Nathaniel Greene on this matter was the founding of a daily paper to complement the Boston Weekly Statesman. In November, 1831 the first edition of the Boston Morning Post rolled off the presses. With this newfound organ the clique sought to begin the process of public disassociation from their relatively well-known support for John C. Calhoun. In its introductory issue this new paper promised to follow a course of political moderation, endorsing the policies of the administration while remaining separate from the divisions that had begun to emerge during the past several months. More importantly, the establishment of an entity nominally separate from the Statesman allowed the clique a chance to begin anew.⁷⁷ The connection between the two papers was greatly underemphasized despite the fact that Charles G. Greene, Nathaniel's brother, was the Post's editor. In fact nowhere in the maiden edition was reference to the decade old Boston Statesman as a parent newsheet made.⁷⁸ By following a silent and at times highly critical stance toward the Tariff, Nullification, and Calhoun's political course, Henshaw and Charles Greene hoped to obscure their former political and ideological tenets. In the process, their main desire was gradually to erase the public's consciousness of their clique's initial fealty to the vice-president. Thus by the end of 1831, the Custom House group had begun their attempt to become more publicly affiliated with the administration, placing themselves above Calhoun's interests. The Statesman clique, formerly known to favor the interests of the vice-president on nearly all political matters by party insiders, had changed. In its stead the Morning Post faction, one that distanced itself fully from any sentiments toward Calhoun and especially Nullification, emerged.⁷⁹

In addition to the establishment of the Daily Morning Post, the Custom House clique endorsed two further changes in approach to disassociate from Calhoun. By neglecting specific mention of the emerging crisis over the tariff in South Carolina during

⁷⁷ Boston *Morning Post*, Nov. 9, 1831.

⁷⁸ In fact, it seems as if throughout the first two years of the daily organ's existence, its relationship with the *Statesman* went unmentioned in the pages of the *Morning Post*.

⁷⁹ Darling, pg. 81.

the new paper's first several months of publication, its founders sought to obscure any remnants of past connection to the vice-president. It was not until nearly ten months after its pilot edition that direct mention was made of the impending Nullification crisis in South Carolina. Similarly the Post ignored any references to its proprietary connection to the Boston Statesman during this same time period. Continuing with a similar tactic, Henshaw and the Greene brothers endeavored to hide any ties the new paper held to John C. Calhoun. In this manner the Morning Post, Boston's new Democratic organ, would from its initial editions be associated solely with Andrew Jackson and his administration. The fact that the national political organization around the president was increasingly moving away from his vice-president's influence was the guiding consideration in adopting such an approach. Because of these well-reasoned strategic aims, the daily's initial editions pledged to its readers moderation and lack of partisanship. On November 9, 1831, in the paper's introductory notice, the editor vowed to give a 'candid and temperate support to the National Administration.' This edition attempted to offer no radical language or promise any sort of unqualified support.⁸⁰ Although subsequent issues proved that the moderate Jacksonism pledged here to have been disingenuous in nature, it is quite probable that in introducing this new Democratic organ to the public the editors hoped to take a temporarily short step away from their former associations while realizing the larger leap was yet to come. If such was the case, it is likely that the producers of the fledgling paper hoped to broaden their support within the city in anticipation of further buttressing the power of the Custom House clique. As their former specific connections to Calhoun had somewhat damaged the appeal of this group and continued public connection to the vice-president was tantamount to suicide in Democratic circles, such an approach seems prudent and far-sighted, no matter the true intentions of the group in charge of local party organization.

In the coming months the Post generally remained publicly aloof from the more divisive events occurring within the administration at Washington. Balancing its columns between calls for a modification of the tariff and support for the president, the paper chose, it can be said, to focus its energies away from Nullification. Initial issues

⁸⁰ Boston *Morning Post*, Nov. 9, 1831.

dealt in large part with local matters like the pending License Law and the Boston mayoral election.⁸¹ Attention to the latter seems a bit misplaced since no official Democratic candidate took an active role in that particular canvass. Ironically Theodore Lyman, Jr. gained a measure of support from the Post despite his past disputes with the Statesman faction.⁸² Perhaps this limited endorsement was further representative of the clique's desire to distinguish between their two organs. If that were the case, showing sentiments for a fellow Jackson man, albeit a Hickory Club member, could well have been an attempt to show the clique's newfound unanimous support for the president. When it dealt with natural questions in depth, the daily paper consistently argued that the course of President Jackson was to be followed with little discussion or debate. Additional early Post fodder included repeated references to the continuing disputes over removals in the Custom House undertaken by Henshaw. These several matters were given undue prominence in the new organ for much of the first part of 1832. Establishing itself as the news source closest to the Custom House appears to have been an important function in the paper's earliest days. As such the Post in no way disassociated itself from those local connections made evident in the pages of the Statesman. By severing all ties to the anti-Jackson wing of the Democratic Party, while reaffirming fellowship with the officials in the city previously affiliated with that same national group, the fledgling Boston Morning Post was attempting a delicate balancing act in its original pages. Of course the direct connection, financial and political, that Henshaw had with the paper made continued mutual association a prerequisite. As the paper was established to be his organ within the city, it was obviously meant to continue the associations formed by the Statesman.

At the same time, however, the ability to obfuscate original ties to the vice-president was a somewhat easy task to accomplish. Since only those within the inner political circles of the Massachusetts Democracy were privy to the knowledge of the esteem pledged for Calhoun by clique men in the city, the lack of continued support for his doctrines did not come across as hypocritical to many of the public at large. This lack

⁸¹ Ibid, Nov. 14, 23, 1831.

⁸² Ibid, Dec. 23, 1831.

of public insight was true for Statesman subscribers as well. Since much of the clique's support for Calhoun had been made evident only by omission of support for the president or through proxies like Duff Green, their direct ties to the vice-president was very likely to have flown under the public radar. Though political insiders well knew that Henshaw and his associates had been formerly in John C. Calhoun's pocket, so to speak, the majority of Massachusetts Democrats were unaware of this political circumstance. Thus emphasizing the continued interest in the affairs of the Custom House as well as the controlling element of Boston's Democrats, while simply ignoring any previous public involvement with the affairs of Calhoun, seemed a plausible and in fact relatively easy task to pull off. It is not surprising that the establishment of the Post evolved out of the divisions rending the administration, though it followed much the same local course as its sister paper in the city. In effect the faction had made a deft political and public move. At the same time many in the city were unable to recognize that it had taken place. Future interest in national affairs was easy to manipulate, without having to worry about cries of hypocrisy, because of this effective political strategy.

The Post's developing adherence to the president was invaluable to the clique's relatively smooth transition away from its former political connection to Calhoun. This evolution came about despite the claims found in the introductory edition of future moderation. The changed course was perhaps made most evident by the manner in which the paper so readily offered support to Martin Van Buren, the very man supplanting Calhoun as Andrew Jackson's most influential advisor. The Morning Post's editor was most assertive in his approval of the New Yorker's nearly unanimous nomination as Jackson's second vice-presidential candidate. This decision the Post claimed, illustrated Jackson's deft skill as president. That he was able summarily to replace his former favorite with a more apt politician and a better qualified man without damaging the party's fortunes, spoke well for the future of the administration. This newly embraced stance was easier to maintain, of course, due to the fact that Calhoun had served two consecutive terms. Following the executive example of George Washington, his right to a third was highly questionable. But in previous days the clique had actually endorsed the very outcome it was opposing at this time. The paper offered more effusive praise in

noting that its approval of the New Yorker's candidacy went beyond Calhoun's ineligibility to seek the office yet again. Van Buren's ascension was in the best interests of the party, the paper declared. It called on Democrats to 'Let the party throughout the country be firm in the support of the great principles which have characterized the present national administration, and the men who have revived and maintained those principles, surrendering local prejudices upon the altar of public good,' in order to effect the continuation of the administration.⁸³ Implying that Van Buren was at the forefront of the movement to purge the party of malicious influences, while at the same time restoring republican doctrines, the paper seems to have been accusing Calhoun of having damaged the party's viability nationwide. Substituting Van Buren in his place seemed likely to help revive the energies of the Democracy in a way that would allow for its longevity and effectiveness over time. Such statements represented a wholesale change from those previously printed in the pages of the Boston Statesman.⁸⁴

Since Jackson appeared to be a strong candidate for re-election, the hopes for further Democratic control of the Executive Department seemed increasingly to depend on the presentation of Martin Van Buren as a future electable commodity. This realization helps explain the rationale behind the increased support for the New Yorker in the pages of the Boston Morning Post. Over the next several months the Statesman would also come to endorse such an approach. Pointing to such characteristics as his integrity, political wisdom, and their common socio-economic origins, the papers sought to portray Van Buren in a similar light to Jackson. They lashed out against National Republican critics, saying the printed assaults of the 'aristocratic' members of society upon him signaled his reliability as a man of the people. Pronouncing the attacks of these political opponents as sure signs of the vice-presidential candidate's worth, the paper averred, 'From the aristocracy, so long as he maintains the integrity of his principles, he has nothing to expect but the vilest calumny and the most relentless persecution.' The true Democrats of the country would be able to see through this criticism for what it was: the jealous harping of an outnumbered and disrespected minority seeking office via any

⁸³ Ibid, May 29, 1832.

⁸⁴ Ibid; Boston *Statesman*, Jun. 23, 1832.

possible means. This tactic had been attempted before with the president, in raising questions about his qualifications for the office. Jackson, however, had foiled their criticisms time and again, proving that social standing or aristocratic background had nothing to do with potential levels of political success. In Van Buren, a tavern-keeper's son, the paper saw the same humble origins and unimpeachable republican principles as indicative of continued success for the administration. By painting Van Buren as a typical Jackson man the editors hoped to paper over any objections local Democrats might have toward his assuming the second post in the party's command system. In so doing, they were also obscuring their own doubts toward the man, which had been strongly reflected in the former comparisons between him and Calhoun.⁸⁵

During this process, however, the leaders of the Custom House faction in Massachusetts continued to show evidence of their similarity in political ideology and more natural connection to John C. Calhoun. Repeatedly the paper, while questioning Nullification in South Carolina, supported the course followed by the state of Georgia in resisting the actions of the Supreme Court in the issue of the sovereignty of Indian nations within their borders. Lamenting the fallacies of the decision that allegedly made the states mere pawns in a consolidated union, the paper instructed Georgia to treat the ruling perhaps not 'with sovereign contempt, but as waste paper.' Noting that the original compact between the states did not mean to establish 'in one branch of the general government a monarchy over our republics,' the paper's editor claimed the Supreme Court's decision should be ignored. If the state were to accept the Marshall Court's action its citizens would be in essence, 'vesting a court of appeals and equity with an absolute and despotic authority to trample on the independence and authority of the states who formed the federation.'⁸⁶ It becomes evident upon reviewing references such as these regarding the affairs in neighboring Georgia that the writers logically could have held the same view of events transpiring in South Carolina.⁸⁷ Of equal importance, the previously published sentiments on the matter of the tariff's constitutionality and the

⁸⁵ *Boston Statesman*, Sept. 1, 1832.

⁸⁶ *Ibid*, Mar. 24, 1832.

proceedings in the Nullification Crisis had not originally been called into question. Thus one could reason that since the paper was still displaying support for the actions of Georgians, their sentiments on issues over protective duties and the mode of approach in the Palmetto State should have been the same. Since Jackson had already pronounced himself against the actions of Chief Justice Marshall's court, however, the Statesman group was allowed to voice their true ideological opinion in this instance. Over the matter of Nullification in South Carolina, where the Chief Executive's views had been long known to be directly opposite to his sentiments on the Cherokee affair, their decision was not made freely. Thus once again in this matter, the hand of the clique was forced by the necessity of following a strict Jacksonian course in hopes of maintaining local influence within the Massachusetts Democracy. In order to continue in the favor of the president and his administration, the clique was forced to match Jackson's opinion on these matters. Without Calhoun as a powerful advocate in Washington, utilizing his influence to ensure continued control over Democratic affairs in Massachusetts, the group had little choice but to follow the dictates of the administration. It mattered little to its leaders how contradictory such a policy may have seemed to those outside of their faction's orbit.

As the vote for Nullification in South Carolina approached, both the Statesman and the Morning Post became more strident in their support for Jackson's actions. This newly adopted position in turn led to increasingly vehement declarations against the course being followed by the Nullifiers in contrast to the course followed by the president. Portraying Jackson as the ultimate patriot, a man who had saved the nation nearly three decades earlier and held its very safety within his own grasp during the current crisis, the papers pledged their unquestioned support for his actions. On the other hand, both the Post and the Statesman declared that the Nullifiers in South Carolina threatened to sunder the ties that bound the states into a cohesive union. In his December 10, 1832 Proclamation the president, it was noted, had shown a generous favor toward tariff reduction, advocating a return to a solely revenue standard. Such a revised

⁸⁷ Prominent Whigs like Daniel Webster argued that Jackson's actions on the Georgia issue gave heart to South Carolina Nullifiers, who were more likely to believe in the successful outcome of their course due to

tariff law would have seemed to meet the Nullifiers' demands to end protection as a policy.⁸⁸ Proving their disuniting sentiments, however, the Carolinians had rejected these efforts at peace. Additionally these men had uttered further denunciations of the oppressive course of the administration. All together the rash actions of this group came across as dangerous and wholly irresponsible. In essence the Post claimed this radical movement was shameful to true democratically-minded men. Furthering their new-found praise of Andrew Jackson, the Post attested that in spite of his leniency in dealing with the situation, the president had not abandoned the duties of the nation's highest office. In fact by standing up to their threats and pronouncements, while averring that the union would be preserved, Old Hickory had proven himself once again to be the right man to confront the forces threatening American ideals. As the Statesman noted, 'His words, his actions, his past services, and his unsurpassed patriotism, integrity and courage, give undoubted assurance that under his administration the Constitution and Laws will remain supreme, and the Union indissoluble.'⁸⁹ His unifying message had brought the Nullifiers to react in an unmanly and treasonous manner. In that Proclamation Jackson had proven himself to be first and foremost a union man; a president who would hold the states together at whatever necessary cost.

The Statesman in pronouncing this course of action commendable seems to have contradicted previous sentiments regarding the rights of the states as paramount to the security of the Constitution. While their new found ultra union sentiments appear to have contrasted with earlier statements, this change of attitude was never mentioned by their editors. To contemporary critics, however, this shift was obvious and indefensible. As Derby noted, the original position of the Statesman and Custom House clique in national affairs had centered upon the issue of extreme states' rights, putting them within the political orbit of Calhoun. Once the vice-president was ousted from the inner circles of the party and his political fires seemed to have been extinguished, they switched their attachment to the president. In order to accomplish this feat it became paramount to drop

perceived similarity of belief on the part of the president.

⁸⁸ Boston *Morning Post*, Nov. 29, Dec. 12, 1832. It is important to note, however, that the *Post* was wrong in its assessment, since the Verplanck Tariff, though reducing duties more rapidly at first, would not have annulled the policy of protection.

all of their former associations and their defining ideology. Therefore these avowed state rights republicans of the 'old '98 school' quickly stood behind the ideals of consolidated government made paramount in the Proclamation of 1832. In Derby's words, 'Since that time the Statesman have become too supportive of consolidation,' a principle always endorsed by those commonly called 'Ultra Federalists.'⁹⁰ Of course this change of attitude becomes even more questionable when it is realized that charges of federalism were exactly the opprobrious epithets the paper had always utilized against its opponents in Massachusetts. The ironic nature of this ideological evolution was not lost on Derby or others among his contemporaries. It was obvious to those with inside understanding of the situation and the political realities faced by these men that their decisive actions were strictly political and self-interested in nature. In modifying their interpretation of the nullification issue, moving from quasi-support of the doctrine to outright disavowal of any of its merits, Henshaw and his Boston affiliates opened themselves to a good deal of criticism, much of it well deserved. While their true attitudes toward events occurring in the South at this time cannot be known, however, by evaluating published words and opinions of both the past and future, it is certain that their support for Jackson's measures cannot have been as absolute as they came to be represented in the pages of Boston's Democratic organs. That their actions make these men seem hypocritical and disloyal is beyond doubt. As events would prove, however, these decisions were political in nature. Their sentiment for Jackson did not mean that the Custom House clique had abandoned its interests in extreme state rights or the remainder of Calhoun's program. In order to preserve their privileged ranks within the party, the clique's collective hand was forced by circumstance into this evolved political outlook.

Contemporaries in Boston continued to charge that the Democracy of the city was still in line with the ideals of Calhoun, despite the public stance of their leaders. Boston's chief National Republican paper, the Daily Atlas, opined that if the compromise tariff were passed in early 1833, 'the Jackson party in New England, stand ready to go over to it [Calhoun's side], and Mr. Calhoun, from a nullifier and a rebel, will become the

⁸⁹ Boston *Statesman*, Jan. 26, 1833.

⁹⁰ Derby, pg. 118-119.

president of the Union which he is now seeking to destroy, and the Chief Magistrate over those three and twenty states, the interests of which he is now ready to sacrifice to the pleasure or madness of South Carolina.’⁹¹ The declaration of this type of belief leveled against Democrats of New England at the same time their public pronouncements were placing them staunchly behind the president, testifies to the strength which former political associations still had in the minds of their rivals. The Statesman was foremost among the papers of the region in its ultimate connection with Calhoun. As such, many rivals and opponents were quick to denounce the clique’s sudden attachment to Jackson and concomitant jettisoning of the Carolinian. No matter how hard the paper testified in favor of its support for the president in all of his actions taken against the Nullifiers in South Carolina, many still recalled the course it had previously followed in avowing public support for the anti-tariff and even pro-nullification doctrines of the former vice-president. And in large measure, the Atlas, Federal Jackson men, and others were correct in their ardent belief that an ideological connection between the Morning Post clique and John C. Calhoun remained latent, as later events would prove.

Jackson Party members from outside the clique’s orbit also questioned the sincerity of that group’s endorsement of the president. In large measure these criticisms came about due to the realization of what such an evolutionary political course meant to the fortunes of their own political entity. The Statesman faction’s fervent support for the president undermined any real necessity for the Hickory Club’s existence. Although many of the latter’s members would abandon the administration in the aftermath of Jackson’s Bank Veto, the ability of the Democracy’s local leadership to co-opt general Democratic support through their endorsement of the president served to obviate the necessity for a separate faction in the city. Increased animosity between the former Federalist Jackson men and their Custom House counterparts continued as Henshaw and his associates moved closer to the columns of presidential stalwarts. Largely out of jealousy at the already powerful faction’s grasping their one trump card for Democratic leadership in the city, the Hickory Club members further vituperated against their bitter rivals’ tactics as hypocritical in the extreme. Though this group would soon desert the

⁹¹ Boston *Daily Atlas*, Feb. 5, 1833.

party, most to become Whigs in the coming political wars of the period, their hatred for the Democracy's power brokers in Boston, founded in the initial days following their joint campaign victory in 1828, continued for some time.

As a result of the political considerations involved in the clique's public disavowal of Calhoun and the doctrines of Nullification, by the end of 1832 the Post and the Statesman had both come over to the side of those vehemently opposed to the course being advocated in South Carolina. Due to this pronounced vilification of those threatening disunion, their columns began to spew forth pieces that were hostile toward the now retired vice-president. In the coming months and years, even with the successful termination of the crisis, Calhoun as Jackson's chief enemy and rival, was excoriated and demeaned in unmeasured terms. In fact over the next four and a half years, until the Carolinian fell in line with Democratic party doctrine over the Sub-treasury system in the fall of 1837, praise for any of his actions, words or deeds was non-existent in the pages of either paper. He was, in short, public enemy number one during this portion of the 1830's. This course led many to believe that the developing Morning Post group had rid itself of all ties to their former icon. Such an interpretation is true to a certain extent. In that these men were political animals to the core of their being, who realized that their existence as recipients of patronage and controllers of the Democracy in Massachusetts depended on the support of Jackson and Van Buren, they wisely played up their support for the administration through supportive words. Extreme vilification of Calhoun was the second pillar upon which they built a new political policy. Beneath the surface of their presentation, however, lies the realization, that these men remained ideological affiliates of the ideas of the former vice-president. Their pronounced doctrines all smacked of state rights interests. Once the Nullification Crisis had receded far enough in the past, they would re-assert those beliefs. Since Calhoun largely out of spite, would repeatedly rail against most of the programs of the Democratic Party for the next half-decade, the paper found it easy to continue its criticism of him. It can be persuasively argued in light of how his own opinions on many of these programs changed following his future reconnection to the party, that Calhoun's ideas at this time did not accord with his own true visions of a proper republican society. As a result, the stance of the Post does not

appear to have been altered significantly from former beliefs. Nonetheless, the public doctrines of the paper were to become ardently Jacksonian in nature. In consequence, that would require them for a time to remain wholly disconnected from Calhoun.

Chapter 4:

Calhounites No Longer: The Henshaw Clique's Abandonment of John C. Calhoun and Final Defeat of the Bulletin Faction.

Once the Custom House clique had determined to pledge its unqualified allegiance to President Jackson in his on-going personal war with John C. Calhoun, its public representation of both men and their political affairs underwent a wholesale modification. All subsequent issues of the Statesman and Boston Morning Post expressed a newly determined course. By this recently developed strategy, the faction came to endorse the activities of the president on a variety of questions. From his response to Nullification, to vetoes on matters of internal improvement and the National Bank, the paper held to a staunch line of support for the administration. In contrast, the pronouncements and political machinations of Calhoun were repeatedly ridiculed and vilified. Perhaps as a result of their noted affiliation with the Carolinian during the previous four-year period, the dual organs of Massachusetts Democracy reserved their harshest words for the former vice president. Their critiques of him repeatedly surpassed those of equally prominent members of the opposition such as Daniel Webster, Henry Clay, and John Quincy Adams. The Nullification Crisis presented the most opportune instance for the clique publicly to switch its loyalties. Grasping upon the images of disunion and the lack of regard for the nation that situation had brought about, both papers continued to rail against Calhoun and his associates as the symbolic antithesis of patriotism. Capitalizing upon the strong antipathy held toward the doctrine of nullification and state interposition in New England, the organs of the Custom House group repeatedly employed references to those disfavored practices in their columns throughout the decade. The image of Calhoun as a politician who worked against the best interests of the union, and thus the complete opposite of Jackson, became a major

theme repeated by the local Democracy over the coming years. In making this presentation, Henshaw and the Greene brothers purposefully ignored their prior leanings. Indeed their vehement assaults on Calhoun were almost certainly undertaken as a means of obscuring their earlier affiliation with this now ridiculed former party leader.¹

In making their allegations of political impropriety against Calhoun, the Statesman faction found great use for its oft-repeated references to Federalist misdeeds during the past war. Returning to the rhetorical employment of tried and true images and phrases, the papers sought to paint Calhoun and the South Carolina Nullifiers in a light well understood by its local readership. Calling the most extreme protesters against the Tariff in the Palmetto State the logical heirs to the discredited Federalists of the past, the clique sought to marshal familiar imagery to make their case against both Calhoun and his new political associates. Conflating the Columbia Convention of 1832 with the Hartford Convention of 1814-15, the paper portrayed both groups of dissenters in a like manner. Federalists two decades past had been disloyal to the country in an hour of dire need. More recently, Nullifiers had threatened the harmony of the union. In both instances, of course, Andrew Jackson, first as the Hero of New Orleans and then as president, had fortunately saved the day for the United States. Nonetheless, Carolinians who had advocated the annulment of federal legislation and threatened secession were as noxious to the cause of the union as the oft-derided Federalists of New England. In this newest rendition of political affairs ventured by the Statesman group, Nullification and 'Hartford Conventionism' were two sides of the same coin.²

Seizing upon this latest example of questionable judgment by political foes, the clique attempted to turn similar allegations against all opponents of the administration. Since they had commonly labeled all political men outside of their local sphere as

¹ John Barton Derby, *Political Reminiscences* (Boston 1835), pg. 134-136; *Boston Daily Atlas*, Nov. 1, 1837. Also in studying the treatment of Calhoun in the pages of the *Boston Statesman* and *Boston Morning Post* from late 1831 through the fall of 1837, this penchant for treating Calhoun with a degree of malignance not reserved for any other political figure makes the Custom House group's intent clear.

² *Boston Morning Post*, Aug. 13, 1832, Oct. 17, 1835.

Federalists in disguise, the language brought to bear over the Nullification Crisis offered them a welcomed opportunity for return to effective rhetorical tropes. With the heightened outrage existent among the mass of citizens because of South Carolina's methods of resisting the tariff laws, any ability to associate opponents with disunion was quickly adopted and followed by both the Statesman and the Morning Post. In those sources the negative image of Calhoun and his cohorts was continually addressed and emphasized. Concomitantly, assaults against members of the old National Republican and newly-forming Whig Parties, were increased. These opposition men, partly due to their nascent affiliation with Calhoun subsequent to his defection from Jackson Party ranks, as well as the large presence of former Federalists within their ranks, were lumped together as marked by the same disloyal stamp.³ Whether they were Columbia Convention Nullifiers, 'Blue Light Federalists,' or sympathizers with either group, all were members of an unpatriotic political clique. Opposed to the ultimate friend of the union, President Jackson, it was repeatedly claimed, each of these political foes deserved the ridicule that was continually heaped upon them by the Democratic leaders in the city. By this rationale, the Post clique attempted to project its criticisms of the nefarious tendencies of Calhoun onto its enemies in Boston. This tactic was most ironically employed against the Bulletin faction, the very same men who had lampooned Henshaw and his political fellows for their untoward attachment to the Carolinian in the not too distant past.

Utilizing this new technique, the Custom House group continued their assaults on the Hickory Club and Bulletin faction men in Boston, hoping finally to eliminate them from any connection to local Democracy. This matter was made more pertinent as a result of events in South Carolina. In the aftermath of the president's strongly worded proclamation against the Nullifiers of South Carolina, issued on December 10, 1832, these former Federalist Jackson men had vocally renewed their connection to the administration. Despite their collective antipathy toward Jackson's Bank Veto several months earlier, the forceful nature of the Proclamation's call for a centralized union

³Ibid, Apr. 22, Aug. 30, 1834; Boston *Statesman*, Feb. 9, 1833.

struck a chord with political men possessing Federalist ideological assumptions. As a result, many of the Bulletin faction who had denounced the president only four months earlier now found themselves once again in his political column. The Custom House clique, having solidified their control over Massachusetts Democracy, cared little for this quasi-reunion. Ever biased against all men with any association to Federalism, Henshaw's faction once again utilized the example of the Hartford Convention to renew their previous assaults against the Bulletin group, this time by comparing the past traitorous undertakings by many of their compatriots to those of Calhoun's affiliates in South Carolina.⁴

The Statesman and the Morning Post were largely effective in their efforts to assert themselves as the sole voice of Democracy in Boston and throughout Massachusetts, thereby undermining the influence of the Bulletin men. Because of their past efforts to establish satellite papers in distant parts of the state, along with their close association with several of the more important national party organs, including the Albany Argus, Portland Argus, New Hampshire Patriot and Washington Globe, the clique was able to present itself as the foundation for local Jackson support. Their rivals' collective inability to garner any sort of national attention led to the undermining of the Bulletin men in the eyes of most Democrats in Washington and elsewhere. At the same time, the large shadow cast by the Statesman clique over the city's Democratic politics cannot be sold short. It was a common tactic to utilize the Custom House's dual organs, Boston's only Jacksonian papers, to publish calls for public party meetings. Oftentimes, the actual importance of these political events was not presented, thereby ensuring relatively small turnouts. In this manner, some local meetings alleged to be formulated solely for the selection of minor officials, became nominating conventions for congressmen or more important party leaders. Since only political intimates of the party's leadership were privy to the agenda of such meetings, the most important conclaves were inevitably dominated by those who shared interests with Henshaw and his local affiliates. Added to this situation, the wealth of Custom House finances that were at

⁴ Boston *Statesman*, May 4, 1833.

the direction of the head collector furthered the clout of this ruling group. Directly responsible for fifty-three officials, earning upwards of \$75,000 yearly, Henshaw was able to pull many political strings in the city. Rivals charged him with utilizing his patronage and appointment powers to guide or directly manage the political leanings of all officials under his supervision as well as their subordinates. Though it is impossible to prove the validity of these claims, the economic and political power that the Collectorship brought to bear on Democratic affairs in Massachusetts cannot be denied.⁵

While all of these factors served to weaken the influence of Democratic men outside of the Custom House's orbit, it is in no way correct to claim that this group held a monopoly on the support of Jackson men throughout Boston. In the city's April 1833 election for a Congressional Representative in Washington, Theodore Lyman and Charles G. Greene garnered similar vote totals. Greene's 849 supporters bested his Hickory Club rival by a mere 40 votes. Both men lost out to National Republican candidate Francis C. Gray, who doubled their combined total. If both Greene and Lyman can be considered Democrats, as each man claimed to be, it appears that support for the Custom House's candidates in Boston equaled that of the Federal Jackson men. More important to the issues of Democratic Party control, the fact that Lyman faced staunch resistance on two fronts, from both the powerful Custom House clique and National Republican opponents, leads to the conclusion that the Bulletin men still carried a great deal of clout at this time. Charles G. Greene had been the official party nominee from a March 1833 Court House meeting, dominated by the clique's associates. The 'Friends of Lyman,' however, showed themselves to be willing and able participants in the electoral field.⁶ It is quite likely that Andrew Jackson's recent actions against South Carolina Nullification had played a large role in Lyman's ability to generate support. The president's temporary rise in popularity at this time makes Lyman's gain, as leader of the Hickory Club in Boston, that much easier to understand.

⁵ Derby, pg. 123-131; see also previous argument from Ronald P. Formisano, *The Transformation of Political Culture: Massachusetts Parties, 1790s-1840s* (New York 1983) in above Chapter One, pg. 35.

⁶ Troy (NY) *Bulletin*, Apr. 15, 1833.

This conclusion becomes more tenable when considering that former Federalists supporting the president's actions had no recourse to express their approval locally other than by voting for Lyman. Statesman clique candidates, due to their continued hostility toward the former Federalists, would never garner their support. Despite Lyman's nearly equal support among the electorate of Boston, his outsider status from the leadership faction surely worked to his disadvantage. The Custom House clique was continually able to direct official party nominations. While Lyman's personal connections and popularity as well as his nominal connection to Andrew Jackson helped his cause somewhat in the April election, further success by Federal Jackson men within the ranks of the Democracy was not in the cards. In the future, Lyman's continuing political career, like that of his peers, would take place outside of Jackson Party ranks.⁷

Greene's status as official party candidate was procured due to the absolute control the Post faction held over the nominating process for the Democracy in Boston. Their firm direction over official party affairs allowed for the clique more easily to claim their candidates as the sole representatives of the administration in the city. During the electoral campaign in question, the faction's organ declared Greene to be the official choice of the Democracy. To their mind, despite the nearly equal tally garnered by Lyman and Greene, the fact that the latter had been nominated by the regular committee overseeing such affairs in the city earlier that year, proved his position as the sole Jacksonian candidate. On the other hand, the former Federalist Lyman had been endorsed by a small gathering of men merely interested in his political fortunes. 'Friends of General Lyman,' had been enjoined to vote for that man for the contested spot in the national House of Representatives. The call for this nominating meeting was juxtaposed to that which had selected Greene as a candidate. The latter was composed of appropriate members of the Democratic Suffolk County and city ward committees.⁸ The contrasting methods of nomination and endorsement of respective candidates for the same seat reflected in the mind of the Statesman's editor the merits of each man's campaign.

⁷ Derby, pg. 162-168.

Additionally, the respective courses pursued also indicated the supposed political track to be followed upon election. The composition of Lyman's supporters as a group made clear that he was no Democrat, but a Federalist in more popular clothing. The Statesman noted in a May 23 article, 'There is no attempt at deception here--no contrivance to palm him off as a Democratic Republican... [it was] equally ridiculous to attempt to pass him off as a Jackson man.'⁹

In several other instances the paper painted Lyman in a negative light, at least in their own mind and those of their followers. The clique alleged that nearly all of Lyman's voters were 'disappointed office seekers and National Republicans, borrowed, like Hessians, for the occasion in order to make a show and impose upon persons at a distance, and make it appear that there are divisions in the democratic party in Boston, when in fact the party was never better united nor more spirited than at present.'¹⁰ This 'old Bulletin faction,' which true Democrats had thought defunct 'some three or four years ago,' had been revived during the congressional election in order to split the true Democracy, a tactic claimed against them in the original formative period of the party's existence in Massachusetts. By pointing to the seemingly illegitimate manner in which Lyman's friends had placed his name on the ballot, outside the regular channels of the Democratic Party, the Statesman was confident that his true political leanings could be ascertained for all those not privy to the state of affairs in Boston. The paper was correct in assuming that Lyman's Democratic support was shallow and temporary. Custom House control would finish off the connection of Bulletin men to the party in the near future.¹¹

What the paper failed to acknowledge was that these so-called friends of Lyman had no other recourse than to nominate their favorite as an additional Jackson candidate. The fact that the Custom House men had dominated the official Democratic nominating

⁸ Boston *Daily Atlas*, May 18, 23, 1833.

⁹ Boston *Statesman*, May 23, 1833.

¹⁰ Boston *Statesman*, May 24, 1833.

¹¹ Derby, pg. 136-137.

meeting that March, naming John Simpson as Chairman by acclamation and thereby exerting exclusive control over the nominating process, made Lyman's prospective candidacy as the official Democratic representative impossible. Due largely to the Statesman's silence on the purport of this meeting, Lyman and his associates had failed to attend. It is quite possible, in light of the Bulletin clique's former public stance, that they would not have been allowed a voice even if their members had attempted to be heard at the Old Meeting House. Still, these outsiders insisted they were not National Republicans. So too did the leading public organ of the latter party. The Boston Atlas vehemently denied that Lyman was anything but either a Jackson man, or a selfish political opportunist without party principles. He was not a member of the party whose great national head was Massachusetts' own Daniel Webster, claimed the paper. Taken a step further, the Atlas avowed that in the nation's capital Lyman would be sure to promote the ideals and policies of General Jackson, as he had previously declared.¹²

Despite their temporary albeit self-proclaimed continuation within the columns of the Democratic Party, the Bulletin faction would soon admit their desertion from the Jackson ranks. The final step in this process came during the August, 1833 Massachusetts Democratic Convention. At this Worcester gathering nominations for various state executive posts were at stake. Traditionally in the weeks preceding such statewide conventions, delegates were chosen in local meetings. True to form, the core of the Boston Democratic Party held such a delegate selection meeting in May. To no one's surprise it was dominated by Custom House interests. Predicting this outcome in advance, Lyman and his associates did not attend. Instead, a week earlier they had held the first of two delegate nominating meetings. As a result of this course of events, when the state's Democracy convened later that summer, there were competing representatives from Boston. Utilizing dominant Custom House influence, John K. Simpson was voted presiding officer. Thus, Henshaw and his colleagues had control of the operation of this convention.¹³

¹² Boston *Daily Atlas*, May 16, 1833.

¹³ *Ibid*, Aug. 13, 1833.

Subsequent to the introductory proceedings, a resolution was introduced declaring that the followers of Lyman were entitled to be seated as convention delegates. It was rejected by a six to one vote. Following this outright refusal, a measure was voted through inviting these men to take their seats by courtesy of the convention. Under such a resolution the Bulletin men would not have been able to participate in any of the votes for men or measures. Insulted, the Lyman delegation refused this olive branch proposal and walked out of the meeting. Following the exodus of a handful of members from other towns protesting the treatment of their fellow Democrats, the meeting succeeded in nominating its regular candidate, Marcus Morton for Governor and James Fowler of Westfield for Lieutenant Governor. In succeeding weeks the Lyman group named its own candidate, William Baylies, to run against Morton and National Republican Andrew Everett. Perhaps showing the reduction in his faction's strength since April's Congressional election, Baylies fared miserably in the campaign. By this period the ability of the Custom House faction to defeat the interests of their intra-party rivals was rapidly forcing the Bulletin group's decision to leave the party. As a result, this conflicted convention marked the final attempt at a Massachusetts Democratic Party that included both original factions of Jackson supporters. In the following months, with Jackson's increasingly apparent hostility to the Bank of the United States and as well at the behest of Henshaw, Lyman and friends would break all association with the Democratic Party.¹⁴ The aftermath of this abandonment would see the Statesman clique strengthen their already considerable control over party affairs.¹⁵

Lyman for his part was not done as a politician by any means. That same December he was successfully elected Mayor of Boston. Curiously enough the Statesman several weeks before the election offered a lukewarm endorsement of his candidacy.¹⁶ Perhaps this quasi-approval of their political rival came due to the fact that there was no official Democratic candidate in the field. Boston was and would continue

¹⁴ Derby, pg. 149-156.

¹⁵ Boston *Daily Atlas*, Sept. 6, 1833; Boston *Columbian Centinel*, Sept. 6, 1833.

¹⁶ Boston *Statesman*, Nov 29, 1833.

throughout the period to be a region off limits to Jacksonian control. In this mayoral election, Lyman utilized his personal popularity among men from a variety of political backgrounds, but numerically dominated by Federalist-minded National Republican and Bulletin men, to develop a broad constituency. He was opposed by General Charles Sullivan, the official National Republican candidate and George Odiorne, an Anti-Mason. The margin of victory for General Lyman proved to be rather overwhelming 3750-2001 over Sullivan. Odiorne appears to have been a fringe candidate, receiving 445 votes. Thus, the former Federalist was able to attain a large majority of the city's votes. His support was said to have come almost equally from Democrats and men considered among the National Republican ranks. A disagreement among the local National Republicans over Sullivan's nomination caused many otherwise regular members of his party to defect to Lyman for this electoral canvass.¹⁷

The Statesman's support for Lyman did not represent any abandonment by that group from their accustomed political ideals. The National Republican Columbian Centinel opined that in the future the anti-Jackson men who had voted for the successful candidate in this election would retain their party allegiances. "They still profess to be National Republicans in principle, and are free to say, that in future, whenever candidates for State or National offices shall be presented, and National Republican principles shall be at issue with Jackson or Anti-Masonic principles, they will be found as heretofore, on the side of the National Republican party."¹⁸ The endorsement of Lyman in the Post and Statesman represented approval for a man seen to be the lesser of evils in an election that no true Democrat could win. The continued marginalization and eventual eviction of all Bulletin men from the party proves that this alleged unity of interest was temporary at best.

It could be argued that such an electoral result, despite the presence of support offered in the Post's columns by Greene, would seem to indicate that Lyman was no

¹⁷ Boston *Columbian Centinel*, Dec. 11, 1832.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

longer publicly associated with the Democratic Party. The fact that many National Republicans readily gave him their votes along with the absence of an official endorsement by any group claiming to represent the Democracy in that fall's municipal election, proves that most politically interested Bostonians did not view the 'friends of Lyman' primarily as Jackson supporters. While it is true that the General drew some of his support from the official ranks of the Democracy, by this time it was obvious that his strength came from a conglomeration of citizens from all political persuasions. He was not regularly nominated by Henshaw's party and never would be. The separation that was already nearly solidified between his constituents and the Democratic Party organization were enhanced by an election like this one. Lyman no longer had to rely upon Democrats to prove his political strength. Quite to the contrary, if he were to be politically successful, he and his Federalist-minded political brethren had no choice but to turn away from full-fledged adherence to the Jackson Party.

Perhaps this realization on the part Lyman and his friends explains the drastically different results between his failure in the spring congressional campaign and the fall municipal race. In the March canvass he had proclaimed himself a Democrat. At the same time Charles Greene, the official representative of that group, had likewise appealed for Democratic votes. Because they had equally split their votes in that contest, the division among nominal Jackson men made the successful campaign of Gray that much easier. Following the scenes enacted at Worcester that September, Lyman no longer endeavored to be labeled as a Democratic candidate. On the other hand, Greene and his associates, both during the March 1833 election and thereafter, sought only the votes of Democrats. While it could be argued that this approach made their various candidacies that much more difficult, it would have been nearly impossible for them to proceed otherwise. Being firmly connected to the local Jacksonian machinery operated through the Custom House, the clique's political leaders were the obvious representatives of the national administration in their city. And of course they wanted that to be known, both in Boston and Washington, for the obvious cache and financial windfall such an association allowed them to maintain. Greene, Henshaw, Dunlap, Simpson and the other leaders of

the Statesman faction would continue to offer themselves as the image of the Democratic Party in Boston.

Meanwhile, because of the apparent trance that this faction possessed over the leaders of the national Democracy combined with the political course being followed in Washington during Jackson's second term, the subsequent decision by the former Bulletin faction to abandon their ties to the president and his party became almost automatic. The newly emerging Whig Party, with such powerful political figures as John C. Calhoun, Daniel Webster, and Henry Clay, was the obvious receptacle for this increasingly frustrated group. Though it was not a uniform movement, these Bulletin men all eventually ended up in the Whig column within the next two years. Although Orne maintained some interest in the New England Palladium and Mercantile Advertiser, that paper had by 1833 become an opposition organ. The Bank Veto and subsequent organization of a formal party resisting Jackson's penchant for limited central government, helped to guide that paper's proprietors publicly to criticize the president on nearly all occasions. While Orne continued his nominal loyalties to the Democracy for the next two years, by 1835 he had become a conservative Whig. At that time he and his fellow Bulletin leaders returned to embrace Calhoun as the figure most able to confront a wayward and despotic Chief Executive.¹⁹

By the end of 1833, the direct control that Henshaw and his associates held over the state's Democratic Party had succeeded in driving the original elements of opposition to their local leadership from Jackson's ranks. The power exercised by Henshaw, Simpson, and Greene over central affairs of the party in Massachusetts allowed for this small ruling group to dictate much of the course that standard procedures followed. Their position at the forefront of the party's affairs also permitted these men to wield control over important meetings and statewide conventions. This ability to direct such organizational events allowed the clique to preclude those from outside their sphere of influence from offering any kind of guidance to the Massachusetts Jackson Party.

¹⁹ Derby, pg. 161, 164.

Additionally, their close association with and proprietary interest in the only Democratic organs in Boston permitted the Custom House group easily to assume the initiative for promoting party functions, conclaves, and rallies. Their capability to publicize nearly all important affairs was of extreme consequence due to the opportunity it presented to the group to highlight certain occasions and gatherings. Because of this influence the clique was able continually to portray their favorite causes as imperative to the success and survival of the party. At the same time, this responsibility for calling to order the representatives of the state's Democracy allowed the Post faction to downplay the importance of informatory or organizational gatherings other than those controlled by their exclusive political group. If the Statesman group's rivals were accurate in their analysis, the faction became quite adept at repeatedly employing this ruse. As a result, David Henshaw and his closest political associates were able to solidify their grasp on Democratic organizational control.

A second major tactic employed to distill their control over Massachusetts Democratic Party affairs was directly related to the public presentation of the clique and their rivals. This approach was undertaken in the pages of the Boston Statesman, Morning Post and various satellites throughout New England. Of primary importance was the manner of portrayal of their political faction. Since the operation of party affairs and stated beliefs seemed to be a direct reflection of local leaders, it was imperative for them to announce a collective political attitude that agreed with the national administrative policies. This role most especially involved Charles G. Greene as editor of the daily Post. The articles and opinions published in that Democratic organ had to express the desired goals of the party in Boston. Equally vital was for such stated doctrine and interpretation to accord with what party bosses in Jackson's closest circles espoused. Somewhat secondary, but directly related was the public representation of the policies, pursuits, and beliefs of their political rivals. Alluding to the alleged political purposes and approaches of opponents increasingly dominated by National Republicans and Whigs both inside and outside of Massachusetts, was an important aspect of most editions of the Post. By painting their adversaries in as negative a light as possible, the

faction hoped to reflect more positively upon themselves. As a result, its leaders hoped to gain the further trust of the party's leaders in Washington, thereby ensuring continued influence, patronage, and direction over the political affairs of the Commonwealth.²⁰

The realization of this political necessity had directly led to the public rending of ties between the Custom House clique and the Calhoun interests in Washington. The formation of the Morning Post, largely out of the necessity for a Democratic daily organ in the state's and region's largest city, had come about during the period of political separation from Calhoun. As we have seen, its establishment was motivated by the recognition of this movement. While many of the initial leaders of the city's Democratic Party and Custom House faction, most obviously Henshaw, Greene, Dunlap, and Simpson, still agreed with much of the political ideology of Calhoun, as political men they had seen no alternative but to break ties with the vice president. In the years to come, as Calhoun left the administration and resumed his post as the senior senator from South Carolina, both the Statesman and Post continually participated in an editorial assault upon his political principles, actions, and character. As the Carolinian had joined the ranks opposed to Jackson and later Van Buren, this public bombardment became rather routine for the paper. Due to their obligation to appear as closely linked to the national administration and policies of Jackson as possible, the tactic of assaulting his rivals became relatively easy to accomplish. Calhoun, largely due to the odium many northerners cast upon the doctrine of nullification and the publicized role he had played at the head of that movement, was the easiest anti-Jackson man to caricature. The paper did so relentlessly during the years subsequent to his exit from the Executive Department.²¹

At the same time, the new-found alliance between Calhoun and prominent National Republicans and Whigs such as Henry Clay and Daniel Webster, made the local supporters of these men further targets of the clique. The faction chose publicly to conflate support for the anti-administration men with espousal of the allegedly

²⁰ Derby, pg. 76-82.

²¹ See *Boston Morning Post* from fall 1831 through Sept. 1837.

disunionist doctrines publicized by Calhoun in his 'Exposition and Protest,' the document that defined the doctrine of Nullification. Because nullification along with the threat of armed conflict and secession made by South Carolinians was commonly associated with the former vice president, the Post attempted to repaint the nascent Whig Party with the seditious ideals propounded by earlier New Englanders. The fact that many of the local founding Whig politicians had direct personal or political connection to the Federalist Party made this task easier to accomplish. The rhetorical devices of the Statesman and the Post assured that the Columbia Convention and Hartford Convention were portrayed as related events. Calhoun's recent abandonment of the Jackson ranks and placement in the Whig column made the task of these Democratic organs rather routine and a matter of course. His direct association with many former Federalists, more natural members of a party espousing centralizing doctrines, allowed for their Democratic opponents to label this recently born party a 'ready port for the belabored vessels of Hartford Convention traitors and Nullifiers to refit,' before returning to battle an otherwise patriotic nation.²²

Contributing to the ability of the Statesman group to paint their rivals in the negative image of Calhoun supporters was the fact that many of the defectors from the Jackson ranks had been noted supporters of the Carolinian. In fact, men who came to support Jackson during his first successful presidential campaign but had now abandoned the Democratic Party for his rivals were far more likely to have endorsed Old Hickory in the first place due to Calhoun's place on the ticket. While Henshaw's own associates were initially as rabid Calhoun men as anyone else in the city, by the time of Calhoun's defection from the party they had two main reasons to remain behind Jackson. Most obvious to the cynical historian of course, was their possession of all plum offices and patronage posts in Boston. Support for the administration was a prerequisite for maintenance of these sinecures. Of equal importance were the beliefs they held in common with the president. Though rivals would dispute the fact that the Statesman faction always came down on the side of the president on all major issues, it is true that their constant espousal of the ideas of 'the Jefferson school,' meant that the clique's

²² Boston *Morning Post*, Mar. 11, 1835.

political ideology was much closer to the tenets of Jacksonian Democracy than their more Federal-minded rivals. The fact that the future policies pursued by the Whigs were easily compared to the original programs of Alexander Hamilton and his nascent Federalists made the conflation of Jacksonian rivals with that oft-maligned party a readily available position for the Post faction.²³ The original Federal Jackson men, on the other hand, found their tripartite union with the centralized political ideology of Whiggery a more natural fit than their former connection with the Democracy. Despite his political ideology that often ran contrary to the party's prescribed notions, Calhoun had become part of that anti-Jackson organization and thus an ally of these men.²⁴

In order to solidify and make clear their newfound connection to John C. Calhoun as a powerful voice against Jackson's administration, many local members of the opposition were vocal in their support for the Carolinian. Most of the time this changed approach involved ignoring the Senator's recent activities during the tariff debates and Nullification Crisis. On several occasions, however, explanation for or mitigation of the harsh charges against his role in the seeming disunion movement of the early part of the decade, was made in the columns of National Republican and Whig papers. On the whole it is no over-simplification to say that during the middle portion of the 1830's in Boston, many Whigs were not afraid to publicize support for Calhoun, whether as a member of their party or a politician in general. Conversely, the Carolinian's staunchest former supporters in the Post faction, did all they could to distance themselves politically and ideologically from the man. While it is true that often times the shifting policies and focuses of prominent national political leaders can cause a concurrent alteration in their constituent base, the case of the political situation in Boston during the 1830's offers an interesting perspective. The power that Calhoun's image had in national politics, as a positive for one side and a negative for the other, allowed for a complete public reversal of favor and disfavor among Boston's political leaders. Many of the very same men who had vilified the Carolinian during their days of supporting Andrew Jackson's actions

²³ Ibid, Jan. 7, May 23, 1832.

²⁴ Derby, pg. 161-165.

against him, became his most staunch local allies. At the same time, true Calhoun sympathizers of earlier days, most especially the Statesman group, would morph into his most vocal public opponents in Massachusetts.

That the late public supporters of Calhoun would become his most vehement antagonists was made apparent in the columns of the Morning Post. Perhaps the words of one of the clique's greatest political rivals, John Barton Derby, were true in this case. Speaking of the change in the clique's attitude toward their former favorite during the first half of the 1830's he noted: 'Zeal may be had cheap, when it had no competitors for favor, and it is never more active than immediately after the explosion of a conspiracy. Suspected traitors, as well as new converts, are remarkable for its superabundance.'²⁵ During the controversies that resulted in the ultimate break-up of the Jackson-Calhoun administrative team, the paper had remained silent while others protested strongly in favor of the president. It seems largely in response to their delay in proffering endorsement for the course followed by their chief in Washington, the writers in both the Statesman and Post decided to take the most direct course possible. This decision led them down the path of offering ultimate glory to Jackson and corresponding defamation of Calhoun. Beginning in the last months of 1832 and lasting until Calhoun's public endorsement of Van Buren's Independent Treasury scheme nearly five years later, every action taken by the South Carolina senator, political and otherwise, was harshly demeaned in the columns of Boston's Democratic organs. Of course, the political nature of newsheets at the time quite often led to denunciation and slander of members of rival parties. In this case however, the treatment of Calhoun far overshadowed the negative portrayal of any other politician. Whether or not the Post believed the vitriol that it spewed against the Carolinian is beside the point. What is important to note is that at least part of Derby's statement holds merit. Seeking to distance himself from obligatory favor toward Jackson in the preceding years, Henshaw through the obvious connection he held with the Morning Post, chose defamation of one of the opponents of the national administration as a tactic to gain further favor. Any association he held with this newly

²⁵ Derby, pg. 115.

vilified figure, along with the need for unqualified political separation, made these repeated assaults harsher than they otherwise would have been. The level of criticism in the Post when compared to other Democratic papers throughout the nation helps make this point more certain.

The clique's public animosity toward Calhoun began in the days surrounding the Columbia Convention, held in November 1832. Earlier musings on the subject and on Calhoun, as the most prominent leader associated with the movement, appear to have been somewhat conciliatory. While disavowing any approval of the doctrine of state interposition, writers in the Statesman and the Post regularly allowed for some of South Carolina's grievances to be aired. The Custom House group's status as free trade and anti-protection men did not change during the battle over the Tariffs of 1828 and 1832. They strongly contended that South Carolina, and Americans throughout the union, were justified in criticizing the supposedly unfair and regionally unbalanced taxes on imported goods. However, the manner of approach by those endorsing nullification in the Palmetto State would come to garner disfavor in the pages of these Boston Democratic organs. In the immediate aftermath of Jackson's December 10, 1832 Proclamation against the Columbia Convention's resolutions endorsing nullification, this emerging contempt for the actions of the alleged rabble rousers from South Carolina became especially notable.²⁶

While the same could be said for nearly every paper in the North, the Statesman's prior hesitation to rebuke the anti-tariff positions of the Carolinians as well as the tendency of the paper's associates to remain mute as a decision on nullification approached, made their course much more relevant.²⁷ In light of the president's

²⁶ Boston Statesman, Jan. 26, Feb. 9, 1833.

²⁷ Ellis, Richard. *The Union at Risk: Jacksonian Democracy, States' Rights and the Nullification Crisis*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1987. Ellis notes in his study, that there was some support for the doctrines of Nullification in several New York newspapers while the doctrine was being propounded by Calhoun. These sources, however were the exception to the rule, though the *Morning Post* came to change its tune on Calhoun's role and moderated its stance on the doctrine of Nullification in later years. See Chapters Five and Six below.

addresses to South Carolina and on the Force Act, the paper chose to emphasize the foolish course being followed by politicians in that state. At the same time it was noted that Jackson had admitted the possibility of amending the existent tariff laws, to make the duties more palatable to complainants. Rehashing their typical indictments, the clique depicted the issue as one of maintaining the tariff to favor 'Federal' interests in the North or modifying its rates in order to ensure national harmony. The desired result of all unpatriotic and selfish men, most especially their rivals in New England, would have been to force secession, thereby gaining support for the doctrines of centralization. The current situation as the Morning Post had noted in August, had been brought about by none other than the rabid advocates of the American System. National Republicans in Congress were to blame for the impending crisis.²⁸ By year's end, however, once Nullification had been approved by the Columbia Convention, the tune of the paper would begin to change. Following the Proclamation, the leaders in South Carolina were officially called out as responsible for the preceding events. Because the Nullifiers were opponents of Jackson and men who had engendered the sharpest rebuke from the president, the Democratic organ in Boston had no choice but to follow his lead in condemning these South Carolinians. Once the president's uncompromising stand against these anti-Tariff diehards had been made, any approval for nullification as a doctrine or calls to lower excessive import duties on the part of the Post were greatly muted. As a result, the prior beliefs of the Statesman faction were amended or silenced completely.

At this point in the debate the Post came down harshly against the principle previously set forth by Calhoun. Whereas in the past its leaders offered acknowledgment of the many truisms associated with interposition, the paper now called nullification a doctrine rooted in fallacy. Although it was admitted that the union had been based on the right of states to join at will, carrying that point too far in the vein of Carolinia leaders could only lead to disunion and secession. As a January, 1833 piece noted, 'A State when it entered into the Union, contracted obligations with its co-States, which it cannot

²⁸ Boston *Morning Post*, Aug. 13, 1832.

abrogate at pleasure--and each individual of the State obtained rights under the Constitution of the United States, of which he cannot be lawfully deprived...The Constitution of the United States, is paramount to all State Constitutions, and a State so far as it regards its own citizens has no right to secede if a single individual object.’²⁹ Compared to the stated constitutional beliefs of the Statesman during the Hayne-Webster debates three years earlier, this statement appears to represent a reversal of previous political belief on the part of the clique. It is not accurate to say, however, that the paper adopted an extreme or intolerant posture against their former ideological allies in South Carolina. Even at this late stage of the controversy, the Post took great pains to present its case in a reasoned and moderate manner. While obviously coming down on the side of the president in his demand for union and against nullification as a principle, the Post understood how some could become deluded into thinking the practice of interposition a tenable method of redress. The constitutional issue was presented as a delicate balance, open to misinterpretation. This leniency on the part of the paper toward those in South Carolina who had adopted a differing point of view, though, was made apparent in the approach taken in the pages of the Post and the Statesman during the early days of 1833. Perhaps this approach was related to their own hesitancy to move away from giving some sort of approval to the course being followed in South Carolina.

Following in this similar vein, it was easy to present many supporters of Nullification as having been simply misguided. Others had never intended to move down a secessionist path and been drawn too far into the course of events. They were purposely fooled into believing ‘that the measures their public servants were pursuing would not endanger the Union--that it was only a peaceable and lawful opposition to oppressive laws, and the proper and Constitutional way to obtain redress.’ The populace was not to blame for having been ignorant of the potentially divisive effects of nullification. They had been led to believe such a course had no connection to potential disunion, the paper claimed. In fact, when such worries were bruited about, the Post alleged, the advocates of nullification had labeled them, ‘a bugbear gotten up by their

²⁹ Boston *Statesman*, Jan. 19, 1833.

opponents to alarm the timid--a mere ruse for political effect.'³⁰ To the mind of the Statesman faction, the mass of citizenry had been led down a destructive path through arguments and framed debates that could have deceived anyone.

Carrying this logic one step further, it would seem, since normal voters were not to blame for the disastrous path trodden by the state, that culpability had to be placed somewhere. The easiest and to their mind, most appropriate objects for scorn were the political leaders who had brainwashed the public to believe in the propriety of nullification. If ordinary people could so easily be coerced into believing this misguided policy to be an appropriate and even-handed measure, the politicians who had been able to lead them astray were deserving of censure. Such men had "quieted the apprehensions of the people, waiting for the day when the next step of their diabolical scheme could be unveiled." At that now passed date, "when the mask was at once thrown off--then it was found that the Tariff was not the cause, but an apology, with the leaders of nullification, for their conduct."³¹ This type of conduct, naturally involved the removal of South Carolina from the nation, unless all of her desires were met. Such a circumstance would have one state directing the course of action for the entire administration, necessitating all other federative bodies to await her approval. Through this interpretation, the leaders of the movement would have succeeded in one of two ways. Either they would effect their removal from the union, following a separate course as their whims dictated or the father of nullification himself, John C. Calhoun, would assert paramount influence over this issue. With such an outcome, the Carolinian would have accomplished the trumping of his political nemesis and gained an important victory over President Jackson. Because of this situation, it was alleged that the fate of perhaps the national government, but most certainly Jackson's administration, hung in the balance over the matter of state interposition. By this convoluted logic, the paper was able to vent its frustration upon their former political guru. Such public presentation also made a surety that the Democracy of Boston, no matter to what degree it sympathized with the plight of

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid.

Carolínians burdened by excessive import duties, was firmly behind the actions of the president. From the Nullification Crisis forward, the papers stood foremost in the column of anti-Calhoun men.

As a result of their desire for a remade image within the local Democratic Party, much of the future public presentation of Calhoun would be contrasted with that of Andrew Jackson. Simply put, the president was constantly presented as the direct opposite of his former Carolinian vice-president. If Andrew Jackson were the ultimate union man, Calhoun had to be presented as the ultimate secessionist. Despite their earlier agreement with much of what the doctrines of nullification and state interposition entailed, the Post was now quick to denounce these tenets. Thus, upon every issue addressed in Congress, Calhoun's stamp of disloyalty to the union was claimed. If most of his ideals were approved, sectional conflict and civil war would have been sure to follow, in the minds of the paper's editors. 'He wishes--or the tendency of his principles is to organize society according to sectional intenerates--broad masses of general feeling--or general passion. The federal constitution--the state constitution--nullification, are all merely the outward forms through which these general principles are to act.' Carried one step further, Calhoun's interpretation of the Constitution would lead down a dangerous path. 'With Calhoun's views we should have civil wars-brilliant deeds-patriotic ardor; in short, another Greek confederacy, as active and refined as that famous country was...'³² If the doctrines of Calhoun were endorsed by Congress, the national government would turn into the most ineffectively chaotic mass of politicians imaginable. In this way, his logic was derided as incompatible with the forms of government instituted by the founders of the nation. This sentiment constituted a very real change in interpretation by a group that had previously presented Calhoun as the embodiment of constitutional rationality. That is not to say that the clique was merely creating a new persona for Jackson, however. As historian John William Ward classically argued, Jackson's hold upon the ideology and culture of Americans at the time was very strong and it is entirely possible that the Post clique in their commendations of his character was showing evidence of its own

³² Boston *Morning Post*, Mar. 13, 1833.

enthusiastic belief in the president's overall character.³³ Nonetheless, regarding Calhoun, the group's approach had markedly changed.

While they never alleged the former vice-president to be lacking in mental capacities or questioned his motives for misinterpreting the proper course of government, it seems to be rather apparent that the Post faction's leaders wished to characterize this man as politically unstable.³⁴ Nullification had proven what the ultimate effect of Calhoun's leadership would entail. The clique also publicly sought to raise doubts about his competence to govern in the proper manner as a United States Senator. It was almost as if the fever of nullification had corrupted his faculties to such a degree that his future involvement in the public duties of government had become unfeasible. Over the course of the next several years, the paper went to great lengths to report his public actions in the most negative light imaginable. Seemingly every political issue, whether under senatorial debate or merely raised through some other channel, could in some way draw criticism upon Calhoun.

Aside from questioning his political sanity, the Custom House leadership continued their assaults against Calhoun by highlighting the questionable nature of his separation from the Democratic Party in the first place. Because Calhoun was seemingly wholly out of place in alliance with the likes of Clay and Webster, the paper pointed repeatedly to the alleged incongruity of the temporary alliance among this 'Great Triumvirate.' By making such a political union, Calhoun had proven his lack of merit. In a word, the Carolinian senator was an untrustworthy and unprincipled man. His course of action had also illustrated the result of nullification. It had ruined his career as a nationally viable candidate for highest office. Affiliation with the anti-union party in his state had blighted Calhoun's image throughout the nation. The Morning Post alleged,

³³ John William Ward argued this point in his *Andrew Jackson: Symbol for an Age* (New York 1955.)

³⁴ *Ibid.*, Feb. 20, 22, Nov. 4, 1835, Mar. 5, 1836.

‘The truth is the Nullies are pretty much run out--Mr. Calhoun has exhausted his political capital, and his friends their power.’³⁵ The only outlet for the rejected former vice-president was in this incongruous alliance with his former great rivals. Unfortunately, all three were of the same ilk. Each man was presented as a scheming politician, without any true principles. They were opposites of Jackson, in the opinion of the Post, a man guided by his republican ideals. The president, it was said, would not condescend to restrict his political path in hopes of advancement. This fact was made evident during the days that decided the 1824 presidential election. Unwilling to stoop to the selling and trading which allegedly characterized the ascendance of John Quincy Adams, Jackson had proven himself beyond the corruptibility of many politicians. The path followed by Calhoun was juxtaposed to Jackson’s history. By abandoning the party that seemed to accord most closely with his principles in order to combine with his ideological opposites, Calhoun had exposed his nefarious character to the world. He was simply a scheming man. Much like the corruptible Daniel Webster and Henry Clay, Calhoun’s loyalties could be bought and sold. Webster’s association with Biddle and the Bank of the United States and Clay’s dealings in the ‘Corrupt Bargain’ were alluded to when discussing their respective political merits.³⁶

In the clique’s mind, nowhere was this lack of principle and abundance of misplaced political ambition seen more prominently than in the event that had first cemented the alliance of Clay and Calhoun. The Compromise Tariff of 1833, as the occasion that helped bring about the peaceful conclusion of the Nullification Crisis, was often cited by the Post as the most prominent example by which members of the Whig leadership coalition had submerged avowed beliefs and political tenets to attempt advancement of their own careers. Such selfish scheming was a direct contrast to the paper’s portrayal of Andrew Jackson. Clay and Calhoun had merely acted in conjunction upon this matter to ‘answer for their own purposes, and forward their own ambitious designs.’ The entire charade was carried out as a dual face-saving measure. Clay, cognizant that the protective system was flawed and in danger of expiring due to its

³⁵ Boston *Morning Post*, Aug. 20, 1834.

deficiencies, saw an avenue to prolong his most valued political measure. Largely due to the furor caused by complainants in South Carolina, the repeal of the duties was widely feared among the manufacturing class. At the same time, the obvious discomfiting of the South Carolina Nullifiers by the masterful political work of President Jackson had left Calhoun in quite a bind. To go through with nullification almost certainly meant federal troops crushing his doomed rebellion.³⁷ The result would be an immediate conclusion to his political career, national shame, and perhaps an appointment with a federal hangman. Thus, a man whose only real purpose in life was political advancement needed to escape from this dire situation however possible. Because of their mutual despair, the Post claimed, 'Mr. Clay held out his hand...and both found themselves again, to their mutual satisfaction, safe upon dry land.'³⁸ Thus the settlement of this dilemma represented a microcosm of the Whig party entire. Men acting against their stated principles when necessary to salvage or advance their own political careers came to be a commonly presented trope for the opposition party leadership. Clay for one wanted no reduction of tariff duties or phasing out of the protective system, both results of the 'Compromise Tariff.' Calhoun, on the other hand, had continually pushed for an immediate end of protective tariffs and the institution of a tariff for revenue purposes only. The 'Compromise Tariff,' delivered neither man's goals. It spelled the ultimate end of protection, but not for another decade. Thus, the Nullifiers' aim for the instant abandonment of federal safeguards for manufactures went unmet, as did Clay's desire to preserve that same system. As the paper claimed, Calhoun's and Clay's piece of legislation went by a misnomer. It was no compromise at all. The bill merely reflected the attempts of two politicians bent on preserving their own careers, by whatever means necessary. While gaining a logical political deal, the efforts of both prominent Whig leaders had worked in direct contrast to their stated political principles.

³⁶ Ibid, Nov. 4, 1835.

³⁷ Of course Calhoun was far from the most radical of the Nullifiers. His efforts with Clay on the Compromise Tariff were endeavored largely as a result of personal worries about the disunionist sentiments the doctrine had helped to bring about. See Merrill D. Peterson, *The Great Triumvirate: Webster, Clay, and Calhoun* (New York 1987), pg. 212-214, 219-232.

³⁸ *Boston Morning Post*, Jan. 17, 1837.

United with Webster to form a grand trio, these men had become part of the same political unit despite their obvious differences on policy. Such an opposition faction could not be maintained for long, due to their separate ambitions and widely divergent political opinions. Time and again, despite their mutual hatred of President Jackson, 'they found themselves in the same condition that they were when they started, viz; as ready to destroy each other as they were the administration, if one should offer to grasp, what they all attempted to gain--the Presidency.'³⁹ Thus, there was no actual potential for this union to be successful. The members composing the Triumvirate were 'more opposed to each other, and the principles advocated by each, than they are to General Jackson and his administration,' it was alleged. Each aspired to be president, but whenever any of the three attempted 'to dissolve the firm and set up for himself, that moment the remaining partners will shut up his shop.' An alliance out of convenience between a Nullifier, the father of the American System, and a former Federalist could never last and was laughable in its very existence. Calhoun's very involvement in this group further proved his shortcomings as a national politician, in the opinion of the Post faction. Regarding his arguments against the administration which seemed to run contrary to earlier stated beliefs, the paper noted, 'To us, they seem to speak a language altogether unworthy of the eminent statesman--the language of party spirit rather than patriotism--and a language that should be execrated by every citizen of the United States.'⁴⁰

In direct contrast to Jackson, Calhoun had abandoned his values and ideals purely out of a desire for political advancement. Giving up on the Democratic Party and its regular proceedings made him the antithesis of the disinterested and patriotic Jackson in every way. Because of that realization, the clique promoted the idea that Calhoun should be vilified and disowned by all true Democrats, no matter what they had previously thought of the man. Of course, the Custom House faction was at the forefront of this

³⁹ Ibid, Aug. 20, 1834.

⁴⁰ Ibid, Jan. 23, 1836.

group. Blaming John Calhoun's recent nefarious actions for their abandoning him as a political icon, removed much of the shame from any past association between Boston's Democratic leadership and this most odious of Whigs.

The Post's most typical claim regarding this triumvirate of Whig leaders was that the only available glue to make them a cohesive unit was their collective animosity to President Jackson. Every measure introduced and endorsed by this group seemed ultimately designed to undermine the administration. Their preeminent hope, it would appear, was to remove many of the powers of the presidency, allowing the Legislature to hold maximum political clout. That was the only way by which they could legally effect their collective will upon an unsuspecting American public. In arguing against the Whig desire to eliminate the president's veto power, Editor Greene opined, 'The Whigs and Nullifiers are going to be the last people, over the President's back, in hope of whipping them into the support of those who wish to deprive them of their supremacy, to break up their union and drive them into acts of violence...' In this manner such corrupt leaders, most especially Calhoun, could effect an emasculation of the office of the presidency, acting against constitutional intent. It was noted, 'A strong, but responsible executive was the leading object of the framers of the Constitution; to make this department efficient, and at the same time, independent of the other departments, and responsible to the people, was a truly wise end.' To effect their own gain was the main goal of this political cabal. Once the capacity of the executive to exercise power over and bring stability to the government had been removed from the capable hands of the president, they hoped to strike a panic among the public. The Post opined that in that case, 'Northern and Southern nullifiers', meaning Federalists posing as Whigs along with Calhoun's cronies, 'may by uniting, rout them.'⁴¹ It was obvious that the main reason for this union was to cause the downfall of Jackson by whatever means were available. Posing as his judicious enemies, Calhoun, Webster, and Henry Clay presented themselves as the complete antithesis of all that 'King Andrew' represented. As Whigs they stood for legislative protection against an overpowering executive bent upon curbing the

⁴¹ Ibid, Oct. 27, 1835.

liberties of the public. Such a representation was hardly credible in the minds of the Statesman and Post editors.

The reliance of the Custom House group upon Andrew Jackson's administration for their patronage posts was the main reason for their overt caricaturing of his most prominent political opponents. Calhoun was foremost among these men, due to his alleged turncoat status to the cause of Democracy. If Andrew Jackson was a man of ultimate principles, Calhoun was a vacillating, scheming politician ready to abscond to the most profitable camp. If the president was 'Old Hickory,' the stable pillar upon which the nation's interests hinged, the Senator was 'Granny Calhoun,' ready to shrink into any corner upon the first signs of distress. And most frequently, if Andrew Jackson was the greatest and most glorified supporter of the union since Washington, Calhoun was in a league with the Post faction's oft-vilified 'Blue Lighters.' The patriotism of Jackson was continually contrasted to the supposedly selfish, narrow-minded and basically sectional interest that seemed to dictate the otherwise inexplicable political course of Calhoun during his career. The schizophrenic behavior of the Carolinian was a trend notable since the beginning of Jackson's first term in office. Inconsistencies alluded to by others during the earliest push toward nullification, had been ignored by the Post faction. Perhaps due to their initial connection to Calhoun, his revised policies, first as an advocate of protection while part of Monroe's cabinet only to become its strictest opponent a decade later, were largely ignored. Instead their attention was focused upon the political course, almost solely in conflict with the national administration, followed by Calhoun and his associates since the split between him and Jackson became too obvious to ignore. In that way the Post group's relative complicity with the ultra anti-tariff South Carolinians, if not nullification itself, were pushed out of view. Their own actions in the aftermath of the Crisis in South Carolina, especially when compared with Calhoun's, were promoted as loyal to the administration. In that way the Post and the Statesman sought to differentiate themselves and their faction from their former leader.

The readiest hobby for the clique to mount and continually ride in order to gain

points with the electorate was the issue of the nation's perpetuity as a viable entity. In that matter Calhoun was an easy mark, especially in a section of the country so far removed from any sort of sentiment that would have allowed for even a limited endorsement of nullification. While the Custom House clique and presumably most of their followers in Boston, did not belong to the class of manufacturers most vehemently opposed to modification of the tariff, the presence of such interests in their geographic realm made protection a bit easier to swallow. Though Henshaw and associates would never come around to see regional support of manufacturers as a worthy goal, they maintained the belief that the measures of redress enacted in the Compromise Tariff during the Nullification Crisis had gone far enough to quiet the legitimate complaints in South Carolina and elsewhere. The prominent role that Calhoun had played in helping to draft the Compromise Tariff of March 1833, along with Henry Clay, added further ammunition to the group's claims that the Carolinian should have nothing to say about the current duties. His subsequent criticisms of import duties allowed the clique to continue criticism of Calhoun's alleged hypocrisy. In fact, such sentiment on his part would add further fuel to the charges labeling the senator as a man bent on fanning the flames of disunion.

By early 1836 Calhoun, true to his sentiments against protective duties, was proposing further modification of the tariff in Congress. Sensing the revival of an old grievance the Boston Morning Post offered typical vitriol against its most vilified opponent. Its Washington correspondent said of Calhoun's course of action, 'He offered a resolution today to modify the compromise, by reducing the duties on all articles consistent with the safety of the manufacturing interests. Well, here is the tariff again!, and here are North and South to be brought again into the field of mortal strife.' Because of the surplus that had accrued to the national treasure at the time, Calhoun pressed for an amelioration of the taxation rate. The Post alleged that Calhoun sought to paint himself as a noble patriot, whose 'object was to control the surplus fund, the great source of evils of the country.'⁴² In fact, of course, the true aim of this devious politician was to

⁴² Ibid, Jan. 4, 1836.

introduce further discord into the Senate, undermine the financial harmony that had been introduced by the prudent measures of the Jackson Administration, and ultimately to engender such sectional strife as to further his own political fortunes by damaging those of the president and his heir apparent, Martin Van Buren. If Calhoun could find it within himself publicly to raise doubts about the merits of a 'compromise' instituted mainly at his own behest in response to complaints arising from his home state, what further lunacy would have been surprising? By highlighting the seeming irrationality inherent in such a situation, the paper and the clique who controlled it, further hoped to denigrate the character and actions of one of Jackson's biggest critics in the national government. At the same time, this issue further proved the untenable situation that existed in the Whig Party. Writing a year later that the original Compromise Tariff of 1833 had involved no real compromise at all, the Post highlighted their claims that the opponents of Jackson had no real political principles. Clay and Calhoun, it was opined, had merely acted in conjunction on this matter 'to answer for their own purposes and forward their own ambitious designs.'⁴³

Even in matters where the paper and its supporters sported similar attitudes and ideologies to Calhoun's, disputes were raised on several occasions. Most glaring among these points of contention was the matter of public debate over slavery and abolition. Although the Statesman clique agreed with the Carolinian that northerners had no place discussing the merits of the institution's continuance in Washington, D.C., nor in offering any sentiments that could be judged as efforts to eliminate legal human bondage from states where it was constitutionally allowed to exist, they contested the manner in which the senator had chosen to approach these issues on several occasions. Sensing the potential for such matters to become explosive, Boston's dual Democratic organs time and again broke from their otherwise traditional protection of southern interests to criticize Calhoun. While denouncing the rants of abolitionists from their own state, the Statesman clique claimed Calhoun's repeated allusions to the designs of this insignificant group was a boldfaced attempt to cover over his actual intent. Replacing the question of

⁴³ Ibid, Jan. 31, 1836.

reducing the Tariffs of 1828 and 1832 with the question of the acceptability of abolitionist petitions to Congress, it was argued, offered the Carolinian the opportunity to continue his public support for the doctrine of nullification. To the mind of the Post's Washington correspondent the repeated arguments in this case represented, 'the only complaint by which NULLIFICATION can hope to live and linger out a loathsome existence.'⁴⁴ In essence, the furor over the Gag Rule of 1835 was to their minds merely an attempt to maintain the credibility and viability of Calhoun as a political leader. In claiming that these petitions needed to be summarily refused by Congress, thereby directly violating constitutional law, he was leaving the door open for his disfavored political doctrine to persist.

Calhoun's frequent allusions to these issues merely represented a desperate attempt to grasp at political leadership, to the mind of the clique. These references constituted, 'only a new game, played for the old stake, the Presidency.' He and his newfound Whig cohorts in Congress were the only ones who seemed poised to take the bait offered by the misguided referrals to the issue of slavery's viability by random northern actors. Seizing upon the petitions of such minority interest groups as Quaker abolition societies, rabble rousers of the Garrisonian school, or the unrepresentative ramblings of fringe political entities in the Northern legislative bodies as excuses to keep this issue alive, Calhoun had done all that was politically possible to steer the course of debate away from more pertinent matters. The Statesman faction thought Calhoun's stridency on the issue well beyond the scope of necessary action. Because the majority of northerners disdained such ardent abolitionists as William Lloyd Garrison and his cohorts at the Liberator, Calhoun's repeated agitation of the petition issue coupled with his inflammatory language, could only serve to damage the interests of national harmony. Since the ultimate result of his public course in the Senate would be the driving of a wedge between North and South, termination of such activity was strongly recommended. Trusting the right-mindedness of their local citizens, the clique's leaders proclaimed confidently that the course of the Carolinian was bound to fail. In truth, if

⁴⁴ Ibid, Feb. 20, 1836.

everyone concerned would simply leave the petition question alone, it was noted, ‘Mr. Calhoun will be discharged from any further attendance on the patient, which will die by being cured-and kill the doctor too!.’ In the mind of the Post’s editor, ‘Mr. Calhoun’s political days [were] numbered.’ He ventured to predict ‘they will be finished before his current Senatorial term expires.’ Since he had been so dishonored in the eyes of his fellows in Congress, the people of his state were awakening to the prospect of gaining more accurate representation, as the next campaign would show. Continuing its longstanding sympathy with the residents of the Palmetto State, the Post predicted that these generally upstanding and patriotic citizens would vote out their fraudulent representative as soon as possible.⁴⁵

The Statesman believed that Calhoun’s politically deluded mind allowed him to pursue his nefarious course in hopes of some measure of political success. Knowing his ideals to be outside the mainstream of public sentiment, he was trying to score points with at least one group of the citizenry in order to attain some degree of favor. His attempts were merely meant to ‘agitate-agitate-agitate-to drive...frantic and deluded prey’ toward a net fixed to hold them. Realistically only hoping for ‘success in turbulence and agitation,’ such an approach was doomed to ultimate failure. Although Calhoun could possibly gain some regional support it would come only at the expense of alienating him from any national viability or that of moving the country down the road to separation. Either contingency would not bring about a returned national respect for the Carolinian. His stance on the matter was most likely to show where the senator’s lack of political acumen and principle could lead. Because of his separation from rational political dealings, the paper continued its calls for Calhoun’s removal by his own constituents.⁴⁶

The most damning allegations against Calhoun’s actions regarding slavery however, went beyond the perceived political error represented by agitating the matter. In the pages of the Boston Morning Post and Boston Statesman, it was alleged several

⁴⁵ Ibid, Feb. 20, 1836.

times that his ultimate goal was to drive South Carolina or the entire South from the union.⁴⁷ Upon that contingency Calhoun as the region's most prominent statesman sought to gain control of the seceded portion. Continually viewing the rancor caused by the debates over the Gag Rule and the acceptance of abolitionist tracts in the public mails through the prism of Nullification, the editors took the Carolinian to task over his public course. In April 1836, Calhoun proposed a bill to bar outright all abolitionist pamphlets from the public mails. Previously the admittance or denial of such pieces of literature was subject to the laws of recipient states. The Washington correspondent of the Post thought the currently established manner of procedure on this matter just and favored its continuance. Calhoun's proposal then seemed to be a violation of the very rights to the use of the Post Office, as instituted by the nation's governing documents. Calling his proposed act the 'Bill for abolishing the Post Office Department, to save slavery from abolition,' the author offered a none- too-subtle critique of Calhoun's political course. Implying that Calhoun's actions were taken merely in hopes of presenting himself as the defender of slavery, which in actuality was under no danger whatsoever, the paper sought to lampoon the South Carolina senator. Proposing, in the mind of the correspondent, to abolish the Congress's constitutional power to establish Post Offices and Post Roads, Calhoun had decided on an extreme measure. Carrying this portrayed excessive behavior one step further, he had commented that this bill, 'assumes as a principle, that the regulation of slavery is left to the States; and that it is the duty of Government to conform itself to such laws as the States may think proper to pass on the subject.'" He went on further to note that this proposed bill merely asked 'of Government, to abstain from every thing inconsistent with the rights of slavery, and conform itself to the State laws on the subject.'⁴⁸ In taking the action proposed here, Calhoun was showing signs of lunacy, the column charged. By shutting down an essential right of the Post Office, thereby annulling its charter to function in the proper manner, Calhoun had offered a solution to a problem that already had been remedied by reliance on state laws to regulate the mails. It was obvious to this author that such a piece of legislation was little more than 'Mr.

⁴⁶ Ibid, Dec. 29, 1835.

⁴⁷ Ibid, Dec. 26, 28, 29, 1835, Apr. 16, 1836.

⁴⁸ Ibid, Apr. 12, 1836.

Calhoun's Incendiary Bill, 'meant to stir the passions of his section, while irritating even the political men most sympathetic to the cause of slavery in the North.⁴⁹ Included among this latter group were the members of the Statesman clique.

The paper's public stance on this matter was in large part enunciated to contrast with the reported fulminations Calhoun was making in the Senate. Speaking of the abolitionists' calls to take action against the slave trade in the capital, the paper pointed to 'an excitement of the most alarming and injurious character, which 'we believe nine-tenths of the citizens of the United States deprecate.' Although the power of Congress to deal with slavery in the District was granted in the Constitution, the Post's prescribed policy was to follow the guidelines set by the nation's 'most prudent, patriotic, and wisest statesmen.' Since the subject was 'one of great moment,' and deserved to 'be approached with coolness and caution' as it involved 'the safety of the Union--perhaps national existence,' it was best to leave the matter alone for the time being. Unfortunately for the state of the union, John C. Calhoun thought otherwise.⁵⁰ In issuing such a calm, rational opinion on this subject, the paper attempted to hold itself apart from the senator's boisterous denial of any right whatsoever by Congress or the president to act on the question. Emphasizing that any discussion of this issue in Congress represented the introduction of fringe ideas, the Post here passed the whole episode off as the attempt of a deluded body of abolitionists to promote their minority faction's ideals upon the nation. The clique believed that the best way to protect against real damage to the nation coming from such a situation was to proceed in a manner differing completely from the vehement actions taken by Calhoun and other ultra southern rights men. A basic trust in Democratic Party leadership allowed for the adoption of such a confident opinion. Since Calhoun, as an opposition man, hoped to gain influence by ignoring the rationally based actions of the more moderate northern majority, it was not surprising that he had a different outlook on the matter. His actions needlessly imperiled the cause of national harmony and needed to be disclaimed, despite the despicable nature of radical abolition men and their unpatriotic activities.

⁴⁹ Ibid, Apr. 16, 1836.

Noting the true sentiment of their fellow citizens in Massachusetts, the very area alleged to be most closely connected to abolitionist sentiment, the Post regretted the rashness that had been displayed by members of the House of Representatives and Senate in addressing questions involving slavery. The rapid progression of opinions and proposals had been uncalled for and led to an ‘unnecessary extreme’ which had ‘exceeded the astonishment of every calm observer. While most men in Massachusetts were opposed to slavery to one degree or another, they were still ‘not willing to sacrifice the liberty of thirteen millions of freemen, to redeem two millions of slavers from bondage.’ Referring to the possible dissolution of the union that could very well be the ultimate effect of such threats as men like Calhoun were issuing in Congress, the paper urged calm and rationality on all politicians. If his proposals to the Senate were approved, it ‘would throw the country into a civil commotion which would cover its fair fields with blood, and render the land, which is now the abode of peace, of liberty, and good government, the theatre of rapine, carnage and anarchy.’⁵¹

Fanning the flames of sectional discord was no more seemly whether done by the hated abolitionists or former Nullifiers of the South. That both were in a league with each other was a charge brought up on more than one occasion by the paper. Calhoun and the ‘Nullifiers’ in Congress, it was alleged, were aiming to steer the abolition petition issue to their own gain. In this matter they were assisted by Northern Whigs who acted the role of agitators or as the correspondent likened them, ‘puppets in a raree-show.’ The object of such activity was to promote Calhoun for Chief Executive, or at the very least help the successful candidacy of one of his temporary allies.⁵² The manner in which this promotion would come about was not specified. Regardless of whether through disunion or merely by reinforcing political realignment between North and South, this unsavory union seemed likely to undermine the stability of the current Democratic administration in Washington. Such action necessitated a proper response against the conjoined goals of

⁵⁰ Ibid, Mar. 31, 1837.

⁵¹ Ibid, Apr. 3, 1837.

⁵² Ibid, Mar. 1, 1836.

this group. It was proclaimed, in reaction to this alleged political cabal, ‘the conspiracy of Abolition and Nullification cannot succeed.’⁵³ This was an attitude requisite for the leaders of the Jackson Party in Massachusetts to take, no matter what their sentiments on the issue of abolition or the merits of allowing a discussion of the institution of slavery into any public and national forum, the *Post* clique claimed. The simple scheming of these two different bodies of men, antithetical to each other on many levels, proved their nefarious character. Indeed, the editor noted, they seemed to represent ‘criminal intrigues,’ surely contrary not only to the morals of political maneuvering, but also to the good of society as well.⁵⁴ Such a union by its very nature was corrupt and needed to be put down. That the rational members of the Democracy could see through this ruse was a surety. Of their less principled political opponents, however, there were no similar assurances.

This attitude was concomitantly applied publicly against local Whig opponents as well, with claims of disloyalty and the further promotion of ideals first prescribed at the Hartford Convention of their federal-minded forebears. Since the foremost opponents of the president seemed to stand for what he most despised, it was logical for some of the most vile and unpleasant statements against these men to come in light of their very opposition to Jackson. Much of the abuse of the administration by Calhoun as one of its chief enemies was ridiculed as the ramblings of a desperate man and largely ignored in the pages of Boston’s Democratic organs. At times however, especially when the character of the president was called into question, the papers’ recriminations could be employed quite harshly against the Carolinian. By taking the opposite side to the president on matters of national import, Nullification being the most obvious example, Calhoun had been among those prominent men who so readily had ‘violate[d] their duty to their country, and forfeit[ed] the confidence of their fellow citizens.’ Calhoun’s repeated involvement in rants against the administration, many times taking stands on issues not based on political reality, to the mind of the *Post*’s editor, were merely the

⁵³ Ibid, Feb. 20, 1836.

⁵⁴ Ibid, Sept. 10, 1835.

action of 'a man who has nothing now to lose-but what it should be a blessing for him to lose-all recollection of the reputation he once enjoyed, which makes him unhappily distinguished.'⁵⁵ To the supporters of the Democracy in Boston, Calhoun was presented as a benighted politician. He was a man whose time had come and passed; an individual whose talents had been manifest at the beginning of his career but who in turning away from Andrew Jackson had been stricken with a sort of political delirium. This brand of mental corruption had ruined his faculty to operate as a rational public-minded individual. Since his split with the president, Calhoun had become everything that Jackson was not. He was now unprincipled, wrongheaded, belligerently irrational, unpatriotic, opportunistic, unstable, fraudulent, and bent upon destroying the union. Jackson, and to a lesser extent Van Buren, could be counted upon to hold the schemes of Calhoun and his Whig associates in check.⁵⁶

This caricatured presentation of Calhoun, along with his presence among the national leaders of the opposition party, made his figure one easily detested in Democratic circles. Attempting to associate support for his character and political measures with local opposition leaders became a common tactic of the Custom House clique during these years. In many cases their attempted association was not a fabrication of slanderous newspaper men. An affinity for the Carolinian did exist among many Whigs in Massachusetts. At several moments this connection was solely due to his opposition to Jackson.⁵⁷ But in others, as we have already seen, men newly converted to the Whig party during Jackson's terms in office had always shared a political connection to the Carolinian. With his split from the president, it became easier for this affinity to be made public once again. Indeed, while it would not be appropriate to label the opponents of the Massachusetts Democracy as Calhounites during this time, it is interesting that first the National Republican and then the Whig rivals of the Statesman clique oftentimes proclaimed themselves in favor of many of the dictates of the Carolinian statesman. As

⁵⁵ Ibid, Jan. 22, 1836.

⁵⁶ Ibid, May 4, 1833, Aug. 30, 1834, Mar. 13, 1837.

⁵⁷ Ibid, Oct. 28, Dec. 28, 1833.

such, the anti-Calhoun sentiments being spouted by the Boston Morning Post and the weekly Statesman were easily redirected as assaults against local politicians or their organs whose pronouncements and actions seemed to endorse much of the course being followed by the senator.

For several reasons, the period between the denouement of the Nullification Crisis and Calhoun's reentry into the Democratic Party in September, 1837, represents an interesting time in the political history of Massachusetts. It was a time when roles were seemingly reversed from those before and certainly from what would come later; a period when allies and rivals were switched in the manner of political musical chairs, revolving around the course followed by John C. Calhoun. That is not to say that all of Massachusetts' political affairs involved the presence of this notable southern statesman. Quite the opposite; Calhoun's appearance in the daily operations of either party was less frequent than that of their own local leaders. But the fact that arguments over his respective vilification and praise, occurred repeatedly in the organs of Boston proves the emotion this man was able to arouse, both positive and negative. Furthermore it helps to show how even during the time of their separation from the senator, the Custom House clique never had his image far from their minds. No doubt part of the reason for this continued referral to the actions of the South Carolinian was due to further efforts on the part of the clique to distance themselves from their former mentor, by demeaning his character. By associating their political opponents with Calhoun, perhaps the leaders of the faction hoped to highlight their dedication to republican ideals and the Jackson administration in contrast. At the very least, by continually harping on the differences between themselves and local Whigs, the paper hoped to illustrate further the divergence of political values between the two groups. Calhoun's image again played an important role in this process.

The most readily available tactic for promoting this negative connection between the Whigs of New England and Calhoun was by calling into question the loyalties of Massachusetts members of the anti-administration party. It was claimed that New

England politicians who allowed themselves to be led by the former vice-president were selling their constituents down the proverbial river. Since John C. Calhoun shared none of their regional interests or political ideology, the thralldom in which he held these Whig politicians was tantamount to a surrender of their principles. By supporting the doctrines of so heterogeneous a party and relying upon the leaders of the Nullification movement to defeat the administration, the Whigs of Massachusetts were aiding their own downfall. Or at least that was the way Henshaw's faction presented this political situation. In October 1835 the Post wrote, 'The union of the Whigs of the North and the Whigs of the South, voting by States, invariable leads to the triumph of Nullification.' By offering further support to this coalition, their Whig rivals were 'wasting [their] votes... to secure the triumph of Nullification in the executive department.' Support for any member of the Whigs' leadership trio constituted a victory for the cause of Calhoun in his efforts to attain Executive power. 'Shall Massachusetts show herself willing,' the Post's editor asked, 'to betray the cause of union into the hands of its bitter and uncompromising foes?'⁵⁸ Taken to its most extreme point, this approach claimed that further support for those who opposed Jackson constituted a vote for Calhoun and his ideals. Such an interpretation equated the Whig party with nullification. This rendition of affairs represented an obvious attempt to bring shame upon their rivals by tying their course to that of a political movement so universally despised in New England. Thus the former Boston sympathizers of the Nullification movement once again essayed an interesting and important shift in political support and endorsement.

The attempts to associate the National Republican and Whig parties with Calhoun and his supposed ideals were not simply rhetorical endeavors on the part of the Post clique against local political enemies. It seems that as the South Carolina senator enacted his final separation from Jackson's Democratic Party, many members of the opposition in Massachusetts welcomed him with open arms. Initially local National Republicans heaped praise upon President Jackson for his actions during the Nullification Crisis in a manner at least as fulsome as found in the columns of Democratic newspapers. By

⁵⁸ Ibid, Oct. 17, 1835.

supporting the principles espoused by Daniel Webster during his memorable debate with Robert Hayne, Jackson seemed to be in complete accord with the sentiment of the majority of National Republican men. Indeed, the leading anti-administration paper in the city was ready to pledge itself as more fervently in favor of the president's actions than their rivals at the Statesman. In February, 1833 the Boston Daily Atlas averred that the Compromise Tariff under consideration would cause all 'Free Trade' men to abandon the President for the political course of Calhoun. Chief among anti-tariff Democrats, noted by this paper were the clique that ran the administration party in their state.⁵⁹ Thus the Atlas attempted to show itself as more favorable toward the cause espoused by Andrew Jackson in his firm stance against South Carolina than the vacillating moderate-tariff supporters among the Custom House group.⁶⁰

Within months, however, such proclamations, tending toward the preservation of the union at all cost began to fade from many public pronouncements of the opponents of Democracy in Massachusetts. Replacing these initial words of praise were critical statements aimed at the president, as well as the increasing presence of charges against his new political heir, Martin Van Buren. Oftentimes portraying the newly installed vice-president as the puppet-master pulling the strings of the president, Whig news sources sought to characterize him as a sly politician, able to manipulate the president and thereby driving policy decisions. It was Van Buren, the common criticism went, who had forced Calhoun out of the inner political circles of the administration, ushering the respected statesman out the door, in order to install himself in the place of successor to the Chief Executive. Later that year the Atlas stated Van Buren had been 'successful in poisoning the mind of the President against many of his earliest and most judicious friends. From the start of his involvement in the Eaton Affair--that successful attempt at 'turning into State affairs, the little petty female jealousies and intrigues of the President's court'-- all of his machinations had been geared toward one goal: 'to raise the 'little

⁵⁹ Boston *Daily Atlas*, Feb. 5, 1833.

⁶⁰ For general sentiment regarding Calhoun and his separation from the Jackson Democratic Party, see the *Daily Atlas*, December 1832-October 1833.

Dutchman' to the Presidency.' His perceived status as a 'very cunning man' may have helped the vice-president to ascend to the ranks of the Executive Department, but once recognized by the citizenry, his true character would prevent his ultimate success.⁶¹ Largely due to his ability to manipulate political affairs, Van Buren had been able to place his stamp on Jackson's administration. Most of the undesirable legislative proposals, especially the defeat of the re-charter for the National Bank, had been the doing of the New Yorker. As a result of the combined charges against him, 'Van Burenism' came to be equated with the worst of historical political movements. His maneuverings, it was regularly claimed, had been far more dangerous than anything previously attributed to Jackson or Calhoun. In fact, in comparison to the nefarious attempts to subvert all good government currently underway in Washington, the Nullification movement had been nothing to fear.

Increasingly, as the opposition to Jackson and Van Buren grew fiercer and as Calhoun's alliance with the Whig party grew stronger, pains were taken to defend the doctrine of interposition. Nullification, although questionable in the instance of South Carolina's proceedings against a legal national tariff, was not a faulty principle. The matter of application was the only point to resolve. Responding to criticism of Calhoun and his doctrines, an Atlas columnist stated, 'The whole theory of Nullification is built upon the Constitution. Everybody allows the right of resistance to unconstitutional laws. The Nullifiers have only attempted to give dignity and safety to their resistance by seeking authority for it in the Constitution itself. If applied to a law undoubtedly unconstitutional--a law for instance abolishing slavery, I should have no objection to their system.' Thus, South Carolina or any other state had the right to resist unconstitutional laws. Massachusetts had done so during the late war, in resisting the Embargo Act during the oft-discussed Hartford Convention. Further defending the actions of the more recent Nullifiers, the author went on to show that their case was more worthy of the doctrine than the issue confronted by the last generation of New Englanders. 'On many accounts the 'Hartford Convention,' was a much more dangerous and alarming affair

⁶¹ Boston *Daily Atlas*, Oct. 29, 1833.

than the Columbia Convention. It was held in a time of war, while the enemy occupied our territory...and it deliberated with *closed doors*.' Despite the danger alluded to in the earlier case, however, the belief that both aggrieved groups were in the right was noted. The Hartford Convention attendees had been 'men of principle, patriotism and integrity.' So too were those who had been at Columbia. 'More honest and high-minded men than McDuffie, Hayne and Hamilton, are not to be found in the whole country.' Thus, due to the patriotism and right-mindedness associated with their new South Carolina cohorts, most especially in light of the administration's long-established penchant for political machinations, the choice of a proper allegiance for New England Whigs was readily apparent. The writer concluded his piece by noting, 'If *coalition* they must be--I for one had much rather unite with the honest citizens of South Carolina, than bow my neck in humble submission to the Albany Regency and the Kitchen Cabinet. I had rather trust the Constitution at the mercy of the Nullifiers, than see it degraded, dishonored and abused by the unprincipled cabal of which Van Buren is the leader.'⁶²

Former Federalist Jackson man John Barton Derby followed a similar path in accepting the motives of Calhoun and nullification. Having switched party alliances for several reasons, by 1835 he had become as staunch an opponent of the Democratic administration in Washington as he had for some time been of the Custom House faction at home. By this time he had also changed his views on the doctrine of Nullification. Worried by what he saw going on in national political circles, he noted how 'the right of property is crumbling to pieces; liberty is not believed to be founded on law and order; an independent judiciary is considered a national evil.' All of the activities of Jackson's government had caused such a change in the public mindset, as to have made the patriots who had created the Constitution seem outdated and worthless ideologically. Much of his criticism came in light of what he viewed as excessive executive encroachment, largely due to Jackson's vetoes of the Bank of the United States. As a result of the calamitous course being followed by the country, Derby saw only one means of preserving the nation's founding principles. Because the president, to his mind, had

⁶² Ibid, Dec. 28, 1833.

singlehandedly arrogated to the executive far more power than the Constitution allowed, thereby acting against the will of the people, their only resort was to revert to the political notions most famously endorsed by Calhoun. Nullification could serve as the antidote to the political evils cropping up in the nation. Included among these were threats of executive monarchy, consolidation of government, excessive veto powers, removal of public officers without legislative approval, partisan appointments, and annulment of Supreme Court decisions. Calling upon the state governments as a security against the over-centralization of power in executive hands, Derby claimed to have seen the light. 'I confess myself a convert to the Carolina Doctrines in a modified sense. If any country ever produced great men and sincere patriots, Calhoun, Hayne, McDuffie and Hamilton are entitled to that honor.'⁶³

Since he believed the Constitution at risk due to the actions of Jackson and Van Buren, Derby acknowledged that reliance upon a controversial doctrine was needed. During his time as Hickory Club President, Derby had publicly criticized Calhoun's repeated confrontations with the administration. Likewise, he and his ilk had made hay of the Custom House's connection to the Carolinian in order to promote their own leadership potential by comparison. Therefore, in this case he was somewhat hesitant to endorse the totality of the late Nullification movement in South Carolina. In the main, however, Derby admitted the soundness of Calhoun's doctrine as a means of protecting individual and minority rights against overly centralized executive power. Agreeing with the general sentiment of local Whigs, he claimed Calhoun was a man who had been wronged by the intrigues of Van Buren and the ham-handed actions of Jackson. While at the time, like the vast majority of his peers in Massachusetts, Derby had advocated the absolute support of Jackson against the actions of the Nullification Party in South Carolina, he had come to realize the wisdom of much of the constitutional basis for their policies. Derby deplored the attitude adopted by the president in his Bank Veto message, when Jackson had averred that he had the 'right to construe the Constitution as *he* [understood] it'. To Derby's mind, such an interpretation of the founders' intent

⁶³ Derby, pg. 161.

represented ‘the most impudent proposition ever submitted to the American people, offering a direct assault upon the Supreme Court and Legislative branches of government.’ Considering Jackson’s actions, Derby proclaimed that the doctrine of interposition, if utilized properly, could not be questioned by any right-minded and impartial American. Thus, because of the dangerous political path trod by the President, the Nullification doctrine seemed to this former Jackson man to offer the ultimate solution for the problems faced by a patriotic minority with no other recourse.⁶⁴

Although it may surprise some to find such strong words in favor of nullification among New England Whigs so soon after the crisis in South Carolina had passed, much of the history of political events in the state seem to caution against such a sentiment. First, it is important to realize that in this period the meaning of the Constitution and the powers it ascribed to different entities, in this case the president and states, were constantly debated. As the Statesman and Morning Post were wont to point out, the actions of Federalists during the War of 1812 had resembled Nullification in form. Thus it is understandable why a former member of that group, despite his noted beliefs in centralized government, would at least temporarily favor that approach toward perceived tyranny. Additionally, Derby and many of the initial Jackson men had been affiliated with John C. Calhoun since the earliest days of the party. Although Calhoun’s close association with the men who would become the rivals of the Bulletin faction for place and power in the state’s Democracy led to a falling out between that faction and the vice-president, future events would help compel a reunion of sorts. Due to Calhoun’s newfound alliance with prominent national Whigs, along with the increased distance from Jackson’s administration on the part of most initial Democrats of the former Federalist school, a mass change in attitude was almost inevitable. Considering that many were already predisposed toward a favorable sentiment for the Carolinian, such an association was almost bound to occur.

Furthermore, the very public disassociation between the Democracy, in the form

⁶⁴ Ibid, pg. 160-170.

of the Post faction's repeated vitriolic pronouncements in its Boston organs, helped to bring about and codify this shuffle in political allegiance. The very presence of many of its former intra-party rivals among the newly formed Whigs of the city, allowed the Statesman and the Post to amplify extant claims against those who supported Calhoun, whether directly by endorsing his ideas or indirectly by the mere advocacy of his party. The vehemence the faction employed against the South Carolina senator in every aspect of his political career following his abandonment of Jackson, allowed for this previously developed propaganda trope to be turned in the direction of one more group. Thereby a reinforced separation of political parties in the city was effected. Of course, much of the secession of Bulletin men like Derby from the Democratic Party in Massachusetts was impelled by the firm grasp the Post faction had on all major public offices in the city. It is apparent, however, in viewing the splits over political ideology that emerged during the period, that the course followed by Jackson in Washington would most likely have led to their voluntary removal from party circles, even without the sense of abandonment provided by the course of appointments in Massachusetts.

Thus, by the middle part of the 1830's the Democracy in Boston was in the complete control of the Statesman faction. At the same time, former rivals for party influence had been removed, most absconding to National Republican and later Whig rivals. During the same period, the Democratic Party's leadership unit, run through the Statesman Office in Boston, had been forced publicly to abandon the interests of John C. Calhoun. Despite its late acknowledgement of the differing political views of each man and its maintaining neutrality during the conflict between president and vice-president until the last possible moment, the paper had during the middle portion of the decade embarked on a wholly different policy regarding the Carolinian. Presenting their former political icon as a psychologically unstable, politically opportunistic, unprincipled, potential disunionist, in direct opposition to the venerable Chief Executive Jackson, the faction hoped to obscure former loyalties. In the main sense they succeeded. Patronage in the city remained in their hands almost entirely. Their organs became the acknowledged voice of the Democratic Party in Massachusetts. It was a verity that what

the Statesman and the Post averred in their pages was taken to be the opinion of the state Democracy entire. Thus, by relying upon an outraged public opinion toward Calhoun, the Custom House clique had cemented its position as the most diehard Jackson men in Massachusetts and New England.

The clique continued to present themselves as the rightful wielders of Democratic power in Massachusetts in the years to come. Despite the fact that they were truly not Van Buren men, having always viewed the New Yorker as a political interloper who had utilized duplicity to displace Vice-President Calhoun, the Post group put on a public front for Jackson's successor. Opponents of the Custom House group alleged their rivals had merely offered support to Van Buren to protect their own patronage interests. It was asserted that these office-holders were actually men 'opposed to Van Buren who [would] vote for him, 'only out of interest in preserving their jobs. Regardless of their actual reasoning, Henshaw and his associates at the Post would continue to proclaim the virtues of the future president. For his part, Van Buren declared that the leaders of Massachusetts Democracy had sufficiently repented for their initial association to the benighted former vice-president and would allow them to maintain their positions of control during the initial period of his administration.⁶⁵ The New Yorker never offered his absolute trust in Henshaw, Greene or Simpson, however, as later events would prove.⁶⁶

⁶⁵ Derby, pg. 164-166.

⁶⁶ Martin Van Buren, 18 Mar. 1840, to George Bancroft, *Bancroft Letters*, MHS; Marcus Morton, 27 Mar. 1837, to Martin Van Buren, *Morton Letterbooks*, MHS.

Chapter 5:

Democratic Party Factionalism: The ‘Country’ Versus ‘City’ Rivalry and the Struggle Over the Head Collectorship.

By the end of Andrew Jackson’s first term as President of the United States, his most influential followers in Boston had gained a stranglehold over all Democratic Party machinery in Massachusetts. Led by David Henshaw, Collector of the Port of Boston, Charles G. Greene, editor of the city’s Democratic organ the Boston Morning Post, Andrew Dunlap, State Attorney General, and John K. Simpson, this group had direct control over most important party affairs. As holders of the most important patronage posts in the city and state, they had collectively sought to present their clique as the staunchest Jackson men in New England and among his most diehard supporters throughout the nation. Utilizing the pages of the Morning Post in conjunction with the several satellite papers distributed throughout Massachusetts and elsewhere in New England, this faction had proclaimed their loyalty to all actions of the administration party on numerous occasions. Often times this absolute fealty to the measures emanating from Washington was expressed by criticizing the opponents of the party. Foremost among these men was their erstwhile benefactor and political idol, John C. Calhoun.

Despite the Statesman clique’s having recently eradicated their original rival Bulletin group led by Henry Orne and William Ingalls from intra-party affairs, other contenders for control of the Democracy began to emerge within the state. Led by the brilliant historian George Bancroft and perennial gubernatorial loser Marcus Morton, several talented and influential Democratic men from outside the Custom House sphere contended for influence and overall control of party affairs throughout the remainder of the decade. On several occasions the rivalry between these outsiders, or ‘Country Party’

men, and the earliest established leaders in Boston, became heated and extremely public. As a result of this continued strife between opposite poles of the Democracy, the party eventually separated into divergent core groups by the dawn of the 1840's.

Several important issues were debated, and disagreed upon, between these two elements of Massachusetts Democracy. The degree of difference between them on several of the most important issues of the day ultimately proved that their separation was based upon far more than personal animosities between leading members. And although disputes over patronage and local party control were at the core of the intra-party political battles during the 1830's, it is clear that the very shape the party would assume was the most important point of conflict. At its core this dispute is easy to explain. It comprised a fight between the fiscally conservative forces of the Post faction, backed by its multi-million, corporately chartered Commonwealth Bank, and the country radicals, soon to be known as the Bay State Democrat group. This latter subset of the state's Democracy espoused the ideals of what nationally were called the Loco Focos, including the abolition of paper money, the end of corporate charters, and legislation outlawing the practice of imprisonment for personal debt.¹ While both groups followed the national party's expansionist crusade, it was the Post faction that was earliest found in support of the annexation of Texas.² On the matter of slavery and its involvement in any kind of congressional debate, neither publicly proclaimed support for the movements of the abolitionists and the right of petition on the matter. Over the period it would become evident, however, that the 'Country Party' was unquestionably more sympathetic to the plight of the agitators and took few pains to hide their negative opinion toward the institution of slavery. Henshaw's faction, on the other hand, was constantly found issuing tacit support for the institution and southern rights in general.³ By the next decade, the somewhat hidden differences between the groups on these issues

¹ Arthur Schlesinger, *The Age of Jackson* (New York 1945). Schlesinger discusses the tendencies of both groups, but focuses most of his attention on the more radical 'Country' faction in making his case for radicalism within the national Democratic Party, in some cases ignoring the important role that Henshaw's 'City' clique played among Massachusetts' Jacksonians.

² *Boston Morning Post*, April 13, 1839.

³ Although Henshaw's views on the institution were never publicized, his sympathies for policies said to favor the South in addition to the stance his faction's mouthpiece the *Boston Morning Post* constantly adopted on the issue, make it quite certain that he harbored little resentment toward slavery or slaveholders.

of national conflict helped to further drive a wedge between them.

The ‘Country Party’ from its start was based upon opposition to the Custom House clique. Sensing that the ruling members of Massachusetts’ Democracy held inordinate control of the party and represented limited interests that would forever remain unpopular among potential Democratic voters, many administration supporters began to level criticism toward the collector and his associates. Their main charge was that with such a small cadre of men directing the policies and actions of the party it could never gain mass support. The patronage Henshaw and company had attained, when coupled with their unique ability to promote their favored doctrines in the pages of Boston’s only Democratic organs and their newly created satellites throughout the state, served to hinder the abilities of the party to truly to represent its constituents. Many of its rivals believed that the Post faction’s focus on Boston at the expense of the rest of the state would doom any chance that Jackson ever had of capturing a majority of Bay State voters. Sensing that the interests of the bulk of state Democrats were not represented accurately in Boston, men like Marcus Morton pushed continually for amendment to the operational procedures of party management.⁴ He once noted that without ‘a little more liberality and disinterestedness, a little more firm dealing, and a little greater regard for the wishes of the whole party...we can never succeed.’⁵ Similar sentiments were also commonplace among his associates. To men on the outside of Democratic leadership, it seemed quite obvious that the patronage interests of the clique did not always accord with all the desirable political goals of the state’s Democracy. Without a modified controlling apparatus, removing at least some of the power from the hands of Henshaw and associates, it was believed that the party would forever be doomed to a minority status within the state.⁶

In the days following the organization of Massachusetts’ Democracy, the party’s leadership group managed to attain and strengthen their control of all political functions.

⁴ Marcus Morton, 4 Mar. 1833, to Nathaniel Cobb; Marcus Morton, Feb. 12, 1834, to Joel Harrington, *Marcus Morton Letterbooks*, MHS; *Boston Bay State Democrat*, Apr. 18, 20, 1843.

⁵ Marcus Morton, 10 Feb. 1835, to Lewis Libby, *Morton Letterbooks*, MHS.

⁶ John Dickinson, 18 May 1835, to George Bancroft, *Bancroft Letters*, MHS; *Boston Bay State Democrat*, Aug. 10, 1843.

This extension of political power was gained largely by means of Custom House patronage. With the expulsion of the Post clique's original intra-party enemies during the years following Jackson's election to the presidency, the power exerted by Henshaw and associates increased significantly. Largely due to the stranglehold this group held upon the mechanisms of party organization, they were able nearly single-handedly to direct the doctrines and policies of the administration's supporters in the Bay State. The clique, capitalizing upon this overwhelming clout over local affairs, was able to institute several important procedural changes to the standards of party rule. Most of these reforms were proposed directly to enhance their ability to manage Democratic affairs more easily through their associates.⁷ Beginning in the 1829 and 1830 Democratic State Conventions, the clique was able to gain control of appointments to committees for the various towns, wards, and counties as well as to have the greatest influence on the nomination of chairmen of these gatherings. With the establishment of the controlling State Central Committee, the faction was formally allowed to employ financial and organizational connections to ensure that its favorite candidates were nominated and its measures adopted at all meetings and conventions throughout the state. Since no towns or counties were allowed to diverge from the judgment of the Central Committee, Henshaw as its chairman was able to direct the Democracy in the same manner utilized at the Custom House. When the Collector gave up his role as chairman in 1831, he was succeeded by John Simpson. In the minds of their several rivals, the Post faction with the collector at its head had arranged such a structure in order to ensure that their interests would outweigh those of any other administration men in the state.⁸

Furthermore, many of these rivals continually leveled the claim that the faction had little interest in expanding the influence of the party to gain more popular support throughout the state. If the wishes of the Democracy's majority were supported through convention platforms or by allowing more able candidates to represent the party, it was alleged that the unpopularity of the Custom House group would preclude its continuing to direct local political affairs. Similar claims had been previously made by the Bulletin

⁷ John Barton Derby. *Political Reminiscences* (Boston 1835), pg. 70-86.

⁸ *Boston Bay State Democrat*, April 18, 20, 1843.

faction, who repeatedly insisted on their having been driven from the Democratic Party due to the interests of their rivals in supporting Henshaw's able manipulation of administration men to gain the majority of posts for his followers.⁹ However, once this group of critics had separated from the party, the majority of the criticism against the control of the ruling clique came from other genuine Democrats. As the Post and the Statesman were the party's organs of the time period in Boston, Democratic skepticism toward the Custom House men was never well publicized. Much of the words against the policies and actions of their rivals for power within the party organization would come from 'Country' Democrats nearly a decade later, after the rift between the groups had become public. That does not mean that their frustrations were a product of revisionism, however. The letters of Marcus Morton and George Bancroft along with evidence found in the columns of the future party organ, the Bay State Democrat, prove that their frustration was contemporary with earlier events.

The 'Country Party' leadership believed that Henshaw's, Greene's and their associates' motive in helping organize the Jackson Party in Massachusetts was directly related to this small clique's self-interest. Because they had already utilized considerable influence with John C. Calhoun to seize control of the Democracy, thereby installing fellow office seekers in important positions, the Custom House group had little interest in expanding the local party's base of constituents. Improving the reach of the state's Democratic Party would involve the assimilation of many new groups of political men beyond their ability to control.¹⁰ Thus, expanding the party would mean allowing inevitable challenges, both ideologically and politically, to David Henshaw and his followers. For that reason they aimed to keep their political organization small, according to their intra-party rivals. This approach directly damaged the overall outlook of Jackson supporters in Massachusetts and was especially troubling to 'Country Party' men beyond the Morning Post's sphere of influence. To Morton, Bancroft and their associates, the Post faction sought to hold the party captive to their own 'perversion, corruption and abuse' from the start. In this rendition, Massachusetts' Democracy was

⁹ Boston *Evening Bulletin and Jackson Republican*, Sep. 3, 7, 1829.

¹⁰ Marcus Morton, 1 Jun. 1836, to David Henshaw, *Morton Letterbooks*, MHS.

meant merely to serve the selfish, patronage-minded purposes of their clique. They cared little for influence in Washington and less still for true Democratic Party dominance in the state. These men were perfectly willing to play second fiddle to their National Republican and Whig opponents in the state's canvass. As long as they could hold onto their patronage posts, while the administration succeeded nationally, the clique had no interests in the pursuit of truly democratic ideals. The great body of Massachusetts' Democrats, in the minds of those opposed to the Custom House faction, cared little for this 'species of democracy,' but were continually thwarted in all attempts to expand the influence of true principles in legislation.¹¹

From an early date Marcus Morton was never terribly enamored of the doctrines or political actions of Henshaw or the clique. In the initial period of the party's existence, despite his support for Jackson, he was extremely hesitant to approve the course followed by Henshaw and his Custom House men. In fact in the 1828 campaign for governor, he would not accept Henshaw's proffered endorsement, made largely out of Henshaw's hope to gain the support of rural areas for the Jackson cause.¹² Realizing that the reach of his clique carried little weight beyond Boston at this early date, David Henshaw sought a more politically prominent man to represent the party. Marcus Morton's career as a congressman a decade earlier and his status as a Massachusetts Supreme Court justice made him a prime candidate for the nomination. In approaching the most viable politician among local Jackson men, Henshaw was attempting to solidify his party faction as the true power source in Massachusetts at a time when his struggle with the Bulletin group was emerging. While Marcus Morton did allow his name to be placed on the ballot as Democratic gubernatorial candidate, he rejected the public support of Henshaw and the Boston Statesman.¹³ Such a rebuff of the advantages affiliation with this faction would provide makes Morton's disfavor with the party's ruling group apparent. Additionally, the similar favor that Morton and his rivals among the Statesman group held for John C. Calhoun would seem to make the local sources of their

¹¹ Boston *Bay State Democrat*, Apr. 18, 1843.

¹² Marcus Morton, 21 Feb. 1829, to William Parmenter, *Morton Letterbooks*, MHS.

¹³ Arthur B. Darling, *Political Changes in Massachusetts, 1824-1828: A Study of Liberal Movements in Politics* (New Haven 1925), pg. 74-74.

hostility more evident. While in future gubernatorial contests, Morton publicly accepted the endorsement of Henshaw and the Custom House clique, the tension between him and the controlling elements of the party remained just below the surface.¹⁴

Not just Morton but perhaps a majority of the state's Democrats were averse to the complete control exercised by the Post faction. Due to their disgust at what was seen as uncontested power wielded from the Statesman office, these political outsiders determined to make a play for more power within local party operations. Their collective move to make the Massachusetts Democratic Party more representative began at the March, 1832 state convention held in Boston. There, delegates mostly from areas outside the capital area and many beyond Custom House influence, moved to alter procedures to nominate a State Central Committee. This legislative body was to be comprised of one delegate from each county. Each Central Committee member was in turn to chair his local county committee, thereby holding great control over those assemblies. In years past the Central Committee had been responsible for voting as a group to decide all county committee chairmen. Since Boston had been given a disproportionate level of influence on the State Central Committee with David Henshaw as perpetual chairman, the Custom House group was continuously able to dictate the composition of many county committees. However, by the rules instituted at this 1832 state convention, the clique's control over Democratic affairs in Massachusetts was somewhat lessened. Henshaw's influence, though reduced, was nevertheless, still notable. Since these new party organizational laws allowed the State Committee to veto opprobrious resolutions and censure members of local county committees, a degree of control centered around the Boston Custom House remained.¹⁵

Further modifications made over the next several years did much to alleviate this residual control held by Henshaw and his associates over Democratic affairs outside

¹⁴ Marcus Morton, 30 Mar. 1830, to John C. Calhoun; Morton, 28 Feb. 1830, to David Henshaw, *Morton Letterbooks*, MHS. Morton wrote to Calhoun to offer his support to the Collector in his dispute with the Orne-Lyman faction. He also recommended the appointment of Henshaw clique man D.D. Brodhead for an appointment as Navy Agent in Boston. In writing to Henshaw he also offered his support for the Collector's branch of the local Democratic Party.

¹⁵ *Boston Bay State Democrat*, Apr. 20, 1843; Derby, pg. 80-85.

Boston. At the next annual state convention, held in September at Worcester, Morton and his 'Country' associates pushed through a new policy that removed the ability of the State Central Committee to veto representative appointments or measures decided at all county gatherings within the state. This change in procedure was instituted in order to leave appointments to county and town committees solely in the hands of local residents. Finally at the 1835 State Convention, the composition of the State Central Committee was directly challenged. At that time the 'Country' Democrats were able to force through legislation that substituted congressional districts for counties as a basis for choosing delegates. Whereas in the past one member from each county was appointed to represent his region in the Central Committee, this modification called for two delegates from each congressional area and three at large representatives to constitute the larger body's membership. Due to the fact that state congressional areas were smaller than counties, such a change increased the size of the Central Committee while ensuring that the additional at-large members would be chosen by the majority faction at the convention. Thus it was reasoned, the party's central body would become more representative, as actual numerical strength and not patronage power played a greater role in ruling the Democratic organization. Without the ability to veto county committee decisions and with a more broadly-based State Central Committee, Henshaw's firm control of the party was directly jeopardized by these convention amendments pushed forward by Morton's 'Country' group.¹⁶

Beyond the emerging organizational changes initiated by the Democratic majority, it is also important to note the sentiments of leading party members regarding the Custom House's manner of exercising leadership, in order to understand the nature of opposition throughout the state. The Central Committee's seemingly incongruous clout and the ability of an apparently small group of men to direct its composition, seemed the ultimate example of disproportionate control in the hands a non-representative body. The fact that many of the Committee's past decisions had been made behind the closed doors of the Custom House or Boston Morning Post offices, seemed a dubious political approach. The Post faction's ability covertly to pull the strings of party control caused

¹⁶ Boston *Bay State Democrat*, Apr. 18, 20, 1843.

many of their critics to view this limited group as a small troupe of puppet masters, running the political show from behind stage. In Marcus Morton's words, there had been 'a little too much disposition to do things covertly and without the knowledge if not against the wishes of the party,' during the Jackson Party's early days in Massachusetts.¹⁷ This represented an inappropriate course of action for any group committed to democracy. Thus, the measures taken by the Democratic legislators and State Convention sought to rectify what had been obviously worrisome to many of the potential party leaders. That their actions further removed control from Henshaw and his State Central Committee was not accidental. From the 1832 Massachusetts State Convention forward, that body could no longer be counted upon as a staunch ally of the Custom House interests. As a result much of the direct influence of the handful of politicians centered around the Morning Post had been circumscribed.

Under this progressive evolution of appointment measures, Henshaw and his associates lost further influence following the Worcester State Convention of 1835, when the state's Democratic congressional corps formally approved of that gathering's proceedings. The following year this restrictive policy was continued as that session's Democratic state legislators became solely responsible for appointing the State Central Committee, due to a newly passed proposal at the annual convention. Since the Post faction had no representatives in the legislature, this committee would be continually composed of men outside the Custom House's political orbit. In each succeeding convention these same rules came up again for approval and passed each time. Such repeated success by Democrats with interests and goals opposite to those of the clique helps to show the obvious momentum that had been gathered by Statesman opponents within the state Democracy. As the Custom House faction was no longer able to guarantee its guidance of all local political affairs, its power waned in other areas as well.¹⁸

Out of concern for party unity, the Post was unable publicly to denounce their

¹⁷ Marcus Morton, 10 Feb. 1835, to Lewis Libby, *Morton Letterbooks*, MHS.

¹⁸ *Boston Bay State Democrat*, Apr. 18, 1843.

fellow Democrats for taking a leading role in enacting these changes in the conduct of routine political business in the state. Instead the paper chose to attack political allies of the 'Country' faction. The group most prominently addressed in these diatribes was the Workingmen's Party, with which George Bancroft had until recently been affiliated. This party sided most often with the doctrines of the Democracy, endorsing Jackson and Van Buren over any Whig opponents. Though their agenda was often times notably more radical than that proposed in Washington, the Workingmen's entity was quite easily conflated with its usual Democratic allies.¹⁹ Within Massachusetts political affairs its organ, the Boston Advocate, had strongly endorsed the limitation of the political power exercised from Boston. This group's leaders regularly promoted turning true party control over to the state's rural and outlying residents. Due to this stance, the paper had drawn the ire of the Post. Unable to level any assault at the more prominent and overtly Democratic politicians in the state who had pushed most strongly for the reforms taking place, Henshaw's faction chose the only viable route. As a result the Workingmen's Party, mainly through its news organ, was to stand in for their nominal Democratic allies. They received criticism for the changes that had been instituted as a response to the power wielded by the inner party circles in Boston, mainly because 'Country' Democrats were in practice unavailable for such public comment out of concern for political decorum.²⁰

Claiming that the Workingmen held beliefs contrary to the doctrines of Democracy and hence the interests of many of its constituents, the Post painted this group as false friends. Labeled as men who affirmed their "willingness to see the strength of the [Democratic] party increased, while they [were] constantly endeavoring to proscribe and drive from its ranks its most important members," the Post hoped to raise doubts about the loyalties of those who pushed against its clique's control. Although they endorsed ostensible harmony this group had repeatedly attempted to stir discord behind the scenes, particularly in amending the ways that Democratic Party business had been

¹⁹ Arthur B. Schlesinger. *The Age of Jackson* (Boston 1945), pg. 149-151. Schlesinger notes that the Workingmen were natural allies with radical Democrats, but were estranged from Henshaw's group, delaying their entry to the Democracy for some time.

²⁰ Boston *Morning Post*, Dec. 23, 1835, Feb. 7, 1837.

conducted in the past, the Post claimed. Their protests against office-holders needed to be taken in the context from which they came. Those posts had gone to the most able and democratic-minded men in the city. Any reaction against their selection constituted sour grapes and a lack of concern for the most effective approach to furthering the interests of the Democracy.²¹

The Post typically accused the Workingmen of trying to remove control from the leading elements of the party in Massachusetts, namely those leaders in Boston. In so doing, it was claimed, they had followed false doctrines. Much like their ‘Country’ allies, the Workingmen’s Party had called the influence of the State Central Committee an example of unprincipled and undemocratic minority rule from the capital. They had actually encouraged the changes in nominating the Committee and the lessening of the powers of that influential body in order to pursue their own interests. Painting such a movement as appropriate to ensure balanced representation throughout the state, this group had turned around and instituted a form of Democratic governance that was solely intended to give direct influence to their cohorts. “The plan they recommended,” the Post claimed, “was for the very purpose of placing the control of the party in the hands of a few of their associates in the exact place from which, they endeavored to convince those they wished to aid them in their trickery, they were desirous it should be removed.” In removing power from the Custom House the Workingmen’s own friends in Boston and its vicinity would be the only beneficiaries in the Post’s rendition of events. The outlying areas had benefited little from such a political restructuring. By trying to associate the movement that had diminished the Custom House’s influence with the behavior of ‘an inconstant, a lazy, and an unprincipled set of men,’ the clique hoped to convince the public that their slight loss of influence could be attributed to nefarious backroom dealings. This was exactly the same type of charge constantly leveled against the ruling practices of the faction itself: selfishness, collective pursuit of personal gain, and covert attempts to form party ruling circles in their own image.²²

²¹ Ibid, Dec. 23, 1835.

²² Ibid.

Furthering their criticism of the amended system of political control, now delegated to county and ward committees over the state central organization, the faction called upon fellow Democrats to note the implications of such a process. Claiming that these changes would merely serve to weaken party organization, making it a much more dispersed entity, the Post warned of the potential dangers of such newfound political realities. In the opinion of Henshaw and associates, it was only by centralizing party organization, eschewing the involvement and influence of those who were not true Democrats and allowing those who had successfully manned the helm thus far to remain in power, that the administration party in Massachusetts could succeed and help their fellows throughout the nation. Due to the Federalist bent of their state, the need for purifying the ranks and solidifying control of party operations was clear, the leaders of Massachusetts Democracy claimed. A state as ‘uncongenial to the growth of republican principles as Massachusetts,’ could not have been ‘revolutionized’ but by ‘industrious application.’ Only by continuing the processes that had brought a measure of success up to that point could more of the same be hoped for. By making changes whose results were wholly unpredictable, the Post worried that the fortunes of their cohorts in the state could be potentially damaged. The paper argued, ‘A more favorable time for a thorough and efficient organization of the democratic party, has not presented itself for years, and should not be suffered to pass without the adoption of such measures as will, if persevered in, bring this ancient Commonwealth once more into the democratic fold.’²³ The measures advocated by the Post were not the same as those recently passed in State Conventions and legislative conclaves. A desire to return to a system more similar to that which had functioned in Massachusetts in the earliest years of Democratic control in Washington informed their suggested policy. If such divergence from the standard norms of electoral operation as those currently advocated by rival Democratic politicians were allowed to continue, the routine and trusted processes of the past that had allowed for effective operational functions of the Democratic Party would be suspended. Under that circumstance, the adverse situation that had always been present in one of the states most hostile to the administration of Andrew Jackson would have become even more troublesome to the president’s true supporters, in the words of their news organ.

²³ Ibid, Feb. 7, 1835.

Representing themselves as the actual conscience of the party in Massachusetts, the clique hinted that those who did not agree with their views were forsaking the principles that had allowed for Democratic votes incrementally to increase during the preceding years. ‘We trust there are no democrats who do not expect one day to see a republican majority in the Commonwealth--none who would forsake their principles because they are unpopular here--and none who are unwilling to unite in a well directed effort to free the State from that federal bondage whose perpetuity would be fatal to the existence of liberal principles.’ Directly criticizing those Workingmen, and by implication their own intra-party rivals, who had declared it necessary to change course because the Democracy had yet to gain a political majority anywhere in the state, the paper went on to note that more time for development was needed. Federalist principles had held sway in Massachusetts since the Constitutional Convention and could not be expected to disappear overnight. The current time was not one to despair over failure. Instead the gradual successes achieved under current Democratic organization should be emphasized. Due to their responsibility to the ‘democracy of the nation, and to the principles of that democracy,’ it was imperative to ‘labor to strengthen the one by disseminating the other.’ The only way to accomplish this goal was through unity, not dispersion. Centralized control, best achieved by allowing the current holders of power to maintain their grasp and direction of affairs, was the only manner in which to achieve the heretofore elusive goal.²⁴

Out of interest in party unity, the Post faction could not publicly denounce those Democratic critics outside the Custom House orbit by name. Because of the political situation at the time it would have been patently counterproductive to have verbally abused or questioned the loyalties of particular men who were nominally similar in political outlook to themselves. The relative weakness of the state Democracy greatly informed this approach. The political situation at the time presented an interesting scenario. Since the clique had the administration’s trust, there was little concern of their losing their stranglehold on the important patronage offices in Boston. Henshaw and his

²⁴ Ibid.

associates were sure to maintain possession of the purse strings of the local Democracy as a result. On the other hand, the state's most prominent political offices, especially the positions in the Legislature, were becoming increasingly available to Democrats outside the faction's orbit. As these rival groups noticed their opportunities to attain political control of the state, thereby undermining the abilities of the leadership faction to dictate policy, many of their members attempted to move the balance of political power further away from the Custom House. Thus despite their continued financial clout and the obvious advantage such a circumstance brought along with it, the Post group was becoming increasingly concerned with the course political events were tending to follow during the mid-1830's. Such doubt led to nebulous and vague accusations against mysterious Democrats who acted against the best interests of the party, by pushing for a course different from that which affairs had followed to that point. The faction, through its mouthpiece the Boston Morning Post, tried to paint itself as preservers of Democratic interests, as opposed to those who chose to take issue with methods that had allowed the party gradually to advance up until that date.²⁵ That this approach was done through the proxy of the Workingmen makes it no less real or important.

Unfortunately for the Custom House clique, all amendments to party organization, structure and operation were approved in the successive state conventions of the mid-1830s. With those changes the role that Henshaw and his associates had in party affairs were gradually and permanently reduced. Rivals of the clique contended then and later that 'keeping the party small' had been the goal of this group since the days preceding General Jackson's first electoral victory. They further charged that during each successive year of Andrew Jackson's first term the faction had placed more emphasis on maintaining and increasing its stranglehold on party affairs. This policy was pursued by means of patronage appointments, resolutions that rewarded control of local affairs to central rather than state committees, and most prominently by excluding those who did not agree with their principles or methods from the nodes of influence. It is important to realize that despite their great differences in political ideology, the 'Country Democrats' by and large did not favor the expulsion of former Federalist

²⁵ Ibid, Feb. 1, 1837.

Jackson men from the party's ranks.²⁶

Democratic Legislators and others outside Custom House control continuously claimed the merit of these 'Country Party' charges. Pointing to the successive gubernatorial elections from 1833 through 1837, they noted the increase of support for Marcus Morton, the party's perennial candidate. His totals had nearly doubled during that time period, going from 18,683 to upward of 33,000 votes. That these numbers were due to the loss of control by Henshaw and associates is questionable. It is quite likely that the influx of former Anti-Mason and Workingmen Party members directly influenced the popularity of the Democratic candidate.²⁷ Nevertheless, as the party increased in size, the clique's sway over party affairs correspondingly decreased. As a result of this emerging battle over influence and control of the party, the rivalry between members of the Post faction and their emerging opponents became more heated and divisive in nature. For the rest of the decade fissures in party affairs remained largely out of public view. Nonetheless, despite the latent nature of these disputes, there were very real and potentially damaging divisions within the party that threatened severely to undermine any chances for electoral triumph in Massachusetts.

The issue of Custom House faction control over the Massachusetts Democratic Party was of special importance due to the differences in political ideology between those respectively styled 'City' and 'Country' Democrats. Although both groups were staunch supporters of Andrew Jackson and his party's measures on many political matters, their opinions differed greatly. Because of these divergences, a review of their respective beliefs is merited. Perhaps the best way to describe the variances that existed between these two factions is to utilize the terminology employed by Arthur B. Darling in his seminal work on the Jackson Democratic Party in Massachusetts. In his 1925 monograph, titled Political Changes in Massachusetts Darling employed the lexicon of several of his subjects, labeling the Post faction as the conservative element of Massachusetts Democracy. Opposed to them were the more radical elements of the

²⁶ Derby, pg. 70-86; *Boston Bay State Democrat*, Apr. 8, 1843; *Boston Daily Atlas*, Nov. 1, 1837.

²⁷ *Boston Bay State Democrat*, Apr. 20, 1843.

party. Despite their common interests in the issues that divided the two great American parties, the two Democratic factions had differences of outlook on many major issues of the day. Though these divisions were largely hidden from the public, they did help form distinctive approaches to the overall meaning of Democracy in the minds of each group's leaders.²⁸

The radical or equal rights point of view espoused most prominently by such men as Bancroft and Morton, had become ascendant both in national and local affairs by the end of the decade. In the words of the Bay State Democrat, which became this faction's organ later in the decade, 'Radical democracy is opposed to special legislation,--is opposed to acts of incorporation for business purposes,--is opposed to granting exclusive privileges,--is opposed to monopolies of all kinds whatsoever,--is opposed to our present banking system, as being injurious to the interests of the whole people,--and is in favor of freedom to its fullest extent, so long as that freedom does not interfere with the rights of others.' The need to distinguish between itself and other members of the party came about because their opponents were alleged to be men 'in favor of granting acts of incorporation of individuals for particular purposes, and by which acts those individuals became clothed with particular and special powers which others in their individual capacities cannot enjoy without a special legislative action.' Unsaid but certainly implied here was that the Boston Morning Post faction was at the forefront of this group of opposing party members.²⁹

The more financial and socially conservative group, centered around the Statesman faction, displayed marked favoritism toward banking. As a proprietary member of the Commonwealth Bank, one of Boston's largest financial institution, David Henshaw was a noted proponent of state banks. Also, somewhat untrue to his Jacksonian reputation, he was in favor of a national bank. In 1831, the port collector headed a delegation of prosperous Bostonians who petitioned Congress to establish a national institution with a \$50 million capital investment. This new corporation would

²⁸ Darling; Schlesinger, pg. 171-172, 175-176, 231. Schlesinger came to a similar conclusion in his *Age of Jackson*, while questioning the merits of calling the Morning Post clique Democrats at all.

²⁹ Boston *Bay State Democrat*, May 10, 1839.

replace Biddle's bank, which the petitioners opposed for many of the same reasons the president would enumerate in his later rejection of that institution. This group hoped to attain a congressional mandate to establish bank branches throughout the country, paying annual taxes to the various states in which they were located. Backed largely by mercantile and manufacturing interests, Theodore Lyman Jr. among their ranks, Henshaw's memorial was rejected by Congress. Nonetheless, this attempt to establish a centralized bank with greater financial means than the soon to be vilified B.U.S. showed that Henshaw's interests in banking extended far beyond the state level. That was the case at least during this earlier time period.³⁰

Although he was rebuffed in this instance, Henshaw soon began to follow the Jackson party line in arguing against the Bank of the United States in the period following the president's veto of 1832. His attitude toward banking at this time was much more favorable than that of his intra-party rivals. Henshaw later became well-known as the man who had proposed to President Jackson the idea of pet banks to hold all government deposits, during the President's tour of New England in the summer of 1832. While the amount of credit to be granted to Henshaw for formulating this policy is open to dispute, it is certain that he was a firm advocate of the prosperity of state or local banks. His Commonwealth Bank came to be the beneficiary of government moneys both in the form of the removed deposits and of Custom House duties. As such, the bank was privy to funds that otherwise would have gone to branches of the B.U.S. Thus while Henshaw had good reason to belittle Biddle's institution, he never extended to the increased finances of his own bank the type of criticism that other Democrats leveled against it and like institutions.³¹ Because of the vested interest which the Commonwealth Bank and the Post faction clique had to obtain the removal of deposits from the B.U.S., the paper's assaults on Biddle and his friends were repeated and vehement. Asserting that the only men interested in continuing the government funds in the national institution were like-minded 'agents of Biddle and the agents of the Nullifiers,' hoping to 'entrap our citizens' into dependence on their favored institution,

³⁰ Darling, pg. 125; Schlesinger, pg. 171-172; *Boston Bay State Democrat*, Apr. 27, 1843.

³¹ Derby, pg. 152-153.

the clique displayed a changed opinion about the status of national banking, an institution they had seen as trustworthy in prior years.³²

In a similar manner the Custom House group differed from the ‘Country Party’ on the important political issue of corporations and monopolies. While the latter vilified all legislative charters allowing privileged status for institutions based on pooled capital investments as inherently tilted toward well-heeled members of society, the Post group disagreed. To these men, corporations were at times a necessity as they allowed for individuals who otherwise would have no chance to become involved in public investments to utilize their resources in a productive manner. In a Fourth of July, 1836 speech Henshaw responded to criticisms of corporate interests issued from the lips of radical Democrats. ‘To abandon the system [of chartering corporations] as some ultra theorists demand, would be to stop short in the march of improvement. If there be abuses in it--and all systems are liable to abuses--correct them, but to prohibit all corporate associations of wealth, which are always controllable by the legislative will, would be yielding to the demands of folly, ignorance and knavery.’ While his rivals within the Democracy had largely adopted the view that all such institutions of corporate interest were categorically flawed, Henshaw was much more stinting in his criticism. Allowing for the correctable nature of the flaws that were often associated with such interests, he showed himself to be much more conservative on the matter than men like Bancroft who readily denied the legitimacy of monopolies and institutions of chartered wealth at all times.³³

Additionally enraging his Democratic critics, Henshaw and his political cronies were supporters of paper money in the initial years of Massachusetts Democracy. Because of his financial interest as a member of the board of the Commonwealth, this position is not surprising, despite his later protestations against non-specie currency. In his 1831 pamphlet ‘Remarks upon the Bank of the United States,’ Henshaw argued that excessive issue of paper had no effect on the value of coin as long as bills were

³² Boston *Morning Post*, Jan. 9, 1834.

³³ David Henshaw, “*An Address, Delivered Before An Assembly of Citizens from all Parts of the Commonwealth, at Faneuil Hall.*” (Boston 1836)

redeemable at the ‘pleasure of the holder in specie.’ In this document, the port collector combated those who argued that paper money and credit undermined the country’s financial system. Though the Post group would undergo a change in sentiment on the paper issue, especially in light of Van Buren’s proposed Independent Treasury System, it is important to note that the connection they had to the Commonwealth helped assure that this group remained loyal to the continued existence of credit and bank notes as a significant source of financial capital for much of this period.³⁴

At the same time that the Post group was espousing such sentiments favorable to banking and paper money, their rivals rarely hesitated to show their disfavor toward all financial institutions. This resentment was especially evident in the political statements and beliefs of George Bancroft. An inveterate opponent of banking, the Springfield politician expended much of his earliest political energy railing against the system then in place. His criticism extended to include Henshaw’s 1831 petition to Congress. Bancroft’s hatred toward banking was so well known that members of the more radical Workingmen’s Party looked to him as the man to lead the state’s Democracy away from the associations that had hindered them from joining its ranks in the past.³⁵ Unable to unite with a party led by such an apparent pro-bank capitalist as David Henshaw, such groups sought out men with a public aversion toward all banking to bring dissidents like themselves and their associates into the Democratic fold. Workingmen Party leader John B. Eldredge wrote to Bancroft in September 1834, urging him to publicize further his own opposition to all banks. The only way to disassociate the state Democracy from the ‘aristocratic’ interests of such men as Henshaw, he stated, was to proclaim aversion to like ideals. Eldredge’s political associates and constituents had “for some time disapproved of the course of policy pursued by the Aristocracy of New England, in the multiplying of Banks and other monopolies, constituting in reality the ‘dynasty of modern states.’” As Bancroft had ‘at several different times and places...stood forth as the advocate and defender’ of the interests of those disaffected people who to the writer’s mind constituted the ‘very essence of Democracy,’ a man who was ‘conscientiously

³⁴ David Henshaw, *Remarks Upon the Bank of the United States: Being an Examination of the Committee of Ways and Means, made to Congress, April 30 By a Merchant.* (Boston 1831)

³⁵ Darling, pg. 188-189; Schlesinger, pg.

opposed to all the various classes of monopolies' that were 'so rapidly fastening themselves upon the body politic,' he was the likeliest candidate to bring them to their rightful political home. Having the ability to bring these 'producing classes' to the party of Jackson in a manner that conservative elements like Henshaw and the Post faction could not, Bancroft was appealed to as a political savior time and time again.³⁶

Although Marcus Morton had not always shared a similar sentiment toward banking, by the mid-1830's he would come around to his friend Bancroft's political ideology on the matter. Indeed in 1831 Morton had shown favor for Biddle's U.S. Bank, publishing a pamphlet defending the institution. His views on that financial concern changed quickly, however. In a short time he went from support for such monetary corporations to taking the same position as that adopted by their most pronounced detractors. Due to his newfound attitude to banking, Morton believed it was impossible for opponents to paint his faction's political ideals as lacking in radicalism. Writing to Bancroft in September 1835, Morton stated, "I have no fear that any one will represent too strongly my radical democracy, my hostility to monopolies and every thing approaching or resembling my desire to improve the intellectual and moral improvement of the whole people.' His sympathies were invariably skewed toward the lower and working classes. Morton further wrote, 'Wealth has an undue and dangerous influence. And it must be the first duty of Government to guard against the encroachments.' Situations that allowed 'the wealth of many' to be 'managed by a few', were 'more alarmingly dangerous' than all other political scenarios. In such circumstances, it remained impossible for individual responsibility to check the inevitable abuses of the powerful who would invariably ignore all moral standards.³⁷

Morton's newfound vehemence against all corporate interests was indicative of an emerging desire to distance himself further from the current leadership wing of Massachusetts Democracy. Truly believing in liberal causes in these and other instances, Morton was more comfortable associating with Bancroft and his Workingmen

³⁶ John B. Eldredge, 10 Sep. 1834, to George Bancroft, *Bancroft Papers*, MHS.

³⁷ Marcus Morton, 9 Sep. 1835, to George Bancroft, *Bancroft Papers*, MHS.

allies than with the Post group. His attempts to eliminate the centralized control of the clique were directly rooted in antipathy for the political beliefs held by Henshaw and his fellow leaders of the Massachusetts Democratic Party. Morton's desires to be marked in the columns of radical Democracy can best be explained as a need to stand apart from Henshaw and his allies. That is not to say that Morton did not harbor the same radical sentiments as Bancroft and his political allies. It is merely more plausible to state that Morton hoped to differentiate himself from the more conservative party branch, in hopes of giving increased energy to the brand of Democracy that he believed to be more likely to bring about the proper political course in Massachusetts.³⁸

Morton's change of heart on the matter of banking occurred long before that of Henshaw and his group. In hopes of strengthening Massachusetts Democracy along with his 'Country' faction's place in it, Morton encouraged Bancroft to use his influence as a former member of the Workingmen's Party to help bring that group into the party's ranks. The latter's well-known opinion as an opponent of all banking was urged forward by the perennial gubernatorial candidate.³⁹ Morton also provided proof of his own disapprobation toward banking of all kinds by denying past activity in any type of financial institution. Responding to charges from Whig papers in Boston accusing him of having petitioned to become a director of the city's Hancock Bank, Morton vehemently proclaimed his perpetual lack of interest in any such post. He vowed to Bancroft that he had no tie to any bank or corporate entities, despite his having been privately elected a director of the Hancock without his knowledge. Having summarily declined that appointment upon notification of his election, Morton hoped to illustrate for all his refusal to associate with any types of banks. On that question he had come to adopt the line that Bancroft had always held and thus brought himself firmly into the columns of the 'Country Party' in staunch opposition to their 'City' rivals and their close ties to the Commonwealth Bank.⁴⁰

Bancroft's close association with the Workingmen's Party and his ability to bring

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Marcus Morton, 29 Oct. 1835, to George Bancroft, *Morton Letterbooks*, MHS

that group into the Democratic fold also provided important insight into the differences between the branches of Massachusetts Democracy. While the more radical wing was wholly ready to admit Workingmen as potential Democratic allies, their counterparts in the Post group were much more hesitant. In fact, during the early portion of the 1830's the Post repeatedly offered criticism of that party. Believing that the interests of the Workingmen largely resembled those of the great mass of Democrats, the Morning Post questioned why the group had avoided direct association with the Jacksonians for so long. The hesitancy of that group's leadership to join the ranks of Massachusetts Democracy seemed somewhat self-serving to the collector and his ilk. In actuality the role played by Henshaw and his associates at the head of the party was itself responsible for the Workingmen's continued lack of commitment.⁴¹ Interestingly enough, however, the pages of the Morning Post were never the host of strong demands for Workingmen support. Perhaps the charges of Post faction opponents that the clique essayed to keep the party small are proven by such a realization. It is more likely, however, that during the first half of the 1830's the leaders of the clique saw the radical doctrines of the Workingmen as too far removed from their more conservative interests to issue ardent calls for these individuals to join the Democratic ranks. Aware that the presence of such individuals would help drive the party agenda in a direction varying from that which they typically desired, the Post group felt comfortable making seemingly tepid appeals to this group to join the Democracy during electoral periods. The clique would warmly accept such support if it meant an increase in its candidates' abilities to gain or hold office. Their assistance in the formulation of platforms, policies, and agendas, however, was something the Custom House group would gladly do without. While Henshaw and his followers changed their public stance and more readily tried to engage this and similarly radical movements in the near future, they remained personally aloof from Workingmen's interests during the period of their control over the state's Democracy.⁴²

For their part, most Workingmen were simply unable to join a political organization that seemed to be so deeply involved with banking and corporate interests.

⁴¹ Boston *Morning Post*, Oct. 30, 1833.

⁴² David Henshaw "An Address, Delivered Before An Assembly of Citizens from all Parts of the Commonwealth, at Faneuil Hall." (Boston 1836)

David Henshaw seemed symbolically to represent all that was wrong with the Morning Post clique. Since he was head collector of customs in Boston and hence the most influential Democrat in the state, these negative associations were impossible for many to ignore. Workingmen for a long period of time denied their obvious similarities with the Democracy. In doing so, they largely kept their own counsel. This antipathy toward joining the ranks behind Custom House leadership rankled 'Country Party' men. George Bancroft provided an example most Workingmen would come to follow. Though he officially left the latter party to join the Democracy in 1834, he would not fall in line behind David Henshaw and his associates. Hailing from western Massachusetts, Bancroft was both geographically and ideologically separated from Post leadership. Upon his move to Boston the following year, Bancroft carefully positioned himself beyond the Custom House pull, choosing to remain true to his radical Workingmen's Party roots as a matter of principle. More than any other man, he served as the connecting point to the Democratic Party for most Workingmen. Even Marcus Morton, leader of the 'Country' faction with which Bancroft would gladly ally, was far less attractive to radicals than his friend. In the words of one of Bancroft's correspondents, the judge was comparatively far too 'interested in banks, insurance companies and mammoth factories', and placed his ideological position closer to the aristocratic Whigs than Democrats. Although many Workingmen like this man greatly resented the judge, their feelings for Bancroft were markedly different. This fact helped the latter gradually increase party membership over the next several years.⁴³

As such a point of connection, his official alliance with the Democratic Party by the end of 1834 provided the impetus for many of his fellows to follow suit in joining the organization. Equally important, however, was that the presence of the 'Country Party' platform offered such a prominent point of counter emphasis to the ideals and practices of Henshaw and his group, thereby allowing for the former Workingmen to more easily affiliate themselves with the national organization. The movement of men like Morton toward a position of radicalism was made in part out of a hope to induce this union. Indeed, the sentiments of radical democracy along with the political clout which the

⁴³ John B. Dickinson, 13 Apr. 1835, to George Bancroft, *Bancroft Papers*, MHS.

Workingmen and similar groups provided also helped greatly in bringing about a junction with these former Workingmen. The great accretion of support these and other more radical Democrats brought to the 'Country' faction also caused a reevaluation of political ideology by their intra-party rivals. The emerging popularity of their Loco Foco point of view did much to force the hand of Henshaw and the Morning Post, provoking the initial steps of that group toward a change in political principles. In spite of the Custom House clique's future changes, however, it is Bancroft and his Democratic allies that must be given the majority of the credit for bringing this Workingmen's group into the Democratic ranks. Without Bancroft's presence, along with the party interests he came to represent, they would never have formed any sort of alliance with any group connected to the Commonwealth Bank. Henshaw's public involvement with that interest precluded their uniting with his faction of the party.⁴⁴

The respective attitude of each faction regarding slavery and the Massachusetts Democratic Party's role in discussing the institution was ostensibly not as dramatically divergent as that regarding banking. Underneath the surface of public presentation, however, their differences were marked and important. While true to party form, both groups denied the ability of the general government to discuss the issue in legislative meetings, therefore opposing the introduction of petitions to the national Congress, their ideological similarities largely ended there. In later years this division would become more pronounced, in fact leading to the ultimate sundering of the Massachusetts Democratic organization. But it is important to note leaders of each group from the outset viewed the viability of the institution of slavery through different eyes.

Morton, despite his deepest sentiments being rooted in abolitionism, maintained that his views on the institution of bondage should be kept from public view. Yet he was always leery about how to approach the issue. When asked to publicize his views on the institution in 1837, Morton fretted to George Bancroft in writing. On this occasion, despite his obvious sentiments against any policy decisions that could have served to benefit slaveholders and the institution, Morton had much trepidation. It was a

⁴⁴ Schlesinger, pg. 165.

course he followed throughout his political career. Seeking counsel from Bancroft, he hoped to devise the best strategy to offer moderate answers to these question.⁴⁵ The degree of concern illustrated over the issue was indicative of his political ambivalence, but not his personal sentiments. In his heart Morton wished for the demise of the institution due to its dehumanizing effects, a fact made quite evident when viewing his personal correspondence. As a Democrat, however, he could never admit to this opinion. A man less troubled by the problem at hand would have completely dismissed discussion of the institution. Morton throughout the Jacksonian period demonstrated that he was deeply bothered by the matter. It was one that had a great effect upon his future political course.⁴⁶

The Morning Post group on the other hand had no problem opposing the involvement of the institution in any sort of discussion. This sentiment was made evident by their accord with John C. Calhoun on the issue at the height of his period of separation from the Democracy. Although it originally criticized the Carolina senator's vehemence on the matter of barring petitions to Congress regarding the institution, the paper later came around to endorse his Gag Rule as the proper course to block abolitionist sentiment from gaining prominence. Similarly the faction was among the earliest group of supporters of the annexation of Texas.⁴⁷ Meanwhile, the Bay State Democrat, the 'Country' Party's later established organ, rarely mentioned the potential addition of territory almost certain to legalize slave labor, the Post repeatedly suggested the desirability of taking on the newly independent republic. Though the issue of slavery in Texas was largely ignored in these columns that does not mean that the editors of the paper were ignorant of its presence in the future state, for few Americans at the time were. In contrast with the hesitancy of President Van Buren, the clique enthusiastically endorsed the right and desirability of annexing Texas from the late-1830's onward. This repeatedly expressed pro-annexation sentiment was vastly different from the more moderate tones adopted by the majority of northern Democratic

⁴⁵ Marcus Morton, 7 Dec. 1837, to George Bancroft, *Bancroft Papers*, MHS.

⁴⁶ Jonathan Earle, "Marcus Morton and the Dilemma of Jacksonian Antislavery in Massachusetts, 1817-1849. The Massachusetts Historical Review 4NA (2002).

⁴⁷ *Boston Morning Post*, Apr. 3, 1837.

papers, nor did it accord with administration policies. The Democrat, true to the example of the party's national leadership in Washington, remained largely silent on the matter.⁴⁸

The relative weakness of Massachusetts Democracy when compared to its National Republican and Whig rivals, would not allow either 'City' or 'Country' faction to make explicit publication of their intra-party differences. This situation led to the airing of grievances by proxy. We have seen how the Custom House clique utilized criticism of Workingmen's newspapers to lash out at their 'Country Party' rivals within the Democracy without explicitly making this hesitancy clear. Those same victims of Post criticism chose to follow a similar technique in attacking their Custom House opponents. The Boston Advocate was called upon to carry out that operation. Owned and operated by Benjamin Franklin Hallett, a figure soon to play a major role in the Massachusetts Democratic Party's story, this paper had been established in 1831 to support the Anti-Masonic cause. By 1835, Hallet's newsheet had gravitated toward the Massachusetts Democratic Party. In fact by the beginning of 1837, the Post was willing to list this paper among the Democratic news sources in Massachusetts.⁴⁹ Many of its principles were in line with radical Democrats. Hence Hallett's Daily Advocate seemed a natural ally for the 'Country Party.'

Cementing this union was the fact that the Advocate took to publishing the most vehement statements against the Boston Post faction as mere conservative pretenders to the Democratic leadership during this time period. Since the 'Country' group as yet had no news organ and the very prospects of the Democracy necessitated harmonious relations between the distinct branches, it is not surprising that the most pertinent public declarations of intra-party differences are to be found in a paper run by new converts to the cause. During the middle portion of the decade, Benjamin F. Hallett's pen was the source of the most distinctive editorials. In his organ's pages, the differences between the 'Country' and 'City' portions of the Democratic Party were aptly delineated.

⁴⁸ See Boston *Morning Post*, Apr. 1839-1845.

⁴⁹ Boston *Morning Post*, Jan. 5, 1837.

Habitually comparing the Post group to the most overt supporters of banking among their Whig adversaries, both on the national and state level, the Advocate sought to draw a distinctive line between its own policies and those allegedly advocated at the Custom House. Labeling this latter group ‘Bank democrats,’ and ‘Conservatives,’ the paper typically succeeded in ruffling the feathers of its opponents.⁵⁰

The known connection between Benjamin F. Hallett, Marcus Morton, and George Bancroft by the middle 1830’s made the harsh language leveled at the ‘City’ faction in the Advocate a ready indicator of opinions ‘Country’ Democrats held toward their intra-party rivals. All of the previously described differences between these factions were given added emphasis in the pages of this newsheet. To the radical Democrats in Boston and throughout Massachusetts, many of the tenets that formed the Post clique’s political ideology seemed closer to Whig doctrine than was advisable. Thus in the pages of the Advocate, as in the correspondence of George Bancroft’s Workingmen’s associates, questions were raised about the respective credentials of the city’s most influential Democrats. Hallett’s repeated assaults on the clique as conservative or Whigs in Democratic clothing, expressed accurately the sentiments of the ‘Country’ faction toward their more privileged rivals at this time.

While it would perhaps be somewhat disingenuous to say that the respective branches of Massachusetts Democracy were diametrically opposed to each other during this period of party formation, it is certainly true that each viewed the important issues of the day through different lenses. Despite its later denial, the Post group was always to be found on the side of state banks. Similarly the interests of Henshaw and his closest associates with corporations, paper money and speculative projects, were far removed from those more commonly endorsed by their ‘Country’ opponents. The beliefs of radical or equal rights Democracy endorsed throughout the period by the ‘Country’ group along with their Workingmen and Anti-Mason associates were only later espoused by their rivals in Boston. Indeed for much of this period, the Post faction did all that it could to ignore the more ‘liberal’ ideologies of the party in favor of those more closely

⁵⁰ See *Boston Morning Post*, 1837-1838.

tied to corporate or upper-crust interests. Their somewhat haughty attitude toward radical political elements from outside the Democratic Party further testifies to this point. Even their consistent stance against the tariff, was at least in part due to a close association with Boston merchants, a connection that party members from interior regions did not have.⁵¹

Whether for geographical reasons or otherwise, by the middle of the 1830's the policies of the Post group largely in favor of banking, local funding of internal improvements, paper currency and merchant interests along with their more generally conservative ideological underpinnings, were firmly entrenched. Opposed to these doctrines, the 'Country' faction with the ultra-liberal Bancroft at its head had little trouble finding points of divergence from their Boston rivals. Positioning themselves in the columns of Van Buren's most ardent Loco Foco supporters in New York, the radical wing of the Massachusetts party would gain further prominence with the endorsement of like-minded sentiments in the party's national platform. At the same time the influence of the Henshaw faction was largely on the wane. Already losing central political control due to the modifications of Democratic Party organizing procedures set in motion by 'Country' Party rivals, their grasp on the Custom House would soon be challenged.

In the fall of 1835, David Henshaw made known his intention to retire from his position as Head Collector of Boston.⁵² This decision set off a battle for his successor that would become a cause of untoward strife within the party. In fact the ensuing fight for the post, lasting over the next two and a half years, was the single most important event in the history of the Jackson Democratic Party in Massachusetts. The original bestowal of the post upon David Henshaw following Jackson's election had allowed his group of associates to dominate the course of the Democracy in Massachusetts. Despite the recent reduction in overall power experienced by the Post faction, possession of the several powerful offices in Boston, most especially leadership of the Custom House, allowed the group to exert a disproportionate level of control upon the party. The clique

⁵¹ Schlesinger makes many of these points in arguing for the 'City' group's inherent conservatism and lack of democratic sentiment.

⁵² Marcus Morton, 17 Feb. 1836, to Levi Woodbury, *Morton Letterbooks*, MHS.

realized that similar domination in the future hinged upon maintaining possession of this central office. This belief was due in large part to the obvious signs that an increasing majority of politicians were outside of their orbit. As a result Henshaw and associates sought to use all of their influence in Washington and in the state to pass the position on to a like-minded Democrat. At the same time the 'Country' group, led mainly by Morton and Bancroft, appreciated the magnitude of the successor issue.⁵³ The debate over the identity of the next collector seemed certain to divide Democrats into several factions. Such a result could not help but to weaken the party during the electoral season, national or local.

Realizing this inevitable outcome of the pending struggle, Morton sought desperately to delay Henshaw's political retirement during the earliest stages of the debate. With the national election as well as various state elections pending in 1836, he endeavored to keep the current collector in his post.⁵⁴ Though it was known by most that when the issue was finally forced, the two obvious factions, 'Country' and 'City,' would vehemently oppose each other, the initial sentiment was toward conciliation. Once the important elections of that year had passed, the political combat took place in earnest. It came to split the ranks of Massachusetts Democracy into opposite columns, driving a wedge between the two major groups that permanently existed below the surface of otherwise united and cordial relations. In its aftermath, the distinctions between these divergent ideological cliques that had always existed became more pronounced. Their rivalry would emerge as one no longer wholly private in nature. Thus, the collector struggle brought to the surface and reified the important distinctions over men and measures that had been fermenting within the Massachusetts Democracy. It signified the first step in what came to represent a complete rending of the party over the course of the decade to follow.

Although the 'Country' faction, largely due to the efforts of Massachusetts Democratic legislators, had succeeded in removing much organizational control from the

⁵³ Marcus Morton, 1 Jun. 1836, to David I. Pearse, 7 Jun. 1836, 27 Mar. 1837, to Martin Van Buren, *Morton Letterbooks*, MHS.

⁵⁴ Marcus Morton, 6 Jun. 1836, to David Henshaw, *Morton Letterbooks*, MHS.

Custom House faction in recent years, the collector position administered by David Henshaw was still extremely influential. His ability to hire, promote, and fire officials with little question from outsiders, had an undeniable impact upon the voting preferences of Custom House officials. The open meeting policies, and especially voice voting procedures, allowed for Democratic leaders at convention and ward gatherings to observe and intimidate those attending, thereby guiding the course of the party. By and large Henshaw and his allies were able to dominate and lead the most important gatherings through a number of diverse, yet similarly manipulative tactics.⁵⁵ Largely through Henshaw's management, the post of head collector had become the leading position within the state's Democratic Party. Henshaw had run the office in the same manner that ward bosses in later years would use to dominate major urban centers. Dispensing his ample supply of patronage in order to keep party members in line and promote the goals of the Post clique, he had turned the collectorship into the central position of the state's Democracy. Having the patronage of the Jackson and Van Buren administrations at his disposal, Henshaw had disproportionate success in propounding his own ideas and policies. Often times this course was followed against the wishes of those outside his own circle, who constituted the majority of the party's constituents.⁵⁶

The huge financial clout that the Custom House represented could do little to silence the voices of opposition against David Henshaw, however. Democrats independent from the control and interests of the clique were present throughout the party's existence and had gained some measure of success, enacting several measures to take a modicum of control from the Post faction. When rumors of Henshaw's pending retirement from the position were first heard early in 1835, several of these heretofore silent opponents began to take note and to issue judgment on the proper course for affairs within the Democracy of Massachusetts to follow. Initially their opinions were cynical in nature. Several believed that an ambitious man like David Henshaw would not easily cede political influence. Thus, it was reasoned, the collector must have expected a more important post. Writing to political associate Lewis Libby, in February, 1835, Marcus

⁵⁵ Derby, pg. 70-86, 120-133.

⁵⁶ Darling, pg. 178-183.

Morton speculated that any abandonment of office by Henshaw would be indicative of his having attained a higher realm of power. In this case the office of Postmaster General was seen as his potential goal. Morton noted that Henshaw had of late been seen in meetings with the Maine and New Hampshire congressional delegations. It was speculated that Henshaw desired to gain nomination to that open office through these discussions. If such a post were bestowed upon the Collector, Morton foresaw grave political consequences for Massachusetts. This high ranking national position would allow Henshaw direct control over the nomination of all Post Office appointments, thereby placing undue power in his hands. With this level of influence, Morton worried, Henshaw could further solidify his grasp upon his home state's political scene, most especially the direction of its Democratic Party. Judging by how he had manipulated the appointments as Boston Port Collector to shape the institution in the state, Morton rued the circumstances bestowal of such a prestigious office would bring about.⁵⁷

Though Morton claimed respect for Henshaw as a man, he implicitly questioned the collector's political judgment and purity. Morton noted, 'We must have a little more liberality and disinterestedness, a little more fair dealing, and a little greater regard for the wishes of the whole party,' than existed under present Custom House rule. Lacking such an approach to politics, the party was doomed to fail, as it had to date. A position of national influence for Henshaw could only damage the administration in Morton's mind. While not averse to Henshaw's removal from political influence on the local scene, Morton called for that result only if the next collector could be a man of proven disinterest.⁵⁸ The state Democracy could not afford for such an influential position, one that David Henshaw had made the most important political office in Massachusetts, to continue in the hands of a man willing to shape its influence to meet his own narrowly focused desires and interests. It was necessary for Morton and his associates to build upon the gains they had made in representation and Committee nominations, they believed. The best way to accomplish this goal was through the appointment to Henshaw's current post of one of their associates or at least by allowing a neutral

⁵⁷ Marcus Morton, 10 Feb. 1835, to Lewis Libby, *Morton Letterbooks*, MHS.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

politician to assume his role. Henshaw's removal from the post, for whatever reason, represented an opportunity to erode further the large base of power the clique had assembled through favorable administrative appointments. Thus the 'Country' faction saw the time ripe to make its move. During the next two and a half years the group engaged in political maneuvers within the party. Because of the damage they believed Post clique control had had upon the Massachusetts Democratic Party, Morton decided the clique's control of the Custom House had to end. Thus he launched upon a campaign to prevent any of that group's members from inheriting the office.

Nonetheless, Morton pressed his formidable rival to remain as collector at that time. Such a desire was promoted as serving the interests of the party as a whole. Marcus Morton viewed 1836 as an unpropitious time for David Henshaw to retire. He reasoned, perhaps intuitively, that if the current collector were to step down, a struggle for his position would ensue. In such a battle it was inevitable, reasoned the 'Country' party's leader, Democratic unity would be sacrificed to the political squabbles that would be sure to result. In recent elections, Democratic gubernatorial tallies had steadily increased to the point where Morton felt he had a distinct opportunity for ultimate success in that fall's campaign. Additionally, the presence of four viable political parties increased the chance for Democratic success in both local and national elections. Divisions within the electorate boded ill for the typically dominant Whigs. Morton reasoned that if the Democratic Party could remain united it could potentially offer a more favorable alternative to the city's liberal voters. Avoiding public division could also potentially attract the votes of former Workingmen's and Anti-Masonic men in the coming presidential election. Recruits to the Democracy would be sure to take sides with one faction or the other, and each would undoubtedly press its cause among these potential supporters and future participants in local affairs. Thus Morton worried that any strife carried over from the collector nomination issue was bound to reduce confidence in the Democratic candidates. It would also undermine any chance that Van Buren had to win the state, in a national election sure to be closer than those won relatively easily by his political mentor. As a result of these considerations, maintaining the status quo seemed likely to be the best course to follow at the current time.

In consequence, Morton sought to take advantage of his friendship with Bancroft to enhance the party's ability to succeed in the 1836 elections. Since Bancroft truly believed the Statesman group did not represent the interests of real or potential Democrats in any way, Morton endeavored to convince him that only through his influence could the Custom House rulers eventually be ousted. Although this change needed to be postponed due to current political realities, only with the union of these radical groups that looked to Bancroft for guidance would it ultimately be effected. Marcus Morton knew that the historian would be able to utilize his prominent status among other political radicals to enlarge the scope of the Massachusetts Democratic Party. In so doing, it was hoped, Bancroft's recruits to the party would further erode the control of the Custom House faction. Calling their intra-party opposition a 'powerful influence to counteract and overcome,' Morton urged alliance with Bancroft to remedy the presence of the Post group in the Democracy. Together with like-minded men, they could counteract the negative influence of these current leaders and overthrow their power. At the same time he explained his delaying tactics in the collector struggle as a temporary requisite in order to achieve optimal gains for the party.⁵⁹

Because George Bancroft and his potential converts to the Democratic Party had much more in common with the 'Country' group than with the ruling faction of the Democracy, Morton hoped they would be able to help shift the balance against the ruling interests of Henshaw, Green, Simpson et al. He said of Workingmen and Anti-Masons, 'Although ranging under differing names, their feelings, principles and interests are identical; and it is only necessary that they should be made to see it, to induce them to act together.'" It was hoped that the next presidential election, sure Morton thought to present a stark contrast between democratic ideals and the more aristocratic controlling notions of their Whig rivals, would force these men to vote for Van Buren. In the late Congressional election, noted Morton, the Anti-Masons and Workingmen had acted largely in concert with the Democrats throughout most of Massachusetts. However, due to the untoward influence of the Statesman group in Boston, and the denunciations the

⁵⁹ Marcus Morton, 9 Sep. 1835, to George Bancroft, *Bancroft Papers*, MHS.

group lavished upon these political allies, they had failed to assist the Democracy in the city. Thus, Morton believed the party had come up short among the electorate because of the lack of inclusiveness emanating from its leadership. With Bancroft on the Democratic side he and Morton along with their other influential allies could work in concert to assure that this scenario would not recur.⁶⁰

Due to their already reduced control over party affairs, David Henshaw and his group now realized the utility of these potential Democrats and were thus also doing all they could to attract their votes. The main approach of this latter group was to endeavor to chart an ever-evolving course of changed political presentation that gradually led to a remodeling of their political profile. The final result was a more radical public ideology for the Statesman clique. This change to less conservative doctrines would make it more palatable for Workingmen and Anti-Masons to join the Democracy in the years to come. It also made it easier for George Bancroft to accept Morton's strategy of biding his time before seeking to control the collectorship.

Once Bancroft was convinced of the propriety of Morton's actions on the collectorship matter, he turned his attention to recruiting former party mates. His selling points to such individuals were similar to those that had converted him to the cause in the first place. Foremost among these was the claim that the changes already brought about in the party's nomination and representation process signaled a modified situation. Only with the introduction of the ideologies of the 'Democratic Workingmen and Democratic Anti-masons' would the party truly represent the best interests of the people, however. Morton opined that the optimal way for such a scenario to come about was the future removal of Henshaw and his allies from any position of strength and influence. In that case the party organization would continue to become more inclusive and representative of actual Democratic interests. Bancroft had largely decided to throw his hat into the Democratic ring in expectation of such a shift. Thus, following the presidential election, he and Marcus Morton unified their efforts to remove the Post

⁶⁰ Ibid.

group from the Custom House and other local leadership positions.⁶¹

That the overall interests of Massachusetts Democracy had guided his actions was refrain repeatedly found in the pages of Morton's correspondence in the months leading up to the elections of 1836. His undoubted endorsement of delay in the collectorship nomination process is made more apparent from the consideration that the judge himself was Van Buren's favored candidate. Knowing full-well the impact that gaining such a post would have upon both his own personal fortunes and those of the intra-party opposition to the Statesman faction, Morton showed true concern for the well-being of the Democracy in repeatedly denying the vice-president's requests to enlist his service as Head Collector of Boston. He maintained the stance that the best possible course on the matter for the immediate future would be to maintain the status quo. Desiring Henshaw to remain at the helm of the Custom House until the critical electoral months had passed was obviously in the best interests of the party both in Massachusetts and nationally. Believing that Van Buren's cause was at a disadvantage to begin with in the Bay State, and foreseeing that with any splits within the party ranks, Daniel Webster, his already heavily favored Whig opponent in the state, could expect little concerted opposition, Morton stressed the evils implicit in an immediate change. This admission was made begrudgingly. As much as Morton did not see eye to eye with the collector on many matters of policy, he still thought Henshaw, due to his enormous local political and financial clout, represented an important ally. By upsetting the fragile balance between the emerging factions of the party in Massachusetts, it was assured that the gossamer thread that held the Democrats together in Boston would be rent. Any discussion of the future successor for the post was sure to bring about differences of opinion between the Post faction, supporting a candidate from their ranks, and other elements of the Democratic Party.⁶²

Furthermore, it was of deepest concern to Morton that the nascent alliance

⁶¹ George Bancroft, 17 Nov. 1834, to Edward Everett; Marcus Morton, 9 Sep. 1835, to George Bancroft; George Dickinson, 13 Apr. 1835, to George Bancroft, *Bancroft Papers*, MHS.

⁶² Marcus Morton, 6 Jun. 1836, to William Jarvis; Morton, 6 Jun. 1836, to Andrew Jackson; Morton, 7 Jun. 1836, to Martin Van Buren; Morton, 27 Mar. 1837, to Van Buren, *Morton Letterbooks*, MHS.

between the Democratic Party and the newly enticed members of the disintegrating Workingmen and Anti-Masonic Parties would be rendered problematic during the course of such an impending struggle. It was in the best wishes of the party to do whatever it could to maintain the newly formed connections with these men. Such individuals did believe in many of the core tenets of Democracy. Opposed as they were to most of the social and several of the political elements of the Whig agenda, the majority of their members saw a closer fit with Morton's party. Such a hold was tenuous, however. Morton predicted that any dissent over the matter of succession in the Custom House would necessarily scare off many of these timid Democratic converts, thereby undermining the already narrow chances of political victory for the allies of Jackson and Van Buren in Massachusetts during the November election. Of even more importance to Morton was the gubernatorial election, in which he was sure once again to represent the Democracy for the state's top post.⁶³

Indeed, Morton criticized politicians who were pushing for his nomination to the collector post in these early days of the discussion of the matter. He claimed that those who desired such a scenario at the present time showed themselves to be unaware of the circumstances of the party in Massachusetts. Since the majority of the expiring Anti-Mason party had tacitly agreed to vote with the Democracy in the coming election, Morton thought it would be tantamount to political suicide to bring this issue to the fore. Disturbing the accord that had been reached would not be in the interests of the party until Van Buren had been safely elected and the Democratic ticket in the state successfully endorsed. Anyone who thought otherwise, according to Morton, was either politically ignorant or simply acting out of selfish interests. The only solution to the current situation sure to preserve the gains already made was to postpone the appointment process. David Henshaw needed to go along with the interests of his rivals if this strategy were to succeed. Morton did not display much concern on that head. Thinking Henshaw a man who acted out of his own interests and a desire to maintain power, Morton believed it would be easy to convince him to maintain his influential post

⁶³ Morton, 17 Feb. 1836, to Levi Woodbury; Morton, 1 Jul. 1836, to David Henshaw, *Morton Letterbooks*, MHS.

in the Custom House for another year. Additionally, once Amos Kendall was appointed as Postmaster General in the spring of 1836, Henshaw had no reason to leave Custom House employ immediately.⁶⁴

Maintaining his hope to avoid any type of divisiveness between the different groups of the Democratic Party, Morton thought it would be best to import a noted political man from out of state to fill the collector post once vacant. Such an individual, ideally without any connections in Massachusetts, would maintain the relatively united front that the party had been able to effect in the preceding months. A candidate along these lines would not engender hatred or dispute from either faction, provided he was able and expressed firm sentiments in favor of the policies of the administration. Morton suggested an individual like Governor Maxcy of New York as a possible replacement for Henshaw. Going to the highest source of power, Morton carried his arguments for delay in naming a new collector to President Jackson himself. Promoting the idea that an early nomination and subsequent Democratic Party discord would lead to the defeat of Old Hickory's successor in Massachusetts, Morton was largely successful in his arguments.⁶⁵

Whether through Morton's increasing influence with the administration as the usual candidate for the state's highest office, Henshaw's own desire to remain in the collector position for a longer period, or simply because it was not the proper time for the position to change hands, the leadership of the Custom House remained in the hands of the Post faction's chief for the next year and a half. Although neither Van Buren nor Morton would win electoral success in the Bay State, the party was able to gain numerically, proving valid Morton's prescription for unity at least to some degree. The strength the party had accrued during this electoral period served the 'Country' party well in the coming days. No longer vying for leadership of a weak political group, the opponents of the Statesman faction were able to present numerical arguments in making their case for the important posts of the new Van Buren administration in Washington.

⁶⁴ Morton, 7 Jun. 1836, to Martin Van Buren, *Morton Letterbooks*, MHS.

⁶⁵ Morton, 6 Jun. 1836, to D.I. Pearce; Morton, 6 Jun. 1836, to Andrew Jackson, *Morton Letterbooks*, MHS.

By the time that debate over the collectorship issue was once again allowable, following Van Buren's inauguration as president in March, 1837, various names were bandied about as candidates. Support and opposition for each potential collector were offered by varying groups at different times. This looming battle represented a situation where the division between the 'City' and 'Country' branches of the party in Massachusetts became more pronounced, and eventually unbridgeable. Morton worried over such an outcome in his correspondence with officials in Washington. Writing to the new president during his first weeks in office, Morton expressed concern over the effect that the nomination of any successor to David Henshaw would have on the state's Democracy. He worried that the issue would become tantamount to a 'war of extermination' between the two branches of the party. Holding himself above the fray as a somewhat neutral figure because of his past need to relate to both 'City' and 'Country' groups as the annual Democratic gubernatorial candidate, Morton feared the more inveterate members of each group relished the potential destruction of their rivals. It seemed to him that neither side aimed at ultimate unity. Instead through their recent actions it had become apparent that the aims of all involved were rooted in selfishness and the desire for office above all other considerations. This state of affairs did not bode well for the future of Democracy in Massachusetts in the mind of this perennial party leader. As an antidote to the bane of intra-party division, Morton pressed the president to endorse a moderate candidate for the office.⁶⁶

While Morton offered conciliation as a solution to Martin Van Buren, it would seem that his approach had ulterior motives. Despite a request for the president to use his clout as the symbol of Democracy to convince both factions that neither had superior favor in the eyes of the administration, Morton himself subsequently offered support for 'Country' faction interests. His suggestion for the successor to Henshaw was none other than Bancroft, Morton's close political ally and a noted foe of the current Custom House leadership. Morton called the Northampton sage, the perfect solution for the current dilemma facing the party both in Washington and in Boston. Saying that George

⁶⁶ Marcus Morton, 27 Mar. 1837, to Martin Van Buren, *Morton Letterbooks*, MHS.

Bancroft's public career both as a historian and a minister, allowed his friend to be viewed as more than a self-serving politician, Morton tried to obscure Bancroft's affiliation with either prominent Massachusetts Democratic faction. Such a description seems rather disingenuous given Bancroft's noted connection to the 'Country' group. Nonetheless, Bancroft was presented to the president as the candidate most likely to mollify the party majority. His abilities were second to none, noted Morton.⁶⁷ Bancroft's relatively recent conversion to the cause and comparative lack of history with either faction, were additional considerations that seemed to work to his favor in the matter. However his clear separation from all Post faction influence was sure to rankle the leaders of that group. Used to controlling the affairs of the Democracy in Massachusetts, the party's constant leading group was sure to look differently at the succession of any man outside of their orbit to the city's most important appointed post. Since they were prominently promoting J.K. Simpson for the collector job, the Post faction's lack of support for George Bancroft was rather well-known.

Morton would only consider one man besides Bancroft for the head collector post. That was John Mills, who was serving as district attorney at the time. Suggesting his candidacy to Van Buren, Morton presented Mills as an individual who had no connection to either branch of the party. Unfortunately for the district attorney, it would seem that he had little support beyond certain members of the Country faction.⁶⁸ In a vote held by the Democratic legislators of the state in January, 1837, Mills received only one vote. The winner of this canvass was William Robinson, who had garnered sixty-eight supporters. Simpson finished fourth with only six ballots.⁶⁹

The Post denounced the merits of this referendum in its aftermath. For this gathering to pronounce Robinson the choice of the Democracy in Massachusetts seemed beyond the bounds of legality to the faction. Since Boston had no representatives in the State House the state's most populous and important city and the only locality directly

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Morton, 6 Jun. 1836, to Andrew Jackson; Morton, 27 Mar. 1837, to Martin Van Buren, *Morton Letterbooks*, MHS.

⁶⁹ *Boston Morning Post*, Feb. 1, 1837.

affected by the position lacked a voice at this conclave. As a result, the caucus seemed slanted away from the city that should have had the most to say on this matter. To have restricted this gathering to a meeting of legislative members only was questionable at the very least, both to the Post and to later historians. It represented a disfranchisement of the city of Boston and every other Democratic town and county not directly represented in the Legislature.⁷⁰ This tactic, however, in limiting Post faction input, would seem to have worked in favor of the ‘Country’ group. Excluding the influence of the current Custom House clique from such a nominating meeting almost ensured that ‘Country’ men would maintain a good deal of control over the candidate chosen. That Marcus Morton and his political allies were unable to gain nomination for their favorites seems somewhat surprising under such circumstances.

Robinson’s nomination, while acceptable to the ‘Country’ Party, was assailed as a miscarriage of democratic justice by ‘City’ men. They chose to focus much of their anger not on the man but on the method of his nomination, questioning the fairness of this proceeding. The paper lashed out against the mechanism chosen as in large part an assault on the very county committees that the ‘Country’ group had been so instrumental in emphasizing with their prior measures. Since the ‘Country’ men had not allowed any input from Henshaw’s own Suffolk Committee, the paper pointed to the faction’s alleged hypocrisy. In light of this circumstance, the Morning Post chose to follow a logical attack on the maneuverings of the legislative Democrats. Their political course was compared to a secret conclave determining the most important issues of the party, at the expense of local representatives who best represented Boston’s interests. The exclusion of Boston’s county committee men from a conclave to select the collector of their city seemed ridiculous to Charles G. Greene. Wishing the nomination to come from the deliberations of the whole party, not a group of politicians who technically represented regions mainly distant from Boston itself, the editor compared the recent actions of the legislature to those found in oligarchic governments. It was alleged the argument over the legislative right of appointment in the matter would be better described as one determining ‘whether the party [was] to be wielded to suit the views of ‘ten or a dozen

⁷⁰ Ibid.

private individuals,’ or whether it shall act and speak for itself.’ They wished for ‘the organization to emanate from the representatives of the whole party, not from a moiety of it.’ Democratic notions would demand no less than exact representation, not the quasi-proxy rule that the actions of party members at the State House and among the rivals to the Post were following.⁷¹

The Post’s criticism against this nomination process was supported by the New Hampshire Patriot, an inveterate ally of the Custom House clique. Editor Isaac Hill noted that removing the decision-making responsibility regarding the collector position from citizens most directly impacted by the Custom House office itself was an utter absurdity. Instead the paper opined, Massachusetts Legislative Democrats should heed the opinion of the Suffolk County Committee. That body led by Charles G. Greene and David Henshaw, had unanimously nominated John K. Simpson to ascend to the post. Thus in the opinion of Boston’s leaders, he seemed to have been a proper candidate.⁷² Considering the oft-mentioned fact that Boston had no representation in the corridors of the State House, the verdict of the local county committee seemed a better source of advice than anything hinterland legislators could impose upon the city’s residents. The Patriot refuted the statements of Democratic rivals that all residents of Massachusetts had an equal interest in the matter since they were subject either directly or indirectly to import duties, asserting that the interests of the city’s merchants took precedence over others. Hill claimed that if the argument of the Democratic legislators held weight, it would be equally true that New Hampshire residents, the majority of whose foreign goods were entered at the Port of Boston, should have an equal role in the selection of the Collector.⁷³ Taking up the same position as the Post, the New Hampshire Patriot continued the argument that direct representation in the Custom House dispute was required by democratic doctrine. The selection by proxy smacking of virtual representation supported by the Post’s intra-party rivals, was denounced as wrong-headed and a travesty to equitable due process.

⁷¹ Boston *Morning Post*, Mar. 21, 1837.

⁷² Ibid, Apr. 28, 1837.

⁷³ Concord (N.H.), *New Hampshire Patriot*, Apr. 26, 1837.

Such a depiction of rivals within the Democratic Party, one tending to paint opponents' actions as geared toward betraying otherwise desirable democratic tendencies, was the most common element of political strategy during the time period. From the earlier charges against the Statesman faction levied by the Bulletin group of trying to keep the party small in order to fulfill their own interests, to the more recent claims that the nominating and committee appointment processes of the Democracy did not represent the interests of the country majority, to the later claims of Henshaw and his associates against the Bay State group of having taken advantage of the Custom House post to stifle the true wishes of their associates, it had become a common ploy to argue against the centralizing tendencies of one's enemies. Whether or not what the Post was claiming had any merit in truth, it is easy to see their statements as a natural part of the political landscape in Massachusetts. Each group upon the discovery of its lack of power tended to point to the allegedly undemocratic shortcomings of rivals who seemed to possess more power. In this instance the Boston Morning Post and its New Hampshire ally were simply following the template laid down previously. It was a pattern they continued to espouse for years to come until the rending of the Massachusetts Democratic Party almost a decade later.

The Post followed these criticisms on the democratic failures of this nomination process by requesting objectivity from their 'Country' Party rivals. Their main argument was that political leaders outside the Custom House orbit had sought to present the clique in a harsh light. Instead the Post argued, Henshaw and his closest associates had always held the best interests of the Democracy in mind and acted accordingly. These were not self-interested politicians as the 'Country' leadership had claimed, the paper said in hoping to sway public opinion its way. Vehemently denying what it portrayed to be erroneous statements on the part of their rivals, the Morning Post stated, 'We take this opportunity to say to our country friends, that many of them have been deceived and imposed upon, in relation to their brethren in Boston, by interested and unprincipled men.' These traducers were men 'whose ambition is inordinate, and who are not willing to trust to the fair and honorable competition of talents and services for its gratification, but resort to the meanest intrigues, and the most disgraceful falsehoods.'

Denying an aversion to those legislative Democrats not associated with the clique, the group sought to place the malicious designs of the recent collectorship canvass on the heads of a few misinformed politicians. Never specifying names, the article nonetheless implied that their opponents among influential 'Country' group members were largely to blame for the undemocratic actions that had so recently taken place.⁷⁴

As in prior circumstances where intra-party disagreement had occurred, the weakness of Massachusetts Democracy did not make public criticism of fellow party members feasible. On this occasion as before, the Post chose to level its frustrations at proxies for the real agitators from within the party. The Boston Advocate was once again most prominent among substitutes. Editor Benjamin F. Hallett, who would later become a member of the Post faction, at this time stood firmly in line with Bancroft, Morton and their 'Country' faction ideals. The Advocate, as Boston's most prominent Anti-Masonic newspaper, was staunchly in the column of radical Democratic ideas. As such, many of its pronouncements were in line with those of the 'Country' Democracy. Since Bancroft and Morton's faction currently lacked a newsheet to promote their ideals, its leading members often offered their printed opinions in the pages of Hallett's Advocate, in turn making it the de facto 'Country' Party journal. In the minds of the Post group the announcements of this paper were usually tantamount to those espoused by their intra-party rivals. Since this connection was publicly underplayed, it served as a convenient point of criticism for the 'City' faction against its most important rivals.⁷⁵

As a result, the Post took the Advocate to task for what it saw to be a flawed nomination process for head collector. Along with the 'Country' members of Massachusetts' Democracy, Hallett's organ had supported the legislative nominations that resulted in the selection of Robinson. Carrying the charges against their opponents a step further, the Post likened the course followed by legislative Democrats on the issue of the collector nomination to the congressional Gag Rule, an odd comparison given Henshaw's and his associates' opinions on that national legislative procedure.

⁷⁴ Boston *Morning Post*, Feb. 1, 1837.

⁷⁵ Boston *Morning Post*, Mar. 21, 1837.

Restraining Boston Democrats from voting on the matter seemed counterproductive to say the least, the paper opined. Presenting the legislators as men acting against the involvement of the Suffolk Committee on this issue did not paint the Advocate in the kindest terms. ‘The members of the Legislature will not thank the Advocate for presenting them to the world in this odious light, nor democrats listen to such sentiments, except with feelings of disgust and abhorrence.’⁷⁶

The Post also was dismayed by the continued practice of the Advocate to slander the ‘City’ portion of the party while acting as a mouthpiece for its Democratic allies. In the spring of 1837 the paper stated, ‘The Advocate is laboring with all its strength to array the democracy of the Legislature and the State against that of Suffolk. It has for weeks insisted upon it that a war must be waged--that Suffolk must be put down, and concludes by intimating that it isn’t of much consequence, after all, how the Boston democrats are treated, as it is not likely that they can bring the whole city into the support of their cause very soon!’ Arguing in favor of the conduct of its constituents the paper went on to say, ‘Now the democrats of Suffolk see no necessity for a war, or occasion for one; and protest against one with any of their brethren, in or out of the Legislature--they wish for no contest of the kind,’ but hope for ‘an impartial judgment upon their conduct.’ The Post hoped to paint the issue of representation for Suffolk County in the nominating process as one of fairness, in which all local democrats could believe.⁷⁷

At the same time the clique tried to claim that the Custom House, long painted as a stronghold of city party influence, was more representative of the membership of Massachusetts Democracy than enemies like the Advocate would have the public think. Pointing out that of the thirteen clerks in Henshaw’s Custom House six were ‘Country’ men while thirteen of its twenty-seven inspectors hailed from regions geographically distinct from Suffolk County, the paper sought to win favor among those seemingly predisposed to ally with the its faction’s enemies.⁷⁸ Deprecating the zero sum approach adopted by its enemies, a belief that support for ‘Country’ interests equaled enmity for

⁷⁶ Ibid, Mar. 24, 1837.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Ibid, Apr. 5, 1837.

the current Custom House group, the paper hoped to change the minds of many Democrats. It was additionally believed that showing the actions of Democratic legislators and their supporters in a negative light would also only further the clique's cause. Thus in questioning the motives of the supporters of the Democratic members of the Massachusetts Legislature, the Post faction endeavored to make their case for democratic ideals more palatable to the mass of party membership.

The Post also attempted to equate the Advocate men and their 'Country' Party allies with enemies to the Democracy. Their actions proved these false Democrats to be no different from local Whigs, the paper claimed. Coupling Hallett's organ with the Boston Atlas, a staunch Whig journal, it was claimed that the former paper's recent denigration of the Suffolk Committee in comparison with Democratic legislative members, showed the Advocate's true colors. Likening their assaults upon the interests of the Boston district, and particularly the Custom House group, to those expected from proclaimed enemies of all those associated with Massachusetts Democracy, the paper hoped to counter all attacks that had been made against its allies. Of the two papers the editor noted, 'They are congenial spirits, and contending for the same object, viz: to break down the democracy of Suffolk, by arraying the democracy of the State against it.' It was argued that these allegedly diametric opposites had taken the same view of the matter. 'Why,' the article asked, 'should any one be astonished at the similarity of their conduct and their language?' Such an alliance of Whigs and reputed Democrats could not continue to fool the state's true Democrats. 'The artifice is too shallow to succeed--the whigs cannot stay the forward march of democracy in Massachusetts, either through the agency of the Boston Advocate or the Boston Atlas.'

The Post hoped to prove that any claims of different interests between the 'Country' and 'City' Democrats were misguided and off-base. Men who preached otherwise were either promoting individual interests or essaying to stall the progress of democratic ideals in the state. In the paper's words, these individuals were 'unprincipled factionists endeavoring to create' differences. It was further alleged that these men had overrated 'their own cunning,' while underrating 'the intelligence of those

they [hoped] to deceive.’ By holding up their interests and cause as those of the true Democrats of Massachusetts, the Post was once again trying to paint all others as enemies of party interests. No matter their political affiliation, past history, or reason for offering contrary opinions, such individuals were portrayed as little more than either true Whigs or feckless politicians under the sway of the enemy party.⁷⁹

Because of the strengthened position of their ‘Country’ Party rivals and the Democratic legislators who helped form its ranks, the Post clique felt obliged to defend itself vehemently against public criticism. Alluding to the constant outside condemnation issued against Custom House procedures and control, the paper challenged the effect of such language on party harmony. This constant carping from the Advocate and its ‘Country’ allies was defamatory and unwarranted, the paper contended. Adopting such a public stance the Post faction tried desperately to enhance their image as a true Democratic element. The faction’s ultimate wish of course, was to maintain their wonted grasp upon the controlling elements of the state party, which was slipping away in front of their very eyes. Never sharing the close ties with President Van Buren that their ‘Country’ foes currently maintained, the clique feared losing power. Such a circumstance was becoming more likely, especially considering their reduced ability to control state convention and county and ward committee appointments and agendas. Losing control of their only remaining mode of power would be disastrous to a group already deemed a minority element of the Massachusetts Democratic Party. Thus, this small group of politicians began a campaign to reform their image. They sought to remove themselves from the perceived stigma of connection to banks and corporations. Ultimately the conservative element of the Democratic Party in Massachusetts adopted a more radical ideology as a means to incorporate former members of parties that had once drawn their public disdain. During this transformation the clique had to respond to constant cries from their critics, calling the group wholly undemocratic and self-interested in nature.⁸⁰ Proving that their leaders’ ultimate interests were directly tied to the promotion of both the Democratic Party and its core ideals became the most

⁷⁹ *Boston Morning Post*, Mar. 25, 1837.

⁸⁰ *Boston Daily Atlas*, Oct. 25, Nov. 1, 1837.

essential element of the Post clique's political approach during the concluding days of the Collectorship struggle and beyond.

While these intra-Democratic Party charges and counter-charges were taking place, the real debate over the future head collector was heating up. During this struggle the 'Country' party leadership was adamant in its insistence that David Henshaw not be allowed to name a successor. The increased rancor between the leading factions played a great role in this demand. Despite his stated endorsement of Mills for the post, the man Morton had really wanted in control of the Custom House all along was George Bancroft.⁸¹ Robert Rantoul, a longtime Democrat and current speaker of the state House of Representatives with a slight connection to the clique, was also endorsed by the 'Country' faction.⁸² The hesitation of Bancroft toward entering the fray allowed for the process to extend beyond the time period normally allowed for the process. Henshaw for his part fully expected to hand off the position to Simpson, another original Statesman member. It was alleged by opponents that the collector still had higher office in mind and had merely postponed stepping down in expectation of a prize to be offered by a grateful national administration. Whether Henshaw was after a position in the U.S. Senate, an appointment as a minister to any of several foreign courts, or yet another cabinet position, was beside the point to those outside of the Post orbit. Their main charge against him was that the collector fully intended to remain in power behind the scenes with a man like Simpson at the helm of the Custom House.⁸³ An obvious level of political acumen had been manifested throughout David Henshaw's near decade reign as port collector. It was doubted that such a man, seemingly interested solely in his own advancement and continuation in power, would merely cede the political clout that went along with the office. There was little doubt to many of these men, Morton included that any potential retirement for this Collector was either a temporary hiatus from the scene or no removal at all.⁸⁴ Henshaw's doubters charged he would continue to have

⁸¹ Morton, 27 Mar. 1837, to Martin Van Buren, *Morton Letterbooks*, MHS.

⁸² Morton, 7 Dec. 1837, to Bancroft, *Morton Letterbooks*, MHS; Benjamin F. Hallet, 6 Jan. 1838, to Bancroft, *Bancroft Papers*, MHS.

⁸³ J.G. Harris, Feb, 1838, to Bancroft, *Bancroft Papers*, MHS

⁸⁴ Morton, 10 Feb. 1835, to Lewis Libby, *Morton Letterbooks*, MHS. At this early date, Morton speculated that Henshaw had been seeking an appointment in the Post Office, an alleged political

great influence over the affairs of the party.

Even more dubious in the minds of the ‘Country’ leadership was the threat of Henshaw’s presence behind the scenes, allowing for this unprincipled man to promote ideals that he never would be able to endorse publicly. Since it was well known that Henshaw held a political ideology different from the majority of local Democrats, the ‘Country’ faction worried that a dupe like Simpson would unwittingly put undesirable policies into practice. As a result their ultimate concern was that continued Post faction rule in any fashion would result in the undermining of the Democratic Party of Massachusetts. Their belief informed their urgency in demanding that a representative of the ‘Country’ faction ascend to power in the Custom House.⁸⁵

The course of the nomination process over this two year period, served to damage further the already tenuous relationship between Henshaw and Morton. When he believed himself to have the greatest influence over the selection of a successor, Henshaw showed nothing but favor toward Morton. Much of this amity was undoubtedly due to the fact that Morton represented the sole standard-bearer for the party in the statewide gubernatorial election each fall. Once the pending struggle for control at the Custom House became clear, however, Henshaw had little trouble displaying animus for his intra-party rival. Because of the favor Morton had curried with Van Buren, Henshaw viewed the Post clique’s chances to control the nomination as greatly reduced. As a result, he felt a good deal of ambivalence. Since Morton seemed more likely to control the nomination, Henshaw is said to have brooded over his loss of power in the party.⁸⁶

The clique followed a similar course, having little of note to say about Morton outside of his electoral campaigns. ‘Country’ control of the nomination process reflected the increased influence of that group within the state itself. To a large extent, this augmented political clout directly detracted from the Post faction. Unable to exert

advancement over his position as head collector. He reasoned that any attempt by Henshaw to retire from the latter position would surely be followed by his attaining a more politically prominent post.

⁸⁵ J. Harris, Feb. 1838, to Bancroft, *Bancroft Papers*, MHS.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

their former absolute control over the inner workings of Massachusetts politics, the clique lost their trump card. It was almost inevitable that the once powerful leading faction of the Massachusetts Democracy, faced with the reality of numerical inferiority, would be in for a step back with the political ascendance of Martin Van Buren, a man who had originally represented the interests opposed to their political benefactor, John C. Calhoun of South Carolina. Since the Morning Post clique were known originally to have favored the latter's political career, all of their efforts to align with the new president were at a serious disadvantage. Even the past half-decade of vitriol against the South Carolinian could not make Van Buren men of the clique. No such impediment existed for Marcus Morton, George Bancroft, or any of the other faithful who had endorsed the New Yorker's political course from an early date, and thus were more closely associated with him.

Intra-party animosity was not entirely rooted in the former collector's resistance to reduced power, however. Indeed the actions of the party's other wing despite their rising influence, show that group to have been as concerned as their opponents with the struggle for power. After a Democratic meeting nominated David Henshaw for mayor in the fall of 1837, the response from enemies within the party was immediate and extremely vocal. A handbill was quickly published and distributed as widely as possible shortly after this informal nomination. Although Henshaw would decline the party's offer, largely due to his continuing service in the Custom House, the episode was revealing. In this instance the divisions within the party became public and heated, serving to illustrate the animosity both sides had for each other.⁸⁷ A few weeks following this incident the Post alluded to the actors against Henshaw's unsought candidacy. Republishing an account originally printed in the Lowell Advertiser, the paper made sure to point out the dubious conduct of its rivals for power. Noting that Henshaw had quietly sacrificed much for the party during the better part of the past two decades while others, most especially Morton, had appeared at the top of its electoral lists, the paper felt that his candidacy should have been appealing to all true Democrats. Those who had come out against Henshaw in recent weeks were not as tried and true in

⁸⁷ Boston *Morning Post*, Dec. 8, 1837.

the cause of democracy as the man they criticized. Many had spent a good deal of time ‘literally and openly, in the ranks of the enemy; and even since pretending to sail under the Republican banner, their course has contributed to ‘keep the party conveniently small.’ A common tactic of their enemies had been to sap the energies of Henshaw as the true guide behind the principled nature of the local party by driving him out of his position of important influence. Rivals to the clique’s leader had no interest in strengthening the party in Boston or Massachusetts. Instead they merely wanted their own leaders to attain power, according to the Custom House organ.⁸⁸

The clique utilized the harsh opposition toward Henshaw’s mayoral prospects as proof that adversaries of ‘City’ Democrats did not deserve power within the party. That faction’s disloyalty to effective leadership had shown that the group’s most prominent individuals possessed flawed characters, the Custom House organ noted. Greene wrote in the Post,

“It seems to us, to be a duty, which the democratic party owes to its principles, and to its own character, to stand by, and defend their champions not simply against the assaults of the comparatively harmless, because open opponents, but especially against the insidious undermining of selfish Judases, and demagogues, who hand about its suburbs for place and plunder, and envy and hate all, who seem to stand between them, and the success of hopes delayed, or defeated. While new converts will always be accepted along with pertinent ideals and principles from beyond the routine, commonly accepted Democratic norms, the core values of the party must never be abandoned. Its leaders, especially those who have emerged from the formative period, who had guided the party during its most trying times as a hopelessly minority status, fledgling institution, must never be maligned.”

These latest attacks seemed to have been motivated by both recent converts and experienced Democrats seeking only to heighten their own influence at the expense of Henshaw. In utilizing the charge of conservatism against him, the paper alleged, they had merely tried to stereotype the ‘City’ group with untrue generalizations in order to mar its character. Painting Henshaw as wholly different from the newly emerging leadership of the party was, the paper said, a fallacious tactic and the work of corrupt-minded politicians. In truth, the Post proclaimed, David Henshaw and his associates had always been in favor of the founding principles of the party, ‘equal rights and equal

⁸⁸ Ibid, Dec. 25, 1837.

privileges,' in spite of their actual antipathies toward the radical wing. Implied here is that 'Country' Democrats who had recently sought to grasp upon these ideals, chose to ignore Henshaw's beliefs in promoting their own selfish causes. Despite the manifest inaccuracies of this statement by the Post, such claims became common points of emphasis among the Statesman clique and were continually adduced to counter their 'Country' rivals' demands for change in Custom House leadership.⁸⁹

Criticism of Morton, Bancroft and their closest associates was directly implied in this kind of recrimination against intra-party rivals. Coupled with its earlier assertion that 'no man in the democratic ranks could command a larger vote than Mr. H., would he consent to run for the office,' the Post was more than likely jabbing at its emerging rivals in two distinctive ways. First, by noting the loyalty of their leader to the cause, oftentimes at the expense of his own political ambitions, they were making obvious reference to the fact that Henshaw and his friends had backed Morton for the governorship each fall since the emergence of the Democratic Party. As the man with the most financial and political clout in the city and perhaps the state at the time, it was entirely plausible to speculate that Henshaw could have offered a more viable candidacy than had the perpetual gubernatorial runner-up. The fact that he had long since determined to manage the Custom House, perhaps to the detriment of his own potential career in politics, redounded to Henshaw's selflessness, the paper attested. Further, as constant backers of Morton's failed attempts to the governorship, the faction could claim to have set aside their own interests in doing all within their power to promote the cause of the party overall. Now that Henshaw's name had come up as a candidate for mayor of Boston, it would have seemed appropriate for his 'Country' rivals to have stepped aside and offered at least tacit support of their fellow party member. Because they did not do so the Post felt it to be its duty to point out the dubious actions of that group, though only through inference at the time.⁹⁰

Henshaw's role in the original formation and subsequent maintenance of the

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

Massachusetts Democracy was also utilized in his favor in the pages of the Post during the collector struggle. That he had been the most influential member of the current party in helping to make it a politically viable entity was undeniable. The Post chose to take the matter a step further. Calling Henshaw the most popular public Democrat in the city at the time, the faction hoped to promote the cause of its leader in his future party endeavors. Knowing full well that Henshaw's days as collector were numbered, the paper was trying to lay the groundwork in public opinion in the matter of his successor. Henshaw's constant activity on behalf of the party, many times at the expense of personal sacrifice in terms of career advancement and finances, seemed worthy of garnering support from all Democrats. The recent attacks on their favorite appeared to have been egregiously misplaced, considering the role he had played both in the overall affairs of the party and the political advancement of a rival like Judge Morton, out of interest in the alleged advancement of democratic principles. To deny Henshaw the credit he was due seemed to represent the ultimate ingratitude. Such behavior, noted the paper, was more befitting of Whigs than Democrats, and perhaps the perpetrators should consider uniting with that maligned party. The unfairness of the whole situation was made more obvious by the fact that Henshaw had had nothing to do with the nomination, a reality directly contrary to many of the charges of interest leveled against him.⁹¹

Aiding their claims that David Henshaw and his Custom House faction manifested the interests of the Massachusetts Democratic Party, was the changed public political ideology of the Post group. It is most plausible to assert that Henshaw, Greene and their associates' collective evolution of sentiment was the result of the shifting power structure both within the local and national Democratic Parties. Hewing to the hard money, anti-banking line that had been enforced by President Van Buren in light of the Panic of 1837, best illustrated by his proposed Independent Treasury, the traditionally more conservative wing of Massachusetts Democracy began publicly to move in the direction of the more 'radical' or 'equal rights' wing of the party. During the latter stages of the collectorship struggle the Post renounced any affiliation with banking. In the process the leadership group of the most prominent financial institution

⁹¹ Ibid, Nov. 13, Dec. 8, 1837.

in Boston attempted to paint themselves as similar to their ‘Country’ rivals on the matter. It would become a repeated tactic of the group vehemently to deny all association with banks, corporations and more generally conservative ideologies. Fighting against the idea that there was a division of the party along radical and conservative lines, the Post strenuously rejected any love of projects and ideals derided as monopolistic. Responding to charges in the pages of the Anti-Mason Advocate, Hallett’s newsheet, the paper declared these and like charges were mere attempts ‘to create jealousies, and foment divisions,’ at the expense of attempting to ‘strengthen the cause of the people.’ Any divisive language like that typically found in the rival paper, equating the faction’s ideals with those associated with Whigs, would merely bring about the Democracy’s political demise and was thus patently disloyal to the cause, the paper claimed.⁹²

Since Charles Greene had endorsed outright separation of bank and state, along with limited government, at a recent Democratic State Convention, charges like those found in the Advocate associating the clique with banking interests represented an outright falsehood to the paper’s way of thinking. It stated, “This is the sort of ‘Conservatism’ that we have in Boston and in Massachusetts, and it is men holding such sentiments that the Advocate, for sinister purposes, is calling ‘bank democrats.’” Having always approved of a system similar to the sub-treasury recently called for by Calhoun and Van Buren, the paper proclaimed its perpetual interest in favor of the people and against corporations and privileged monopolies. Only politicians bent on misrepresenting their rivals for personal gain would have failed to take note of such a long-established record as that alleged by the Post.⁹³

Such claims make it obvious that the paper hoped to obscure the clique’s past association with the city’s financial corporations to win the favor of a more radical majority. By reminding readers of instances in which the Post had stood on the side of the anti-bank interests and the more radical elements of Democracy, they attempted to obscure the real conservative bent that their policies had followed throughout much of the

⁹² Ibid, Nov. 3, 1837.

⁹³ Ibid.

history of the party. Henshaw's and Simpson's involvement on the board of the Commonwealth Bank, a pet banking institution that surely was not an example of any radical separation of bank and state, was completely ignored. This concerted glossing over of the clique's actual involvement with one of the state's largest bank was taken with a grain of salt by other Democrats. In painting themselves as radical Democrats, much like their 'Country' rivals, the faction backed itself into a corner. This strategy, maintained in order to retain control of the party or at least the Custom House, in essence forced the clique to forfeit many of their actual political principles. As a result of these actions the Post group were made to look like selfish politicians whose stated beliefs were changeable when politically prudent, thereby reinforcing what rivals from the time of Orne and Lyman had said all along.

A similar approach was followed by the clique on the matter of accepting Anti-Masons into the Democratic ranks. Evolving from a position in the early part of the decade that labeled that group as a threat to Democratic primacy to one that by 1838 assumed that such political figures were natural members of their own party, the public stance of the paper had changed notably. Since many men with former prominent connections to the Anti-Masons were by this time firmly ensconced in the party of Jackson Democrats, it was quite natural for the Post to have made this change. However, the vehemence of their earlier sentiments against the once strong party makes it readily apparent that a real shift in attitude had taken place. Since the attitudes of these men could not have undergone a total metamorphosis in this amount of time, it is safe to say that such an evolution once again represents a policy alteration that was meant to bring the Post group to a position more in line with the shape the Massachusetts Democracy was taking as a whole.⁹⁴ Thus in the particular matter of broadening the party as well as the more general claim of having become 'equal-rights' Democrats, the clique can be said to have changed their outlook dramatically.

Any advantage that the clique may have gained from this changed public ideology or from their prior control of the collector post in the campaign to ensure their favored

⁹⁴ Ibid, Feb. 16, 1839.

candidate's nomination ended with the death of J.K. Simpson in the fall of 1837. While the current managers of the Custom House subsequently made a somewhat half-hearted effort to place Robert Rantoul's name in the running for the post, it was to no avail.⁹⁵ Morton's wing of the party, due to their closer association with Van Buren as well as the predominant 'Country' influence among Democrats in the Massachusetts State House, seems to have had the upper hand in the battle following the termination of Jackson's second term. Without a viable candidate the Post faction was unable to mount any kind of continued resistance to the designs of their intra-party rivals. As a result, the paper was silent in the days leading up to the official nomination of George Bancroft to the post. Once his ascendancy became a matter of public knowledge, however, the paper voiced its wholesale approval of the choice. Emphasizing the wisdom evident in the selection of such a learned individual, the Post was effusive in its praise.⁹⁶

Adopting such a public position is unsurprising due to the clique's oft-stated desire to present the party as a united front against the Whig majority in the state. The Post faction had no other option but to accept the fact that the appointment had gone to a member of a rival faction. It mattered little what their actual opinions of Bancroft may have been. They emphasized Bancroft's skill and acumen as reasons for favoring his promotion. Greene said, 'Mr. Bancroft's standing as a gentleman, a scholar, and a man of practical intelligence,' made him worthy of the 'respect and confidence even of his political adversaries.'⁹⁷ Giving Bancroft a fair chance based on his abilities was a natural course for the Democratic organ in Boston to have followed. The fact that the Morning Post was allowed to retain printing rights to Custom House notices, along with maintaining a degree of patronage for the institution, undoubtedly assuaged some of the clique's resentment at having lost out on the collectorship. This decision came as an unpleasant surprise to Benjamin F. Hallett, who had hoped Bancroft's appointment would serve to benefit his paper.⁹⁸

⁹⁵ Boston *Daily Atlas*, Nov. 3, 1838.

⁹⁶ Boston *Morning Post*, Jan. 10, 1838.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Benjamin F. Hallett, 6 Jan. 1838, to George Bancroft, *Bancroft Papers*, MHS.

In the aftermath of the election the Post did all within its power to dispel any rumors or charges that it had never desired the appointment to go to Bancroft. Although admitting the initial favor of Henshaw's associates for Simpson, the paper acknowledged that the death of that candidate left it without a replacement. All attempts from other men, be they Democrats or men outside party influence, to assert any division over the issue, were false efforts to fuel dissent where none existed. Such conduct would only serve to weaken the Democracy. As such it was seen as undertaken mainly to foster trouble. The paper went no further than to say that the appointment of Bancroft was satisfactory to all members of the party under the circumstances.⁹⁹ Henshaw and his group declined officially backing any candidate after Simpson's death. Such a course of action would seem to indicate the clique's concession on the collectorship issue. Indeed, in the days immediately following the nomination, the Suffolk County Committee, under David Henshaw's control, passed resolutions endorsing Bancroft for the post.¹⁰⁰

While it is probable that Simpson's death so late in the struggle constituted a death knell for any chance the Post faction had to control the nomination, it also would seem to indicate their reduced power in the matter altogether. With so many political cohorts under his sway it is likely that Henshaw could have found another able associate to hold up for the post. The fact that he did not have the ear of Van Buren in the same manner he had with Calhoun and Jackson previously, undoubtedly hurt the collector in his efforts to maintain ultimate control of the local party. As a result, Henshaw's term of party leadership had passed, for the time being. Simpson's death merely made the loss of the office more palatable and easier to accept. The Post followed the cues of its leader, endorsing Bancroft's selection as collector. As Boston's only public Democratic organ, it really had little choice but to acquiesce on the matter, despite its leader's undoubted bitterness at having lost out on the succession issue.

Continuing the recently endorsed policy of highlighting their Democratic

⁹⁹ *Boston Morning Post*, Jan. 11, 12, 1838.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid*, Jan. 20, 1838.

credentials, the Post sought to dispel all criticisms previously leveled at its most important affiliates. First to receive this treatment was the late J.K. Simpson. Responding to claims issued both during his life and in the period leading up to Bancroft's ascension, the paper sought to prove his true Democratic values. The common accusations that both Simpson's and the rest of the clique's principles tended to favor more conservative policies rankled many of the 'City' Democrats. Trying to prove themselves to be in line with the radical bent the party had taken in Massachusetts, the group sought to clear the name of their deceased mate. In their analysis, the former candidate for Boston head collector was nothing but a staunch Democrat. He had been 'an unwavering supporter of all the measures of Gen. Jackson's administration.'¹⁰¹

The paper acknowledged there was one notable exception in this general depiction. Simpson had come out against the Sub-Treasury Bill, currently under public debate in Washington. Arguing against a core principle of Van Buren's administration had allowed for his opponents in Boston to paint Simpson as an anti-administration man. Therefore the commonly asserted accusations leveled against the Post faction, charging conservatism, could be projected upon their favored candidate for the collectorship in a manner seen as embarrassing to the editors of the paper. Since the clique had been trying to paint itself as closer in ideology to the emerging majority of Massachusetts Democrats, such a stance taken by a leading member was extremely problematic. This dilemma was made doubly troublesome due to the connection Henshaw and company had with Calhoun. The Post had publicly praised the South Carolina senator's return to the party over the Sub Treasury issue. Having its representative in the collectorship struggle act in direct opposition to those interests, was a difficult situation for them to handle. Simpson's death and the immediate concession of the collectorship to Bancroft seems to have mitigated the problem. It is quite possible that the group's embarrassment over this issue further informed its decision for quick concession. Because of his stance on the Sub-Treasury issue and its contrast to their revived affiliation with John C. Calhoun, David Henshaw's chosen candidate had quite probably

¹⁰¹ Ibid, Jan. 11, 1838.

lost a great deal of favor in the estimation of his champions.¹⁰² Despite this one questionable decision, however, the clique made great efforts to clear Simpson's Democratic credentials in the aftermath of his death.¹⁰³

The Post group was forced to define their principles as radical in nature much the same way that they had little choice but to accept the change of power taking place in the party. At this point they could only hope for cordial relations with the new leaders. The faction had already begun to modify its policies on many of the important issues of the day, at least in its public presentations. Endorsing a more radical line, whether for political purposes or due to a changed political outlook, the clique had been more in line with ideas typically associated with their intra-party rivals for some time once Bancroft was first installed in office. In this manner they hoped to remain viable in party power circles. The development of this changed ideology had been set in motion from the time the clique began to lose power within state party circles, making them well-versed in the tenets of radical Democracy by 1838. As a result Bancroft's ascension was made much more palatable. It is not such a stretch to say that if the group had still held the iron grasp upon power that it had enjoyed in previous days, such change in political attitudes would probably not have taken place. Facing circumstances as they were, however, it made perfect sense for the faction to appeal to the majority of Democratic voters in hopes of maintaining some sort of influential position within the Democratic Party of Massachusetts.

In spite of their previous evolution, however, events surrounding the Commonwealth Bank in Boston threw a wrench in the Post clique's attempts to disassociate itself from all elements of so-called conservatism. Only a day after George Bancroft's nomination on January 10, 1838, Boston's largest bank became financially insolvent.¹⁰⁴ Although part of the national economic distress caused by the Panic of 1837 and its aftermath, this failure came as a surprise to nearly everyone in Boston's

¹⁰² Calhoun's return to the Democratic Party and the Post clique's reaction to this renewed affiliation are the main subjects of Chapter Five.

¹⁰³ Boston *Morning Post*, Jan. 27, 1838.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid*, Jan. 13, 1838.

fiscal community. Because the Commonwealth had been thought a sound concern, its seemingly unforeseen bankruptcy caused a great deal of controversy. Multiple recriminations against its leaders were issued in the aftermath of this event. David Henshaw stood in the middle of the fray. Henshaw was already under a good deal of strain due to the reduced role of the 'City' faction in the Massachusetts Democratic Party, and now his direct involvement with the operation of the Commonwealth fueled further resentment against the former leader of Boston's Democracy. His new status as a supplemental player in local politics allowed for opponents to increase the already existing criticisms of the former collector. In the aftermath of the Commonwealth's closure, the close ties Henshaw held to banking in general made his credentials as a Democrat even more questionable. The rise of vehement anti-bank men like George Bancroft to positions of prominence and the Post clique's recent vilification of corporate financial institutions in general, made the situation less tenable.¹⁰⁵

The demise of the Commonwealth Bank and the debate over the role that Henshaw had played in the process would be fodder for political acrimony and debate within the Massachusetts Democracy for at least the next decade. In the weeks following its failure, the issue allowed the newly entrenched 'Country' faction to increase attacks upon their rivals.¹⁰⁶ In the process they were able to strengthen their control of the party's majority further. The Commonwealth affair, following immediately on the heels of the collector battle, helped drive another wedge between the two prominent factions of the party in Massachusetts. During this debate the actual beliefs of each wing of the party were brought into question and further defined, thereby highlighting the divergence between the two groups.

The acrimonious arguments over the nature of Henshaw's and the Post clique's involvement in both the failure of the Commonwealth Bank and a related incident that would come to be known as the 'South Boston Land Fraud,' became a major issue in years to come. At the time, however, much of the description of the exact role played

¹⁰⁵ Boston *Bay State Democrat*, Apr. 28, May 2, 1843.

¹⁰⁶ B.F. Hallett, 15 Jan., 8 Feb., 1838, to George Bancroft, *Bancroft Papers*, MHS.

by the ex-collector was kept to a minimum. While his ties to banking were raised against him at the time, it is important to realize that the stigma attached to this incident became a larger point of contention in the 1840's. The collapse of the Commonwealth, coming almost simultaneously with the announcement of Bancroft as collector, allowed the critics of Henshaw and the Post clique to ratchet up their criticism of the outgoing head of the Custom House. Capitalizing on the Post faction's close connection to the Commonwealth, in direct contradiction to the paper's stated antipathy for banking in general, the members of the 'Country' faction were able to seize upon an issue that painted their rivals as untrue to the principles of the party. Especially in the early days of Van Buren's administration when the complete divorce of banking and government was being promoted in Washington, allusion to the Commonwealth and the connection of their enemies to that failed institution was a valuable political ploy for the 'Country' group to utilize.¹⁰⁷

Due to the presence of this issue, the Post found itself largely on the defensive. In reaction the paper first tried to disassociate itself from the bank altogether. It next sought to remove the taint of association from its political chief. Obfuscating Henshaw's influential role on the bank's board of directors, the paper attempted to obscure his interest in the concern.¹⁰⁸ As such the former collector was just as likely to be painted as a victim of the evils of a benighted financial institution, the view of his friends, as he was a politician in possession of undemocratic ideals, the claim of his opponents. The story of the Commonwealth Bank, then, represents a unique moment in the history of party development. One side attempted to disassociate itself from a tainted institution while the other utilized the very real connection to it of their rivals to question that group's merits for governance.

Any attempt to delineate the role the failure of the Commonwealth played in the Massachusetts Democratic Party must begin with an overview of the ties between the Custom House faction and the institution itself. The initial intersection of these two

¹⁰⁷ Boston *Daily Atlas*, Oct. 24, 26, 1838.

¹⁰⁸ Boston *Morning Post*, Jan. 13, 15, 1838.

entities came about in the immediate aftermath of Henshaw's appointment as Boston collector of customs. Shortly after having been installed to this post, the leader of the state Democratic Party directed the removal of public deposits derived from tariff duties from the United States Bank Branch of Boston to the Commonwealth Bank. Since this movement of funds had not been authorized by the government in Washington, his course of action was quickly reversed at the request of Secretary of the Treasury Samuel D. Ingham. Henshaw dutifully followed the orders of his superiors and restored the deposits to the Branch Bank.¹⁰⁹ Nonetheless, it was obvious to most observers at the time that Henshaw would do all in his power to utilize his newfound political authority to enhance the personal financial interests of the Post faction. This failed attempt to benefit the coffers of the Commonwealth with Custom House money merely served as a brief setback. Eventually the collector was successful in gaining the government's blessing in his desire to deposit the customs duties into his bank.¹¹⁰

Throughout the 1830's Henshaw and J.K. Simpson in his capacity as Commonwealth Bank President utilized the government's money to finance real estate purchases, among other financially interested schemes. Henshaw and associates seem to have been largely successful in suppressing knowledge of the several investments made with Custom House money from the general government. Whatever Henshaw's actual knowledge of the schemes being carried out at the time it is hard to believe that he lacked any insight into the types of activities with which his bank was involved. Thus, any lack of disclosure to his superiors in Washington would seem to constitute a concealing of information that would have cast both him and his financial institution in a negative light. Critics from outside the ranks of the 'City' faction would later seize upon this point to illustrate what they viewed to be the nefarious character of their intra-party rivals.¹¹¹

Whig opponents placed most of the blame for the Bank's failure upon David Henshaw. They continually pointed to certain dealings around the time of the financial

¹⁰⁹ *Boston Bay State Democrat*, Apr. 23, 1843.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid*, Apr. 28, 1843.

¹¹¹ *Ibid*.

collapse as an indication of their political foe's corrupt principles.¹¹² His supporters, however, continued to defend the actions of the former collector. In their interpretation Henshaw was the individual who had been wronged by an unfortunate turn of events and was no profiteer from this incident. Shortly following the January 11 collapse, an investigation by the Massachusetts Legislature concluded that the bank's directors had no prior knowledge of the impending failure of the institution. Their report contained no intimation that Henshaw had any better knowledge of the crisis within the Commonwealth before its ultimate failure than anyone else.¹¹³ In fact if his supporters are to be believed, Henshaw did all that he could to save the Bank. The Morning Post claimed, 'He urged active exertion to meet the difficulties, and there was no understanding [as of January 10, 1838] that the Bank was to stop, except in the alternative that it was pressed to pay its bills and balances, and could not obtain assistance.' Such proceeding would have been in accord with the practices of 'almost every bank in the commonwealth.' Given the shaky status of banks in general during the time period, prior knowledge of trouble within the institution did not automatically call for a great deal of action to have been taken. Nor would it have caused severely increased alarm. That Henshaw had not reported any prior suspicion of the troubles of the Bank was not surprising, given this understanding of common bank practices. Had he done otherwise, it was alleged, the action could have raised allegations regarding his activity and involvement in some sort of profiteering scheme.¹¹⁴

At the time of the Bank's failure Henshaw was in no way indebted to the institution. Thus, the Bank lost no money due to his overuse of its funds. While his brother John had a debt of \$80,000, that obligation was met and paid in the aftermath of the failure. Neither David nor John Henshaw benefited from the failure in any way. It is also true that neither man was relieved by any prior arrangements made before the collapse. Hence allies claimed, they could not be alleged to have partaken in fraudulent dealings. In fact, the collector lost \$14,000 in bank shares, which would seem further to

¹¹² *Boston Daily Atlas*, Jan. 17, 20, 1838.

¹¹³ Anonymous, "A Refutation, By His Friends, of the Calumnies Against David Henshaw, In Relation To the Failure of the Commonwealth Bank, and the Transfer of South Boston Lands to the United States" (Boston 1844), pg. 3-4.

¹¹⁴ *Boston Morning Post*, Jan. 20, 25, 27, 1838.

preclude any intimation that he knew of the bank's failure in advance. Such claims were raised by members of the 'Country' faction during the debate over Henshaw's potential appointment as secretary of the navy under President John Tyler six years later. It was acknowledged by the Post faction that a tenable suspicion of fraud could have been leveled at Henshaw due to the removal of special deposits amounting to \$53,378.70 on January 11, four days prior to the Commonwealth's failure. However, it would seem that since this money was derived from Custom House duties and was bound for the national government, these removals were beyond suspicion.¹¹⁵

David Henshaw's critics would also point to the collector's January 11th call for all debts owed the Custom House to be paid to the Commonwealth Bank immediately, as indicative of his prior knowledge that the financial institution was about to fail. They reasoned that based on knowledge of pending bankruptcy, the collector wanted to secure as much of the money owed the government as possible. Having received these funds, it was assumed Henshaw would immediately remove the money or else use bank deposit statements to prove to his federal employers that he had devotedly collected the duties regardless of their having been lost through the Commonwealth's bankruptcy. The charges of fraud derived from this suspicious action, however, were largely answered with the realization that as Henshaw's long term as port collector was coming to an end the time had arrived for all debts to be rounded up. That this call had gone out in the hours preceding failure was presented as a mere coincidence. In fact there is a great deal of logic behind this assertion. If Henshaw had wanted assurance that the monies owed the Custom House would be in the vaults of the bank, he undoubtedly would have made his final call at least several days before any pending failure. Henshaw would also draw criticism for paying off Custom House debts to Boston fishermen with notes of the failing bank. This charge was once again claimed to be fallacious by his advocates. The notice he had sent out appointing this impending payment was issued before the collapse, when Henshaw would have allegedly had no knowledge of the worthlessness of the bank notes. No fisherman was ever actually sent Commonwealth Bank notes, since the crash occurred before the institution was able to issue these payments. Thus, the

¹¹⁵ Anonymous. "A Refutation By His Friends...", pg. 6-7.

actions of Henshaw in regard to the incident were made to appear honorable.¹¹⁶

That is not to say that Henshaw was blameless in the Commonwealth Bank matter. His faults are apparent in hindsight. Most important, the collector had committed the government funds of the Custom House to his bank. At the time of its failure, the Commonwealth Bank owed the government funds amounting to over \$337,000. Of this amount, approximately \$66,000 was deposited to the credit of Henshaw. Other agents were responsible for larger amounts, most notably the building commissioners of the Custom House, William Shaw, Lloyd Howe and Donald Lewis, who collectively owed \$71,500. The deceased J. K. Simpson was also in debt for over \$150,000. In the month following the Bank's collapse the Commonwealth's directors voted to secure the debt owed to the government by personal liability of several members of the board. Among them were the heirs of John K. Simpson and Henshaw. As a result of this measure the government held double securities and safeties against the Commonwealth.¹¹⁷

While the import of these liabilities and the political animosity they engendered will be dealt with at a later time, it is important to note that Henshaw's involvement in the failed Commonwealth Bank became a major point of embarrassment for both the Democratic Party in general and the Post faction in particular. While in the later period of factious division between the two wings of the Massachusetts Democracy, this issue was ably utilized to illustrate the major differences between what would later be the supporters of Van Buren and Calhoun, during 1838 the new controlling group of the party abstained from addressing the matter. Their differences with the Post group were obscured from public eyes. It was left to opponents of the Democracy to raise the issue of the involvement of Henshaw and his fellow Democrats, with the very type of institution regularly vilified in the pages of the Boston Morning Post as Martin Van Buren promoted his Independent Treasury scheme in Washington. Pointing to the inherent contradictions between the Post clique's proclaimed ideas on the evils of

¹¹⁶ Ibid, pg. 9-10.

¹¹⁷ Ibid. pg. 11-12.

banking and its actual executive involvement with the largest financial institution in town, made the 'City' faction easy marks for Whig newsheets and politicians.¹¹⁸

The further involvement of the Commonwealth management with several large land schemes connected to the Bank's demise also served as fuel for the fire of controversy emanating from the pens of Whig authors. The largest of these, which would come to be known as the 'South Boston Land Fraud,' caused quite a stir in political circles at the time and later, first with opposing Whigs and then as a hobby for the 'Country' wing of the Democracy. Henshaw, as an original associate and member of the board of directors of an unincorporated entity known as the Warren Association, played a prominent role in this controversial affair. Warren Association cohorts of Henshaw included the cashier of the Commonwealth Bank, who served as treasurer of the Warren group, and J.K. Simpson, who was President of the Association in addition to his role as a bank director. Upon its formation as an unincorporated trust in 1835, the Association purchased a large tract of land in South Boston. Later critics would allege that this land was obtained for the sole purpose of speculation. The group proceeded to erect a large hotel known as the Mount Washington House on a portion of this land. At the time of the Commonwealth Bank collapse in January 1838, records indicated that the company owed the bank funds amounting to in excess of \$263,000 for which the bank held no security. It was claimed by Henshaw's group that \$180,000 of this amount constituted monies borrowed by the Association from the bank in order to make the purchase.¹¹⁹ This group's having obtained money so readily without having offered a guarantee for the financial liability, seemed to prove a direct connection between the administrators of the Commonwealth and the Warren Association.

At the Bank's failure, the Commonwealth held a large amount of unsecured notes against the Warren group. Since the Bank's creditors clamored for repayment of their pledged funds, the Association's members were required somehow to raise the capital to

¹¹⁸ Indeed, much of the recriminations the Post group responded to in the 1844 "*Refutations*" pamphlet were charges made by the Boston *Atlas* in January-February, 1838, though the document was mainly a response to the allegedly calumnious statements made by 'Country' Democratic rivals.

¹¹⁹ Anonymous. "*A Refutation By His Friends...*," pg. 17-20.

pay off their debts. Acting he said with concern for both institutions, Henshaw induced the Bank to give up the obligations of the Warren group. Instead he demanded the bank seek out all notes that were in possession of other clients. Henshaw's reasoning rested on a claim that these old notes had not been authorized by the Warren group's board of directors. The purpose of this move was most likely to give extra time to his fellow speculators to make their own terms with those who would come to handle the affairs of the now defunct Bank. Under a new proposal, the old notes would be replaced by obligations based for their payment upon guarantees of the proceeds of South Boston land sales. Thus the associated speculators were freed from individual liability by Henshaw's management.¹²⁰ In turn, fairly or not, their losses were thrown upon the United States Government in an indirect fashion. The government then assumed control of these lands to sell at public auction, in lieu of the hard capital that the Bank could no longer provide, in hopes of paying off its Custom House debts.¹²¹

Once the South Boston lands had replaced the unsecured bank notes as the accepted method of Warren Association debt repayment, three high ranking officials were appointed to appraise the real estate. State Senator Nathan Gurney, James Merrill, Justice of the Boston Police Court, and Amos Bunney, a State Legislative representative, were selected for the task. This group came to the conclusion that the value of the lands exceeded or at least equaled the amounts owed the Bank by the Warren Association. The lands were valued at just over \$166,000. When an \$18,000 payment from several Association members was added to this assessed total, there was sufficient capital to settle the debt between the Warren group and the Commonwealth. The bank in turn transferred this payment money to help account for obligations owed the federal government. The entire matter was approved at the time by government and congressional committees in state. Of equal importance to the members of the Massachusetts Democracy, President Van Buren gave his vote of confidence to the proceedings and to the final settlement of the Commonwealth Bank's debts to the U.S. Government, and hence the conclusion of the South Boston Land Affair. His

¹²⁰ Ibid, pg. 21-22.

¹²¹ *Boston Bay State Democrat*, May 2, 1843.

endorsement was seconded by the Secretary and two solicitors of the Treasury Department.¹²²

Whatever the final outcome of the matter and the manner in which the Commonwealth Bank's associates dealt with it, the issue of Democratic involvement in banking and land speculation was very controversial. After the Bank's failure and the subsequent strife over the South Boston lands, critics of Henshaw and the Post group did not hesitate to assault their foes. In the face of such recriminations the Post appeared to feel its Democratic legitimacy at stake. Repeatedly stating its amended political ideology, the paper became consistent in denouncing all forms of banking and paper money interests. These newfound assertions came at the same time that the faction's recently returned ally John C. Calhoun, was proclaiming his accord with the ultimate separation of bank and state and the attendant Democratic vilification of banking on all levels. Calhoun's recent statements equaled those of Martin Van Buren in their hostility toward banking and paper money. The Post fell in line behind Calhoun as soon as he began issuing statements that presented views parallel to those of the administration. It was also true that the faction chose the period when its leadership in Massachusetts was in question to declare publicly its disfavor of all types of banking interests, something that had never occurred previously. This same disassociation was first taking place largely during a time period in which several of its leading members were firmly entrenched in management positions of the Commonwealth Bank. Once that financial institution ceased to exist in a most embarrassing manner, it became necessary for the group to remove any public connection it may have had through written pieces that tended to obscure the direct ties held between the paper and the Commonwealth Bank. That the executive offices of the party had for some time been located in the Commonwealth Bank office serves to symbolize just how concrete this association actually was, despite claims to the contrary in later times.¹²³

In the aftermath of the Commonwealth failure, what influence Henshaw had with

¹²² *Anonymous*. "A Refutation By His Friends...", pg. 24-26.

¹²³ *Boston Morning Post*, Mar 28, 29, Apr. 2, 1838, May 9, 1840.

his fellow Democrats was greatly eroded. Benjamin F. Hallett, who later became allied with the Post group, noted to Bancroft in February, 1838 that the former collector could not continue as the head of the Democratic Party in Massachusetts.¹²⁴ And Henshaw would not. Despite the fact that President Van Buren had publicly exonerated the directors of both the Commonwealth Bank and the Warren Association, the influence that the Post faction held with the national administration was greatly reduced.¹²⁵ Hence the already strong tie between the ‘Country’ group and the leadership of the Democracy in Washington was strengthened further because of the debacle surrounding the bank’s failure. Such an association helped push the former leaders of the party in Massachusetts further into the columns of those supporting the national aspirations of John C. Calhoun for leadership of the Democracy. At this time however, the efforts of the paper and its associates to present themselves in a proper light to their fellow Democrats, seen with the proliferation of published radical sentiments, precluded any statements on party division.

Under such circumstances the actions of the Post and its associates to promote their asserted anti-corporate ideology and anti-bank leanings are not surprising. Knowing that the attitudes of their fellow Democrats had markedly disapproved of banking and corporate interests for some time, and sensing their loss of leadership in the local party, the Post tried to follow the lead of their rivals on the matter. While such a change in public presentation may have illustrated that the clique was still struggling for control within the party, it was also indicative of a more important fate. With the succession of the collector post from David Henshaw to George Bancroft, the once powerful Boston Morning Post faction of the party had lost its authority as the driving force behind Democratic policies and actions within the state. Henshaw and his associates had been relegated to secondary status, and now were forced to react to and conform to an ideology formulated in different quarters of the party. Boston interests no longer ruled the Massachusetts Democratic Party. By 1838 the ‘Country’ faction with its more radical ideology, held sway in the state. From this point forward, Henshaw’s

¹²⁴ B.F. Hallett, 8 Feb. 1838, to George Bancroft, *Bancroft Papers*, MHS.

¹²⁵ Anonymous. “A *Refutation By His Friends...*,” pg. 28.

group was forced to switch from its normal role. Now that the 'Country' faction had national patronage and the ear of influential Democrats in Washington, the *Morning Post* group had to assume the role of outside agitators. In the past they had utilized the prestige of John C. Calhoun to ensure a hold upon the party apparatus. Now their intra-party rivals took advantage of the friendship between Marcus Morton, George Bancroft, and Martin Van Buren to help facilitate a control already greatly influenced by the popularity of their ideals among the Massachusetts Democratic majority. In response to the change in both national platform emphases and local political ideology, the *Post* clique was forced away from many of its original beliefs and toward a more radical orientation, the same one followed by the new Custom House leadership under Bancroft.

The attempts to reclaim J.K. Simpson's image in the aftermath of both his death and the Commonwealth Bank failure, were far from the first public efforts of the *Boston Morning Post* to amend its pronounced stances on the major issues of the day. Its movement away from the more conservative aspects of Democratic Party membership and toward an alignment with the more publicly radical platform of its 'Country' rivals had begun a few years previously. Almost simultaneous to the successful attempts of the state's Democratic legislative members to shift political control from the Central Committee to the hands of local government groups, the paper began to change its pronouncements. Perhaps accurately relating such a loss of power to the unpopularity of their principles, the *Post* and the *Statesman* became loath to promote the interests of any type of banking. Always averse to Nicholas Biddle's Bank of the United States, most especially in the aftermath of Jackson's famous veto, the paper during this period was increasingly less likely to promote the value of state or local banks. This change of presentation came at the same time that the *Post's* own associates were running the clique in the offices of the Commonwealth Bank in Boston.¹²⁶

Originally, state banks like the Commonwealth were upheld as the proper receptacles for public monies. This argument was usually made by contrasting the

¹²⁶ *Boston Daily Atlas*, Nov. 1, 1837; *Boston Morning Post*, Jan. 9, 16, 1834.

smaller and more localized concerns, with the prospect of a looming, tyrannical national bank. In the days immediately following Jackson's famous bank veto, Biddle's Bank of the United States, or what the Statesman took to calling the Ten Million Bank, was seen as a threat to the interests of society in general. Such an institution went well beyond the scope prescribed for state institutions, in threatening to monopolize the money market, thereby granting itself uncontested direction over the financial affairs of the nation. In putting down all of the small banks and exercising its power over them, such an institution would hold 'complete power over the business of State, POLITICAL as well as COMMERCIAL.' It was averred that the 'Ten Million Tyrant would monopolize the whole trade of the State,' meaning it would be able to 'fix the price of every article of merchandise in the market--depress or elevate the price of stocks of every description, and in short keep all kinds of property in that uncertain state of value, which would enable it to enrich those who governed its movements, by impoverishing the public and robbing honest enterprise of its just reward.' The most viable safeguard against such a nefarious threat was embodied in state banks. As the true, local yet significantly powerful guardians of the public's finances, such institutions as the Commonwealth represented a buffer against the encroachment of centralized interests. Though like institutions were certainly corporations, in the mind of the Post their close association with the localities from which they emerged ensured the maintenance of a relatively paternal aspect. Hence, it was only through the ministrations of state banks that financial security could be assured. As such it was in the immediate interests of all to assure their continued survival in the face of the threat of encroachment by Biddle's bank and his Whig allies.¹²⁷

The Post faction's favor toward state banks changed markedly within the next several years. As part of the faction's overall attempt to move further in the direction of Morton and Bancroft's 'Country' Democrats, the paper altered its views on many issues pertinent to local and national politics of the 1830's. Banking was at the forefront of these debates. Whereas the paper had recently espoused the interests of state banking institutions like the Commonwealth to act as warehouses for government funds, by the

¹²⁷ Boston *Morning Post*, Jan. 9, 14, 1834.

time that the struggle for the Collectorship was in full swing, the public opinions of the clique's most prominent members and news organ would become much more radically opposed to monied institutions. This shift was nowhere more notable than in the words of the collector himself. Despite his long association with banking, especially prominent as a member of the governing board of Boston's largest financial institution, David Henshaw officially pronounced himself against any connection of banks with the federal government. Henshaw made known his new found opinions in July, 1837, coming out in favor of 'a speedy and final divorce of the government of the United States from all Bank governments and Bank agencies in the management of the public revenue, and in the performance of their official duties. The very same man who allegedly had originated the idea of 'pet banks' as a direct connection between the federal government and several local institutions five years previously, was now on record as not merely disfavoring such a strong association between government and banking interests, but disavowing any ties whatsoever.¹²⁸

The Post capitalized on David Henshaw's changed opinion in hopes of enhancing the popularity of its faction. On July 29, 1837 the editor wrote that Henshaw, as a veteran in the cause of Democracy, was opposed to the renewal of the B.U.S. charter and to banking in general.¹²⁹ The only portion of this avowal that would have been accurate as recently as the previous year was that Henshaw was opposed to the re-charter of the B.U.S. Of course as a Jacksonian Democrat he had always spoken against the 'monster' bank. On all other points though, most especially his having been a veteran in the cause of 'equal rights' or radical democracy, this piece offered a false depiction of the collector's previous political sentiments. While it is probably inaccurate to claim, as his Democratic rivals did, that Henshaw was always to be found among the most conservative members of the Democracy on the major issues of the day, he certainly did not ascribe to the radical ideals of his current rivals for party control. Bowing to the clamors of the majority of Democrats in the state, the collector by this time chose to ignore his obvious interest in large banking institutions to portray himself as a champion

¹²⁸ Ibid, Jul. 22, 1837.

¹²⁹ Ibid, Jul. 29, 1837.

of the demise of the banking system. This pronounced shift in opinion came despite his actual interests as a director of the Commonwealth Bank. For those, both Democrat and Whig, who were privy in any way to knowledge of Henshaw's proprietary position, the Post's assertion that their clique's leader was generally opposed to banks must have appeared comical and disingenuous, to say the least.

At the same time, the Post changed its stated opinion on paper currency in order to keep in line with current trends in political beliefs among both administration and state Democrats. As we have seen, originally David Henshaw and his associates had endorsed bank notes and paper currency as a method to facilitate monetary transactions. Once Calhoun issued his public approval of the Independent Treasury Bill and his correspondence vilifying paper money, however, the clique adopted these policies long since endorsed by their 'Country' Party rivals.¹³⁰ Although falling short of the sentiments that marked President Van Buren's extreme radicalism on the matter, the paper still questioned the merit of any kind of bank notes being utilized as a form of currency. Unlike Van Buren or his local allies, the paper was willing to listen to those advocating reform and not simply destruction of banking altogether, although its endorsement of any potential ameliorative scheme was tepid at best and seemed rooted in skepticism. Speaking of the reform-minded men to be found among more moderate members of the Democratic Party, the paper issued a warning. 'If this opposition [to the administration] is sufficient to mix up with their reforming measures certain projects of interested men, serving to burden the new system of currency with appendages of the old experiments, the good resulting from this reform may be obscured by the evil resulting from its appendages.' It seems that the evils of paper money and credit were enough potentially to undermine even the most well-intentioned efforts. Thus the old Jacksonian worry of the bank's corrupting even those with the most honorable and desirable plans reared its head once again. This concern until recently had not existed among members of the faction and had rarely made the pages of either the Post or the Statesman. In response to the circumstances of this time period, however, the public

¹³⁰ Ibid, Sep. 15, 1837.

pronouncements of the paper were marked by a more radical tinge.¹³¹

With the failure of the Commonwealth Bank in January, 1838, the Post once again adjusted its stated views on banking. Refraining from outright vitriol against all financial institutions in the immediate aftermath of this catastrophe, the paper chose more moderate language in addressing the affair. No doubt, much of this moderation was due to the fact that the paper's ownership and most of its close political associates were tied to the demise of that institution. Issuing harsh words against the Commonwealth or portraying those responsible for the management of that bank in general as an evil and misguided concern would have been far too hypocritical for the paper's editors. As a result the clique abstained from the type of pronouncements that would have followed a similar public failure by a Whig-affiliated bank. In the immediate future the paper would take great pains to show the trustworthiness of the Commonwealth's operators. Claiming that those in charge of the bank would maintain responsibility for all claims against it, the Post again chose to follow a course very different from that which its published views on banking would have indicated in previous months. Blaming Whig organs for emphasizing the connection of the bank to the Democratic Party in general, the Post adopted the tactic of following an objective course. Claiming that polemical assaults against the reputable men associated with the Commonwealth would benefit no one in the community it tried to direct public attention away from its now embarrassing association with this financial institution. By accusing the 'Federal papers' of having endeavored to increase the excitement surrounding a turbulent local financial market the editor equated his paper's moderately-toned coverage of the affair with justice and wisdom.¹³²

More specifically, the paper made a point of removing direct blame from Henshaw. Responding to charges from the city's most prominent Whig organ, the Post claimed the Collector, 'was never a director of that institution, and knew no more about it than the editor of the Atlas.' While this was a blatantly false statement, the clique was

¹³¹ Ibid, Oct. 3, 1837.

¹³² Ibid, Jan. 15, 1838.

obviously attempting to defend its most prominent member. Further absolving Henshaw from any blame the piece went on to claim, ‘Mr. Henshaw was confined to his bed by severe sickness,’ when the issue of payments to local fishermen was made.¹³³ The ultimate aim of the paper during this crisis was to win support for the notion that it would be more worthy of all involved to abstain from political slander during the affair in hopes of effecting the best results for all parties. In attempting to do so, the ‘City’ faction took great care to obscure its own connection to the Commonwealth Bank along with its obvious interests in that oft-maligned institution.

Instead of blaming the Commonwealth’s operators, the clique argued that the banking system as currently constituted was culpable for the failure and resultant dire consequences. Allowing large corporations to be involved with paper money was at the root of all problems associated with banking. Moving away from its previously measured objectivity on the banking issue, the Post publicly called for a complete renovation of the system. While denying any connection to the Commonwealth, the clique’s representatives in this case utilized the issue of its demise and the questionable quality of all similar local institutions in light of what had occurred, to bolster and further evolve the public presentation of their position. If the Commonwealth, the most reputable institution of its kind based on the presence of trustworthy governing Democrats, was subject to failure and embarrassment all similar institutions must also fail, noted the paper. This particular bankruptcy served as testament to the unreliability of the system in general and allowed all fair-minded citizens to see the evils of financial conglomerates.¹³⁴

The Post’s recriminations against banking, however, could not totally absolve the managers of the Commonwealth. While these honorable Democrats had been tainted by the evils of the system, it was still admitted that on occasion their actions had been questionable. The paper noted, ‘That the Commonwealth Bank has stopped business, we admit--that it has been badly managed, we admit--that those who have mismanaged it

¹³³ Ibid, Jan. 18, 1838.

¹³⁴ Ibid, Mar. 17, 1838.

deserve censure, we admit--that the public suffers in consequence of their conduct, we admit.' Taking its public confession a step further, the paper stated in print that many friends--as well as enemies--of the Democracy had been involved with the bank's administration. At this point, however, its self-flagellation ended. Only if those who had been involved with the bank had wittingly run it into the ground, thereby abusing and misusing the public's money and damaging their own finances would they be worthy of real censure. People could be blamed for their misdeeds if 'they knowingly sanctioned them.' In the same vein neither the government nor its agents, most prominent of whom at the time was Henshaw could 'be more justly blamed for the conduct of the bank, than any principal for a breach of faith on the part of an agent.'¹³⁵ Thus, any criticisms against the bank had to be labeled as simple human error, allowable as long as no ulterior motives were involved. Since its closest associates were men of honor, the paper was able to declare them above such allegations.

In defense of David Henshaw, the paper was much more specific. Responding to actual and pointed claims from rival papers that alleged improprieties related to the failure of the bank and its connection to Custom House affairs, the Post undertook a systematic defense of its favorite. Because Henshaw had held the most lucrative and most contentious position, his role in the bank controversy in particular naturally received a great deal of scrutiny and criticism from those outside the Post's orbit. Since Custom House money had been kept in the vaults of the Commonwealth nearly from his first day as collector, issues surrounding Henshaw's obligations to the federal government were sure to surface in light of the bank's suspension of business. Engaging in a public debate with Boston's main Whig organ, the Daily Atlas, the Post sought to prove that Henshaw had no knowledge of the peril that his bank was in until it was too late and much of the institution's capital resources had been lost. Defending the Collector's maintenance of government funds in the bank and consequent allowance of the majority of this uninsured total to be defaulted, the clique averred that Henshaw could not be criticized for faulty actions with regard to the bank. If as the Atlas claimed, the collector had previous knowledge of imminent failure, the paper asked, would he not

¹³⁵ Ibid, Jan. 20, 1838.

have at the very least insured government monies in order to protect himself against future prosecution? A comment attributed to Henshaw by the Atlas regarding a belief that the bank stood at least eight to ten days short of any sort of trouble, from which he believed it would eventually recover, was repeated to help absolve their associate from blame in this matter.¹³⁶

It was also noted that as outgoing collector, Henshaw had an obligation to pay off all outstanding debts of the Custom House before stepping down. Because he had paid these debts the day before the bank's failure in Commonwealth notes, the Atlas and others outside of the Post's sphere had charged Henshaw with disingenuousness. The timing of the affair does seem suspicious on its surface. But as the Post claimed in 1838 and in later years, the notice calling in all outstanding checks associated with the collector had been issued just before the bank's collapse and was published 'solely in reference to the necessary settlement of the collector's accounts preparatory to his leaving the office.' Hence those who had collected their payments at the Commonwealth office could not blame Henshaw in this matter. It was simply a case of bad timing as it would appear. The Atlas and opponents of the collector utilized the dubious circumstances surrounding the final payments of Custom House debts further to criticize Henshaw and the clique's connection to such an ill-fated financial institution.¹³⁷ All the while the Post and the Statesman vehemently defended the conduct of Henshaw, despite offering timely critiques of the operation of the Commonwealth itself. Choosing to uphold the actions of their close associate while coming down against this particular bank and the banking system in general, apparently seemed the only tenable approach to maintaining any sort of support among the city's Democrats for the clique's leadership.

In essence it mattered little what the true sentiments of the Post clique's members were toward banking or the propriety of the Commonwealth Bank's operation. For all intents and purposes, the political necessities of the day forced their leaders to adopt a public stance against the institution in general. Such posturing would most likely have

¹³⁶ Ibid, Jan. 25, 1838.

¹³⁷ Ibid.

led to a separation from the group's true and pronounced connection to the Commonwealth whether that institution had failed or not. Since the bank underwent a very public and embarrassing dissolution, the clique was prompted to issue judgment on the institution and the role their own associates had played in its operation. Hoping to maintain their place amidst the changing fortunes of the Democratic Party in Massachusetts, the 'City' faction essayed the promotion of policies and ideals that would best assure its temporary survival. Because of the concomitant anti-banking platforms of both the administration in Washington and the Post's Democratic rivals in Massachusetts, the clique had little choice but to offer similar pronouncements if it hoped to maintain any influential role in governance. Since the ascendance of George Bancroft to the collectorship position and the solidification of his 'Country' associates at the head of Massachusetts' Democracy, the former leaders of the party had a much reduced role in formulating policies and guiding public opinion. For now at least, the Post group was forced to heed the dictation of Morton, Bancroft and their cronies. Because these newly emergent leaders, with their favorite Martin Van Buren as president, had always been vehemently opposed to all financial corporations, the faction attempted to display their recently developed hatred of all forms of banking. The failure of the Commonwealth Bank made this modified political ideology all the more pressing.

The clique's association with the Commonwealth Bank helped further to remove its members from positions of influence and respect among Democratic rivals in the state. Because of the faction's previous support for banking, several of its members had already appeared suspicious to its intra-party rivals. With the much publicized circumstances surrounding the Commonwealth Bank's collapse and Henshaw's obvious connection to its failure, many Democrats in Boston began to heed warnings already issued about the true sentiments of the Post faction. Long since criticized for possessing standards and beliefs that seemed to contradict the most common sentiments of the day within the party, the group's loyalties to administration policy had more recently come into question. Upon the demise of the bank these doubts were amplified. Van Buren's disapproval of Henshaw's interests in the collectorship succession affair now appeared to have been the most politically beneficial decision that could have been made in light of these

circumstances. That the party had been able to separate itself from the most embarrassing aspects of the affair through the removal of Henshaw and his associates from positions of power seemed a boon to the president and his closest followers in Massachusetts. As Post rival Benjamin F. Hallett noted in correspondence with Bancroft, ‘The news... of the failure of the Commonwealth Bank in Boston, shows how well we have judged of that concern, and will rejoice the President of the escape he has made.’ By ignoring the wishes of the former power brokers in Boston, the president had enhanced the party’s chances to succeed in the Bay State. The failure of the Commonwealth was just the most prominent symbol of the ineptitude of those who had led the operation of Massachusetts Democracy since its inception. As Henshaw and his Custom House cronies had proven, selfish cliques should not be responsible for the interests of party organization, Hallett noted. Thankfully the bank’s failure seemed to reinforce the decisions of the president, made largely as a reaction against Henshaw. Many hoped that the party, now removed from former Custom House control, would be allowed to flourish.¹³⁸

With Henshaw’s faction now effectively removed from the helm of the Democratic Party in Massachusetts, the Boston Morning Post began to lose its status as the administration mouthpiece. This reduced role was made especially notable with the founding of the Bay State Democrat as a second party organ. Brought into being largely at the request of the newly ensconced collector and his political associates in Boston and throughout the state, the paper came to represent the majority interests of the Democracy.¹³⁹ In discussing the newly established paper, first printed as a seasonal campaign sheet, political ally Benjamin Harris noted that such a public news source would serve to keep their associates from the taint of David Henshaw and his minions. By the 1840 election it was hoped that possessing their own political organ would help the ‘Country’ faction to gain all patronage appointments from a national administration that already favored its interests over those of the ‘City’ group. Since the only advantage the latter clique maintained was the prominence of the Morning Post as the

¹³⁸ B.F. Hallett, 15 Jan. 1838, to George Bancroft; G. Harris, Nov. 1838, to Bancroft, *Bancroft Papers*, MHS.

¹³⁹ Boston *Daily Atlas*, Sep. 4, 1838.

official mouthpiece of Massachusetts Democracy, it was thought that this new paper would further reduce the influence of the party's former leaders. The Democrat, once it became a daily and well-distributed paper, would remove the last vestige of Post strength, if its founders' goals were met. While Harris noted that the Democrat should not advocate open hostilities with the Post, its position as another voice outside Henshaw and Greene's orbit would inevitably bring favor to the opposite wing of the party, he believed. As an ultimate result, its proprietors hoped that the Democratic-minded who had remained outside party circles due to their disinclination to accept Post clique leadership, would now become privy to the opinions and ideology of a new leading faction, and therefore enter the party's columns.¹⁴⁰

Following the fall 1838 and spring 1839 state electoral campaigns, the Democrat became a permanent daily paper. The Post group, which had initially been appeased by that paper's temporary status, was soon to be discomfited with this changed scenario.¹⁴¹ Existing in large part on contributions from members of the Custom House rank and file, the Democrat continually endorsed the methods and operations of the 'Country' branch of Massachusetts Democracy.¹⁴² The paper's first editor, J. G. Harris, was a subordinate of Bancroft in the Custom House, thereby in effect imprinting the stamp of that institution at the head of the paper during its earliest period of existence. While no Massachusetts Democrat would admit the differences that were at first latent between the two great pillars of the state's Democratic Party, Whig opponents had no compunction in pointing out the obvious divisions that the presence of these two daily newsheets seemed to manifest.

As the new official voice of Boston's Custom House, the Democrat's first edition was printed in September, 1838. Utilizing the patronage that the lucrative post of head collector for Boston brought along, Bancroft was able to hire many influential editors and writers from defunct or weakened Democratic papers throughout the state. Employing such men in Custom House positions, the collector was able to marshal the editorial

¹⁴⁰ Harris, Nov. 1838, to Bancroft, *Bancroft Papers*, MHS.

¹⁴¹ Boston *Daily Atlas*, Jan. 19, 1839.

¹⁴² *Ibid*, Sep. 6, 1838.

powers of several important party men to help spread the doctrines of the ‘Country’ group through the means of his own paper and other Democratic satellites throughout Massachusetts. Similar financial clout served to benefit Bancroft’s group in influencing the election of state officials during this time period.¹⁴³

Almost from the start the Democrat made sure to indicate its differences with the Post faction of the party. Alluding to the former modes of operation during the party’s nascent period, the paper asserted the overwhelming importance that state-wide nominating conventions held. As the main means of keeping undue influence out of the hands of minority interests, such gatherings were certain to ensure the prominence of the most popular ideals and candidates in local and national elections. Because the former leaders of the party had not followed such a prescribed course, true democratization of Massachusetts politics had been delayed. In more recent times the convention had been allowed to become the dominant forum for nominating worthy candidates and their platforms. Yet the threat that powerful members of the party would return to the old ways of rule needed to be quelled. Without such an assurance, ‘nominations for the most important state offices in the people’s gift would be made either by a few managers at the metropolis, by a newspaper, or perhaps by a county or town caucus--by persons who have no right to dictate and direct--who have no means of knowing the state of public feeling throughout the commonwealth--and whose object may be the aggrandizement of themselves or their particular friends, regardless of the popular voice or the popular interests.’¹⁴⁴ This depiction was a thinly veiled reference to the manner in which David Henshaw had run Massachusetts Democratic affairs. Making such a public statement at the inception of this new journal’s existence illustrates the clarity with which the authors and proprietors of the Democrat showed their intent to separate themselves from any sort of association with their intra-party rivals in Boston. That they were willing to use such blatantly descriptive terms to direct attention to the former leaders of the Democracy in Massachusetts shows both the confidence the leaders of the group had in their abilities as well as their intense desire to injure the party’s

¹⁴³ Ibid, Oct. 24, 1838.

¹⁴⁴ *Boston Bay State Democrat*, Sep. 7, 1838.

discredited former leadership further.

The Post clique was unable to voice its hostility to the new organ of Massachusetts Democracy publicly in its pages. Satellite papers, however, were under no obligation to restrain their respective voices against the Democrat. One such paper was the Lowell Advertiser. Upon learning of the newly permanent status of the Bay State Democrat, the Advertiser made no bones about its sentiments on the matter, stating that while the campaign season Bay State Democrat ‘during its brief existence, was an excellent paper and efficient supporter in the cause of democracy,’ its current incarnation was nothing of the sort. In fact its revival at that time was, in the words of the Lowell paper, ‘entirely uncalled for.’ The Advertiser’s editors hoped for its ultimate demise. The reasoning behind this opinion was that with a newfound glut of Democratic papers in Boston, the patronage available to each was sure to be greatly reduced. Such a likely scenario, reasoned the Advertiser, would do great damage to the strength of those newsheets already extant. While the insincerity made evident by this stance cannot be questioned, it is relatively certain that patronage concerns were the basis for the Advertiser’s misgivings. Since the supporters of the Democrat by and large represented different sources from those previously allied to the Post, both papers would probably have continued to receive revenues from their disparate sources. The real concern here was the damage that the creation of the Democrat would do to Morning Post control of the local Democratic news cycle. Losing their last vestige of exclusive influence in Boston, the Post and its allies worried that the grip of the ‘Country’ faction, already greatly enhanced by their ascension to Custom House power, would be made absolute with the establishment of a new daily in Boston. The printed words of the Lowell Advertiser accurately display the worries of Henshaw, Greene and the rest of the Post clique over this matter.¹⁴⁵

Responding to the Bay State Democrat’s efforts to establish itself as the mouthpiece of the party in Massachusetts, the leaders of the Post faction adopted a new course of activity. Realizing that it was impossible to assault the Custom House organ

¹⁴⁵ Lowell *Advertiser*, Jan. 15, 1839.

openly for reasons of party harmony and the reality that the Bancroft faction possessed near complete control of the state's Democratic organization, Henshaw, Greene and company decided to re-focus their attention. Since the Morning Post was well-known as the 'City' faction's organ, resistance through that paper would have raised charges of jealous activity on the part of the clique. Furthermore, open dissension within the party would benefit none of the factions of the Massachusetts Democratic Party. Therefore, the leaders of the 'City' group decided to found another seasonal paper to act as a counterweight to the Democrat. The Thorn as it would be known was put into existence to offer yet another voice of Democracy in the city.¹⁴⁶ Its main reason for existence, however, seems to have been to offer differing opinions from those being uttered by the Custom House sheet while remaining separate from the Post clique. Though positioned as a nominal opponent to the Whig presses in the city, which to be sure it was, the Thorn's main project was to give further voice to the arguments and presentations of the Henshaw faction in the city. That the former collector's influence had been weakened in recent months was indisputable. His political designs, however, had not been diminished at all. Running the operations of a news source able to issue denunciations against all of their opponents without having to worry about the repercussions sure to have been leveled against the more established and publicly-recognized Post, the faction was able to pursue their course with a bit more liberty than they had heretofore done.

Established as a campaign season weekly, the paper, emerging as it did concomitantly with Bancroft's Democrat, makes obvious the Thorn's position as a source of difference from the doctrines of the Custom House within the Democracy. The fact that these two new Democratic papers came into being during the same week in a city which for a full decade had been able to boast but one editorial source, the combined Post and Statesman enterprise, promoting the ideals and policies of the Democracy, would seem to raise obvious questions. Why was there a need for Boston suddenly support three such papers?¹⁴⁷ The obvious answer was that the newly established Custom House faction felt themselves improperly represented in the pages of the Morning Post

¹⁴⁶ Boston *Thorn*, Sep. 4, 1838.

¹⁴⁷ In fact throughout the Jacksonian Era, Boston never had a Democratic mayor, and the Whig Party generally dominated all elections in the city.

and Weekly Statesman. Those papers, espousing the ideals of their intra-party opponents, necessitated a rival Democratic voice in opposition. Why though would the Post faction feel the need for an additional paper to combat the Democrat? That question is more easily answered through a realization of what the Democrat was meant to represent. As a seasonal electoral paper the Bay State Democrat was first published merely to support the official Democratic candidates and platforms during the specific period surrounding the biennial canvasses. Since the 'Country' faction was now in control of much of the party machinery, the paper on most occasions offered support to its faction's own hand-picked candidates. As a result its role was well-defined if somewhat circumscribed.

In contrast to the long-time party organ the Boston Morning Post, the Thorn, while usually found squarely behind Democratic political candidates in local elections, had more leeway to question the policies of the new party leadership. Directly in contrast to the Bay State Democrat, the Thorn on several occasions routinely contradicted the stated political ideologies of candidates from either party. At other times Henshaw's new paper would withhold public endorsement of any candidates, while arguing what the proper course of political democracy was. This tactic was one that the Custom House's sheet simply could not follow. In the Thorn's introductory issue, its prescribed political ideology was laid out as follows: 'Everything for the Cause, Nothing For Men.' In light of this doctrine it was easier for the paper to point out the questionable actions of both parties. This criticism extended to potential and actual Democratic candidates for local and national elected offices.¹⁴⁸

The Democrat on the other hand, was hardly ever willing to follow suit. Instead the Custom House paper upon becoming a full-time, non-campaign season newsheet in the fall of 1839, proclaimed itself 'devoted to the promulgation of Democratic Truth.'¹⁴⁹ The paper was never able to assault party members directly. That is not to say, however, that the Bay State Democrat refrained from offering veiled

¹⁴⁸ Boston *Thorn*, Sept. 4, 18, 1838.

¹⁴⁹ Boston *Bay State Democrat*, Sep. 8, 1838.

rebukes against the former leaders of the Custom House and the Massachusetts Democratic Party. During its first year of existence Bancroft's journal continually lashed out against men and factions who had worked to limit the party's scope in order to promote their own control. By giving 'wider circulation to the great truths' which were inherent in the ideologies of true Democrats, the paper hoped to act in a fashion that had been sorely lacking in state political affairs during the prior time period.¹⁵⁰ Such assertions served as obvious jibes at both the Post and the Thorn. The implication of such statements was that the existing organs of Boston Democracy were not following through on their duties to their fellow Democrats. Thus these newspapers could not be labeled as true voices for the ideals of Democracy.

While Boston's non-Custom House affiliated Democratic papers possessed the ability to criticize policies and beliefs of the local party's establishment, the Democrat only questioned its fellow party men using less assertive means. Claiming to stand for the leading interests of Democracy in the state, that paper presented itself in direct opposition to all other public outlets. It viewed other news sources as routinely failing in their duties to benefit the party. The establishment of the Bay State Democrat and its subsequent vehement language on the matter would seem to prove that the 'Country' faction of the Massachusetts Democratic Party saw itself as a voice contrary to that being pronounced in the pages of the longest-running Democratic paper in Boston as well as its newly established fellow. The competing doctrines and pronounced ideologies of both the Democrat and the Thorn further proved the differences between the two papers and their leadership factions and would help offer a final point of comparison between the fragmenting groups of the Democracy of Massachusetts during the later part of the 1830's.

While both papers espoused policies that were more in line with those of 'Radical Democracy' than perhaps would have been common a few years earlier, their major differences were evident in the respective approaches they took toward the proper role for Massachusetts to play in national affairs. Remaining true to its faction's traditional

¹⁵⁰ Ibid, Apr. 19, 1839.

approach, the Thorn early and often was found supporting the rights of southern states in questions of legislative dispute. Placing themselves as supporters of even-handed sectional balance, the paper's editors made clear their collective opposition to any undue meddling in the interests of the South. This policy was promoted regardless of its impact on local constituents.¹⁵¹ The Democrat on the other hand, made evident that despite their proclaimed support for all administrative actions and the standard doctrines of the party their main interests lay with the people of New England.¹⁵² This assertion led that paper continually to form policy opinions based on perceived regional interests. Such a divided approach from the outset clearly displays how each faction viewed its responsibility on the matters deemed important to the South as a region. Their contrast was mainly muted during the period immediately following the establishment of each paper. During the next decade, however, the inherent differences between the two groups flared up on several occasions, further undermining any unity or connection between the wings of the party in Massachusetts. It was over the issues associated with southern interests, most especially the issue of territorial expansion linked to the annexation of Texas and the presence of slavery there, that these two groups found one of their most divisive items of debate. For the present, however, the beliefs and political sentiments that would eventually lead to this strengthened animosity were largely muted as a result of the lack of prominence given to such issues.

The Thorn from its introductory issue criticized the interference of its own state in the affairs of others, North or South. Echoing John C. Calhoun's organ the Charleston Mercury, the paper proclaimed its belief that for the sections to exist in harmony each must remain accountable for its own affairs. Following such a guideline was the only way in which federal harmony could be preserved. Allowing local control of state institutions would be the basis for the future success of the union. It was obvious that national harmony had been threatened by the meddling of others, most especially New England's abolitionists, the paper noted. The Thorn and the clique who operated it frequently reminded their readers that it was their own fellow northern citizens who

¹⁵¹ Boston *Thorn*, Sep. 4, 18, 24, Oct. 8, Nov. 10 1838.

¹⁵² Boston *Bay State Democrat*, Nov. 9, 1838.

threatened the harmony of the South more than any others. Because of this realization, the Thorn felt it important to acknowledge its geographic locale. ‘Here in the face of all New England, we erect our standard, and fling our banner to the battle and the breeze!’ declared its seminal issue. That banner was one of national patriotism and unqualified union sentiments. The only way to achieve those noble goals was for northerners to end their meddling with southern affairs. The very fact that its proprietors felt the sectional harmony of the nation was among the most important political issues of the day, evinces proof that preserving the rights of their southern brethren was among the primary goals of their faction. Within the Democratic Party of Massachusetts the men who had chosen to found the Thorn as a contrary voice to the ‘Country’ faction and its Bay State Democrat, felt that asserting their beliefs on such political questions as slavery, tariffs, and territorial expansion, was of the utmost importance.¹⁵³ Placing such an assertion in the introductory edition clearly illustrated that the leaders of the ‘City’ faction felt their leanings on these matters were being threatened by the control of party affairs recently attained by their ‘Country’ rivals. That Bancroft, Morton and their associates did not give the issues of southern interest as much weight as Henshaw, Greene and the Post faction was known to political insiders at the time. By asserting its strong-willed desire to ensure sectional equality in such matters, the Thorn was voicing a concern that Massachusetts Democrats would otherwise have remained ignorant of their full import. The newly founded Custom House group, in the minds of their intra-party rivals, would not follow a similar path with regards to these issues.

The Democrat at the exact same time, pronounced an obvious favoritism to the interests of Massachusetts and New England. While both papers were consistent supporters of Marcus Morton in his repeated quests for the governorship, the Democrat was alone in promoting his strong stance in favor of matters that ultimately worked to Massachusetts’ benefit to the exclusion of all others. Granted, as a potential governor of Massachusetts, Morton would be responsible for upholding and promoting the interests of that state over all others. The Democrat, however, took great pains to devalue the interests of other states in order to promote their own. As a member of the prior 18th

¹⁵³ Boston *Thorn*, Sept. 4, 1838.

and 19th Congress, Morton had always been found in favor of regional interests. As such he had represented himself as a man with the best interests of his state in mind. ‘He was the friend of true liberty, the able advocate of the simple principles of the constitution, and a distinguished friend of the New England interests,’ as men from other sections had attested.¹⁵⁴ In this and similar presentations, the comity of the regions was highlighted but never so prominently as were the positive benefits that Morton would bring to Massachusetts. Such an approach is directly opposite to those seen in the Post and the Thorn. Those latter papers and the faction they represented, more often took up the cause of national harmony above all others. This activity typically involved the promotion of issues normally endorsed by southerners prior to any discussion of how these questions impacted Massachusetts. Such a difference in approach, while seemingly muted in these presentations, is important to understanding the major differences between these two factions. Henshaw’s interests in issues of import to the South had already placed him, and would continue to place him and his affiliated papers in the column of Calhoun’s supporters in the years to come.

Though one has to read between the lines of these two Democratic rival papers to assess the differences between their proprietors, no such interpretation is necessary to discover the real enmity that existed between the leading political men of each faction. Beyond the establishment of the Bay State Democrat as its organ, the ‘Country’ faction of the Massachusetts Democracy also sought to remove itself physically from all former spheres of Morning Post faction influence. Thus shortly after Bancroft assumed the role of Customs Collector, his group established the Democratic Reading Room in Boston.¹⁵⁵ This new meeting room’s location replaced both the Commonwealth Bank and Morning Post offices as the former unofficial headquarters of the city’s ruling members of the Democratic Party. Members of Henshaw’s group were rarely if ever seen at this site. At the same time those closest to Bancroft and Morton, men comprising the current leadership of the party, were customary participants in the activities that went on at this locale. In a letter to George Bancroft, Edward Harris, the Bay State Democrat’s editor,

¹⁵⁴ Boston *Bay State Democrat*, Nov. 9, 1838.

¹⁵⁵ Boston *Morning Post*, Oct. 8, 1838.

noted how his paper and the Reading Room had particularly bothered Henshaw and affiliates of the Morning Post group. In the period after the paper and meeting place were established, obvious hostility toward these aspects of 'Country' control made evident the clique's ultimate hopes of undermining the new Custom House leadership. The former group's main fear was that its rival newspaper was on the right track toward gaining strength and permanency. The Reading Room was also seen as a troubling spatial reminder of the minimized ability the former Custom House faction had to dictate or influence Democratic affairs. Confident of his group's popularity and George Bancroft's ability to wrest party control from the Morning Post group which these new institutions seemed able to provide, Harris looked optimistically toward the party's future in Massachusetts. His outlook proved to be well-informed.¹⁵⁶

Because of the power behind its founding group, the Democratic Reading Room was particularly galling to Henshaw and his closest associates. Having lost the overall ability to greatly influence the Democracy's political affairs within Boston and Massachusetts, the faction had largely ceded its power to dictate important actions. Therefore the role of their meeting places to serve as focal points for Democratic machinery had largely become moot. In place of the Boston Morning Post and Commonwealth Bank offices the Democracy's new leaders had established their Reading Room. For almost the same purposes as their initial founding of the Bay State Democrat, Bancroft and his associates realized the importance of this new center of party power. Disassociating themselves from the perceived influence of the Post group, the Democrat faction hoped to mark themselves as the distinctive and uninfluenced leaders of the party in Boston. Henshaw and Greene were said to detest this newfound establishment.¹⁵⁷ If the Reading Room were to become the center of Massachusetts Democratic power, the clique feared its members would become eminently powerless. With no ability to hold any kind of sway over the affairs of the party even in their own backyard, the already ebbing influence of this group would have totally disappeared. Having had no control over the Democratic Reading Room, the clique saw subsequent

¹⁵⁶ Harris, Nov. 1838, to Bancroft, *Bancroft Papers*, MHS.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

popularity of this spot as further evidence that their own collective ability to help guide the party's dealings had passed.

Though Greene initially subscribed to the Bay State Democrat, the acrimony that the clique held for these new ventures of 'Country' Party control was notable. Henshaw refused to read the rival paper and would not set foot in the Reading Room. It was also well-known that the clique was doing all in its power to undermine the reputation of their rivals. Edward Harris noted, 'I hear of their opposition in every quarter. In fact they are constantly on the watch, striving to take advantage of and throw cold water on every measure that you [Bancroft] are in favor of--their Gen. Amee [a Henshaw ally] has been all over South Boston telling the people that 'the Democrat is a sort of Locofoco of the Reformer Stamp got up by the collector to distract the party.' Despite the best efforts of Henshaw, Amee, and others these attempts to undermine the Democrat proved of little avail. The continued existence of the Democrat, which became a daily enterprise in 1840, and of the Reading Room, were proposed as the one way to ensure that Post influence continued to wane. As the new paper gained strength, largely through Custom House patronage, and the Reading Room continued to house the men closest to the Collector and his interests, the 'Country' faction flourished.¹⁵⁸

In direct contrast the Post group, already a minority faction in the state, continued to decline. With Van Buren almost always favoring the 'Country' faction in matters of appointment and the Henshaw faction's well-established lack of influence among the state's Democratic legislators, the clique had come to rely upon its media dominance in the form of the Post as the sole organ of the party in Boston. Similarly, they had taken for granted their direction of the city's Democrats because of their superior ability to organize that group through the columns of the Post. Now with the establishment of the Bay State Democrat and with the control of the Custom House leadership projected outward to the Democratic Reading Room, the Post group felt themselves to have lost their last bastion of influence. Henshaw, bitter over his losses, temporarily removed

¹⁵⁸ Ibid.

himself from public life.¹⁵⁹ His faction, however, did not cede control without a fight. As the brief existence of the Thorn and continued publication of the Post proved, the clique maintained their important position, albeit now one of secondary status, within the Democratic ranks. During the coming years their members, forced to remain largely in the background, continued to advocate the cause of the Democracy.

At the same time the group would further delineate their positions on a variety of issues, further establishing some similarities and many differences with their rivals at the Democrat. The most prominent points of emphasis in the decade to come were the developing rivalries over national political endorsements. The Democrat group continued to support their party's national leader, Martin Van Buren. For the Post's part, while nominally supporting Van Buren as president, its members' true interests lay with John C. Calhoun. During the remainder of the 1830's their approach to matters of national politics remained similar to the one they had adopted in the earliest years of Jackson's presidency, when they had supported the president because of his position as the head of the party but secretly endorsed the second strongest member of their political organization, John C. Calhoun. Similarly, on the issues of slavery and southern interests the groups' differences continued to be notable. The growing division between these two factions was most prominent when it came to the issues of sectional import that seemed so sharply to divide their members.

¹⁵⁹ Darling, pg. 238. In the meantime, Henshaw conducted a tour of the West in order to further investment pursuits among railroad corporations.

Chapter 6:

Calhounites Once Again: The Henshaw Clique Re-establishes Political Loyalty to Calhoun While Continuing To Struggle With the ‘Country’ Faction for Local Control.

On September 12, 1837, readers of the Boston Morning Post were informed of a momentous event in national politics. John C. Calhoun had returned to the Democratic Party after his initial departure five years earlier at the height of the Nullification Crisis. This change in sentiment was most immediately due to the South Carolinian’s support of Martin Van Buren’s newly introduced Sub-Treasury Bill. Judging by Calhoun’s publicly pronounced ideology, however, it is safe to say the senator’s political sentiments were more akin to those of most Jacksonian Democrats than to any faction of the Whig Party to which he had previously pledged loyalty. In essence Calhoun’s recent avowal of support for administration measures seems to have been a re-affirmation of his most cherished beliefs.¹

For the Morning Post faction, this seemingly logical return to the party of his earlier years symbolized much more than a predictable step. The clique had followed a complicated path on the matter of support for the former vice-president since the days of his various controversies with President Jackson. Despite the fact that their ardent support for John C. Calhoun had allowed David Henshaw and his associates to attain nearly all principal offices in Boston, the faction had been forced to move away from their previous praise of this man. As a result of their position as the most prominent Jackson men in the city throughout the entirety of Old Hickory’s two terms at the nation’s helm, the Morning Post group had little choice but to take the side of the Commander in Chief during all disputes with his former second officer. Because Jackson came to view the divisive actions of his first vice-president

¹ Boston *Morning Post*, Sep. 12, 1837.

as a threat to the administration's existence, the Statesman and the Post publicly followed suit in denouncing their former benefactor. All the while, it was privately apparent that the leaders of the group still held their original affinities for Calhoun's ideology and believed strongly in his talents. Despite the fact that the well-known qualities of Calhoun had been directed toward a politically improper course during his years of affiliation with the Whigs, Henshaw and his closest associates kept warm sentiments for the man. His return to the party in the fall of 1837 therefore presented them with an opportunity to reassert their respective faith in Calhoun as a politician and statesman. The rapidity of their declarations of joy on his return to the fold was ready proof that the collective sentiments of the Post faction for him had not eroded despite his time outside the ranks of the Democracy. The faction believed that the Administration party could 'afford to give away Maine and Rhode Island if it gets John C. Calhoun in return.' Such a reunion came as a pleasant surprise to the Post group and one that seemed to answer long-time wishes.²

Over the course of the next several years, the Post faction continued to lavish praise on Calhoun, routinely endorsing his political plans and policies with great fervor. At the same time the leaders of the 'Country' Party, while supportive of the Carolinian as a fellow Democrat, were a bit less effusive in their praise. Although the latter group was by and large in favor of most of what Calhoun said and did in Washington, their language was certainly not as enthusiastic as that of their Massachusetts counterparts. In large part, this more lukewarm response was due to the fact that the 'Country' faction had never had any particular alliance with Calhoun as a politician. Additionally, they did not share his ideology in the same manner as Henshaw and associates seem to have done. The most important factor behind the differences between these two factions on the matter was the fact that the Democrat group was closely aligned with President Van Buren. Though the president cemented his political affiliation with the South Carolina senator during this period, those two prominent national leaders at the same time came to represent distinctive focal points for Democrats in Massachusetts. Because of their affinity for Calhoun,

² Ibid, Sep. 21, 1837.

the *Morning Post* group continually maintained strong ties to the man, while also remaining nominally supportive of Van Buren as head of the party. This approach was very similar to that followed by the same group during the days of Andrew Jackson's first administration.

The *Democrat*, for its part, never experienced such a dilemma. Largely regarding Van Buren as their benefactor in much the same way as their intra-party rivals had done with Calhoun half a decade earlier, Bancroft, Morton and their associates did not have to look any further than the party's titular head for instruction. Thus on all matters of disagreement between the president and his newest ally in Washington, the Bay State group had no doubts about where to direct its support. Since the *Democrat* faction's hold on party control was continually reified and increased during the later part of the 1830's and into the 1840's this group had no reason to question the beneficence of their national patron. Already holding the administration patronage largely inherited from the *Post* group over the preceding several years, along with its already significant influence over the Democratic members of the state's legislature, the 'Country' group continued to dominate state party affairs during the years to come. Because Van Buren's principles seemed to be ideals more likely to appeal to northern Democrats, the subsequent actions and tendencies of this local ruling faction were easy to predict. While the New Yorker continued in office, both wings of Massachusetts Democracy viewed him as their leader and most viable political representative. Only the 'Country' group, however, actually offered Van Buren outright and unstinted support.³

Following the election of 1840, the differences between the two groups regarding desirable national leaders would become more pronounced. By the early part of the next decade, Massachusetts Democracy was notably divided between Van Buren and Calhoun factions along the lines previously denominated 'Country' and 'City.' While the Van Buren men held numerical superiority as long as their leader

³ This fact is made evident by the rapidity with which the *Morning Post* seems to have abandoned allegiance to Van Buren in the aftermath of his 1840 electoral defeat.

was incumbent in the nation's top office, support for the former president began to fray following his defeat at the hands of William Henry Harrison. At that point the Post faction was able to draw more Democrats into their ranks as supporters of Calhoun. Thus once again, Calhoun's position of strength within the Massachusetts Democratic Party was partly responsible for engendering marked competition between these branches. Utilizing the connection that several former members of their association had with the senator along with the support of newfound allies, the Morning Post faction became able to mount a comeback of sorts, contending once again for leadership of the state's party. Much of this maneuvering occurred during the political re-alignment attending John Tyler's ill-fated presidency. For the immediate period it is important to note the distinctions that were drawn between the respective supporters of Martin Van Buren and John C. Calhoun in Massachusetts during the late 1830's and early 1840's and the role that the endorsements of the two leaders played in local Democratic affairs.

The origin of Calhoun's re-acceptance as a Democrat was the debate over the desirability of the federal government's future association with banking. By endorsing Van Buren's plan to separate government funds completely from any sort of banking establishments through the mechanism of a national Sub-Treasury to house government money, Calhoun clearly showed a hostility towards financial institutions similar to that recently vociferated by the Post faction. The latter group's modification in sentiments on financial institutions made the pronouncements of their once and current political associate more appealing.⁴ In fact it was argued by Whig politicians in the city, that this very shift in emphasis by Henshaw and his faction to the public stance that banking of all kinds was an inherent evil, was a mere ploy to engender the support of southern politicians, most specifically Calhoun. The Boston Daily Atlas alleged that the Post group was 'anxious to prostrate the industry and enterprise of the country; and [was] leaguering with Calhoun and Pickens to reduce

⁴ Merrill D. Peterson. *The Great Triumvirate: Webster, Clay, and Calhoun* (New York 1987), pg. 270-279; John Niven. *John C. Calhoun and the Price of Union* (Baton Rouge 1988), pg. 219-238; Charles M. Wiltse. "Calhoun: An Interpretation," *South Carolina Historical Association Proceedings*, 1948, pg. 26-38.

Massachusetts to the primitive and pastoral condition of Texas and South Carolina.’⁵ Reprising a regular criticism of the faction, the Whig Party claimed the reunion of Calhoun with his closest associates in Boston was done out of a mutual interest in promoting their own respective causes at the expense of regional and national welfare. This process once again found Henshaw’s group of associates in Boston promoting a cause that would favor southern interests over those of New England in the mind of Massachusetts Whigs.

On the whole the Post downplayed the importance of its similar ideology on banking and the Sub-Treasury to Calhoun’s recently pronounced views on these issues. It believed the most important fact to take away from his recent actions was that the Carolinian’s reunion with the party, whatever the reason, was itself of paramount significance. Such an event was so propitious that the paper declared a change in the overall political outlook of the country. This idea was best displayed in the derisive tones taken in the paper’s sentiments against the Whigs, both locally and nationally. Having lost one of their most able statesmen, the Post averred, the opposing party was unlikely to recover in the immediate future. This belief was printed on several occasions, in essence simply to taunt its rivals.⁶

Local Whig organs took advantage of Calhoun’s prominent role in the Nullification Crisis and his more recent endorsement of the Congressional Gag Rule to raise the specter of sectionalism in hopes of lessening the blow of his defection from their party. In so doing they attempted to paint Massachusetts Democrats as southern sympathizers and thus traitors to their region. The Morning Post clique was most susceptible to these charges. Calhoun’s re-entry to the party was sure to bring along formerly disaffected regions of the South, most particularly his home state of South Carolina. Adding such associates to the Democracy, Whig rivals argued, would force the party toward policies that considered southern interests above those of their own region. In fact the title of a piece in the Atlas declared Calhoun’s

⁵ Boston *Daily Atlas*, Nov. 1, 1837.

⁶ Boston *Morning Post*, Mar. 23, 1838.

union with the Democrats ensured an ‘Alliance of the Nullifiers and Loco Focos.’ Under the current circumstances, that organ noted, the bonds of union were ‘drawing closer and closer between the Loco-Focos of the north, and the ultra-aristocrats of the south.’ These new-found allies to Massachusetts Democracy were men who as Calhoun had claimed, were pledged to the belief that, ‘of all the social conditions of man, the most favorable to the development of cardinal virtues of the heart, and the noblest faculties of the soul--to the promotion of private happiness, and public prosperity, is that of slaveholding communities under free political institutions.’ Alleging that the interests of local Democrats were henceforth pledged to those of the slaveholder, the Atlas and like-minded Whig sources tried to paint their Democratic rivals in Boston in the light of southern sympathizers, thinking that such a depiction would be sure to do great political damage in Massachusetts.⁷

Believing that no northern politician, Democrat or otherwise, could truly support the interests of slavery, the Atlas went on to assume that such feigned support for the South’s peculiar institution showed their political opponents to be mere opportunists. Such men were willing to bow to the dictates of more influential or powerful allies. In this rendition, Boston Democrats did not stand up for the interests of their constituents and therefore were unworthy of their support. Political men who merely hoped to attain the spoils of power instead of promoting the interests and harmony of those upon whose support they depended, were little better than sycophants, the Atlas averred. Thus the city’s Democratic leaders were, ‘anxious and desirous to submit and surrender all the great interests of the free people of the North,--the interests of our northern farmers, mechanics and traders,--and the safe keeping of our free institutions, to the control and superintendence of a set of Southern politicians, who doubtless hold in accordance with their theory, that they shall be doing us of the north a great kindness, by reducing us all to a state of subordination and servitude.’⁸ Linking local party men with their southern rivals in this fashion, presenting the former as merely interested in self-promotion and selling

⁷ Boston *Daily Atlas*, Sep. 11, 1838.

⁸ *Ibid.*

out their region in hopes of furthering their own political gain, Whigs hoped to defame the opposing party. The prevalence of this type of accusation shows that these politically-minded men felt such sentiments would hold great weight in Massachusetts.

The prominence given efforts to link the Boston Morning Post group directly to John C. Calhoun and his supposedly southern ideals, makes evident the importance of this affiliation to contemporaries in Massachusetts. Latent throughout many statements made by Whig organs was the idea that Calhoun's political ideology, readily endorsed by Boston Democrats, was antithetical to one with New England's interests in mind. In offering absolute support to the Carolinian's reunion with the Democracy, the Post group was selling out its region to southern political happiness in a manner that was never ascribed to the partisans of Martin Van Buren, it was claimed. Following this logic, the Atlas predicted that Calhoun's connection to Boston Democrats spelled evil for the party in general. Its editor wrote, "The ultra aristocrats of the South Carolina School, who hold that universal suffrage is the greatest curse with which a State can be visited, and who have long been plotting to deprive a huge portion of their white citizens of the right of voting, are now banding together with a set of mercenary, hypocritical, selfish and unprincipled northern politicians and demagogues, through whom they hope to govern and control the majority of the northern people, and to make them the instruments of raising up and sustaining a dynasty, which will be hostile in all its feelings, and in all its measures, to the real interests of those upon whose support it will depend."⁹

The Atlas further stated that John C. Calhoun's recent return to his original party marked an attempt by a southern-oriented political bloc to assert control over national affairs. The complicity of northern Democrats, Boston men most prominent among them, was sure to greatly enhance these nefarious efforts. The Atlas avowed that the ultimate hope of the powerful senator and his minions was 'to get up a party at the north ready to sacrifice all the interests of their fellow citizens,

⁹ Ibid, Oct. 24, 1838.

and to submit to be made the tools of by a despotic, anti-social, narrow-minded and self conceited school of southern politicians, whose ideas are those of the middle ages, and who, with an ignorance equaled only by their malice, hope to elevate themselves, by the depression and ruin of their northern brethren.’ The prominent position that Calhoun men in Boston held within the local Democracy, greatly enhanced the efforts of the benighted former Whig to undermine the interests of New England, thereby upsetting the constitutional balance established by the founding fathers. Upholding such a delicate equilibrium in the face of divisive actions originated by Calhoun and his local followers was the averred goal of the Whig paper as its party’s local organ. Conflating Calhoun’s recent reunion with the Democratic Party with the regional disloyalty of Post group’s members was a major point of emphasis for Whig leaders, further proving the connection between the clique and the Carolinian’s political course in the minds of many local politicians.

Calling out their Democratic rivals in Massachusetts, the Atlas hoped to awaken many Democrats to the recent developments that served to disfavor their party on the whole. The people were ‘not to be deceived or misled, by any such shallow devices. Loco foco orators from the post offices and custom houses, may scream themselves hoarse; Loco foco newspapers may be issued by the ream, and be paid for too out of the public purse, under the general head of ‘blanks, paper and twine.’¹⁰ These obvious references to the posts of influence occupied and the maneuvers utilized by the Democratic Party in Boston are of enormous import. While it is true that the Bay State Democrat faction was in control of these offices, the Atlas made no distinction between the two wings of Massachusetts Democracy. In fact in recent editions the paper had often times confused the Bancroft and Henshaw groups as being one and the same despite the differences between the groups widely known throughout the city.¹¹ The Atlas followed such a course for one of two reasons. Either the paper was employing a common strategy to pick and choose occasions to promote unity or discord in Massachusetts Democratic circles, or

¹⁰ Ibid, Sep. 11, 1838.

¹¹ Ibid, Sep. 6, 28, 1838.

it simply took the repeated proclamations of the Post insisting on party unity at face value. No matter the cause, the significant threat that Massachusetts Democratic association with Calhoun and his 'South Carolina School' posed to local citizens of either party was given a great deal of prominence here.

While much of these claims was perhaps mere rhetorical bluster, there is at least some element of genuine concern that goes along with them. The fact that Massachusetts Democracy had been and at this very time was once again coming to be identified with the political ideology of John C. Calhoun is obvious through such pronouncements. In future years the distinctions between the 'Country' and 'City' factions became more prominent. At a later date, when the allegiances of each group were evident in their respective support of Van Buren and Calhoun, even Whig papers made the proper public affiliations. For the time being, however, it was simply more convenient and politically prudent to ignore these divisions, lumping Massachusetts Democrats into the column of pro-southern ideologues who were disloyal to the interests of their own region.

The very placement of such charges in the best known, and most widely circulated of Boston's Whig papers is itself worthy of note. That such an organ would be accusing its political rivals of having a pronounced affinity with southern ideals and with policies seen as favoring the specific interests of that region, rendered such issues pertinent to contemporaries of the Post and the Democrat. It becomes rather apparent after reading such heated and specific allegations against the leaders of the Democracy in Massachusetts, that the presentation of this group as particularly receptive to the ideals and beliefs of John Calhoun was of the utmost importance to the approach taken by Whig political leaders. The degree to which Whig rivals of the dual factions of Massachusetts Democracy believed in such political leanings is disputable. It is entirely possible that such pieces were given prominence due to the heated reaction they were sure to engender. At the same time, there seems to have been more than a grain of truth to such accusations. This fact is made more evident when considering the Morning Post group, as we have seen. Therefore, it becomes

apparent that the southern orientation of the Democracy in Boston was at least somewhat well-known by this period. The lack of specificity over which faction espoused this leaning was only a temporary oversight in hopes of making the charges stick against the entire party.

Responding to these and similar charges from the Boston Atlas that with Calhoun in a prominent position, the Democracy was sure further to promote the interests of the South over those of their own region, the Post took great pains to prove the similarity of their own political policies to those of like-minded southerners. Typical of this type of public presentation were predictions of the future place of territorial expansion in the party's plans. Since Jackson Democrats had always been closer to southern political interests, at least in the mind of most northern Whigs, Calhoun's alliance with the administration party would allow him to pursue more effectively a goal of adding lands in the hopes of importing slavery to newly acquired territories. That the Democrats of their own region would go along with such hopes was to be expected. Considering the predisposition among their local political rivals to accede to the wishes of their southern cohorts, the Atlas and other Whig sources often alluded to the dubious designs of Democratic Party organizers in their home state. Since the pages of Isaac Hill's New Hampshire Patriot, a noted compatriot of the Morning Post, had already come out in favor of the annexation of Texas, Whigs in Boston rightly assumed that their local adversaries would not be far behind. Because both Hill's group in New Hampshire and Henshaw's faction shared a similar political ideology with John C. Calhoun, it was reasoned that the interests of the North were further to be sold out by these conspirators. With the South Carolinian as a newfound 'chief executive adviser,' the Atlas continually asserted, the administration's policy as well as the public interests of all those owing allegiance to their leaders in Washington would clearly tend to favor the South as a geographic entity and extreme state rights as a political ideology. Convinced that support for the addition of Texas represented a major political setback for the interests of New England, Whig politicians presented compliance with the wishes of Calhoun and his southern associates as nothing short

of treason.¹²

The Atlas later claimed that Democrats of their city, more specifically the Boston Morning Post faction, had endeavored to bring about the submission of the North in national political affairs. The support of that Democratic organ for the gag resolutions of Representative Charles Atherton of New Hampshire, a political ally and member of Isaac Hill's faction, had brought about vile recriminations. The very practice of stifling debate on any issue was tantamount to public censorship and should not be tolerated in a republican society, claimed the Atlas. Only with the compliance of their northern allies could southerners like Calhoun, the most prominent advocate of the Gag Rule in Congress, effectively bar discussion of the inequities of slavery from the national Congress. In forming an alliance with such nefarious politicians, the Post was selling out not only the interests of the region but the very tenets upon which the Constitution had been based. 'By a combination of Southern slave-holders and Northern Loco Focos,' the Atlas claimed, 'this underhanded project had been carried into effect since the fulminations of Calhoun had made it a prominent issue in the session of 1835. Because of the Gag Rule 'the people of the North, by the base treachery of a part of their own representatives, [had] been deprived of two most important rights...the right, namely of presenting their petitions in relation to the District of Columbia, and the right, no less important, of having those petitions commented upon, explained and enforced by their representatives.' It was only through the means of 'Southern usurpation and Northern subservience,' that such a situation had been allowed to occur. Only by informing northern supporters of its iniquity would the policy be changed and slavery petitions heard.¹³

Thus constant agitation by like-minded northern Whigs represented the sole manner in which the designs of radical southern leaders could be undermined. It was hoped that more moderate men of their opponents' party, seeing the errors in the

¹² Ibid, Nov. 7, 1837.

¹³ Ibid, Jan. 13, 1839.

ways of their leaders, would change their former support for the Gag measures to a call for democratic representation and freedom of speech in the halls of government. In part because of their link to the Hill-Atherton wing of New Hampshire's Democratic Party, but more importantly due to their oft-referenced bias in favor of the South and its institutions, the Post group seemed to be incapable of adopting this more rational course, in the mind of Atlas publicists.¹⁴

The Atlas took great pains to dispute the Boston Morning Post's repeated claims that both North and South were actuated by common interests. In fact the Whig organ was hostile to the very notion of inter-sectional harmony of the type repeatedly espoused by 'City' Democrats. The Atlas's editor claimed, 'The Democracy of New England are the natural allies of the southern slave holders; of which alliance the object [is] of the maintenance of slavery on the one hand, and upon the other, office and profit, to a few northern hypocritical knaves!' Thus this alliance was brought about with no expectation of attaining prominence for the interests of New England, but merely to further the political goals of a handful of local Democrats. Those men, most especially members of the Post group recently removed from power, were involved in utilizing both their own natural duplicity and their well-known sentiments in favor of southern interests, to damage their region for personal gain. Led by David Henshaw, this group represented a set 'so intoxicated at the idea of deriving from presidential appointment a little brief authority, so greedy of the gains derived from official patronage, and so totally lost to all sense of decency and shame, as actually to exult in being employed as base subservient tools for plundering the rights and gagging the mouths of their own fellow citizens.' Such an expectation was the only logical explanation for a course of action that seemed to Whigs to represent a selling off of local political interests in favor of values endorsed by ultra-southern rights men like John C. Calhoun.¹⁵

Because of their influence with Calhoun, along with their penchant for

¹⁴ Ibid, Jan. 14, 1839.

¹⁵ Ibid, Jan. 15, 1839.

following his wishes, the Morning Post clique was uniquely positioned for both political and potential financial gains in the near future. Local Whigs hoped that the populace of the region would be able to see through such base attempts at selfish, personal gain. The Atlas hoped its criticisms would lead to a circumstance in which the ‘democracy of New England whose subservience to Southern slave-holders [was] so rashly pledged by the Post, may understand what sort of alliance they are to be led into, and what sort of liberty and laws they are to be pledged to support.’ If that goal were accomplished, then and only then would bedrock notions such as free speech and democratic representation be upheld, the paper claimed. Otherwise the close association of the clique with this group and the influence they held over Massachusetts politics would bring the state further into the thrall of sectional-minded southerners. Labeled as advocates of ‘sacrifice to Southern insolence and usurpation,’ the Post faction’s connection to Calhoun and his associates was lambasted for its perceived hindrance of policies, goals and a political ideology that represented the only means to achieve fairness for the region under an administration that similarly kowtowed to the interests of the South.¹⁶ The influence of the Post group in Democratic Party affairs would allow no benefits to New Englanders, the Atlas claimed. Their steadfast alliance with John C. Calhoun was propounded in both the Morning Post and the pages of Whig organs, albeit for differing reasons.

The issue of protective tariffs was of particular importance for local Whigs’ presentation of their Democratic rivals as foes of New England political interests. Since its earliest days as the Boston Statesman, the city’s Democratic organ had routinely denounced high tariffs on imported goods. This policy, it was claimed by the Atlas, was clearly to the detriment of New England’s manufacturing interests. As Calhoun’s most prominent political hobby, the opposition to protection of home manufacturers had always been a sticking point to the Whigs. Even during his alliance with their party, the well-known opinions of Calhoun regarding this oft-denigrated policy had made for a political union that was at times uncomfortable. Now that he had defected to the opposition, Whig organs had no qualms about

¹⁶ Ibid, Jan. 18, 1839.

denouncing his stance on the matter. Since the Post as a former Calhoun ally had pushed for lowering of duties during the entirety of the Nullification Crisis, it had made itself known as an opponent of the system. Now the resentment felt toward the paper on that matter was multiplied by Calhoun's presence among its advocates.

Calhoun and the Post faction's collective antipathy to manufacturing duties was denounced in the pages of the Boston Atlas as a further means of damaging the regional interests of New England. The projected lowering of the tariff in preparation for the end of the protective policy was sure to reduce the 'laboring freemen of the northern states to the level of European operatives and southern slaves.'¹⁷ And that was the very desire of the Post group, as well as of their most prominent national ally opined the paper. Since the clique was so obviously enamored of the social circumstances of the South, it seemed quite reasonable that they would hope to reproduce a similar system of servitude in the northern part of the country. Their claims to protect the interest of the laboring classes and yeomanry were presented as mere ruses to induce the support of those most damaged by the very measures the Post and Calhoun were promoting. The duplication of the southern system, with 'aristocrats, riding over a plundered and beggared yeomanry,' was what the Post secretly hoped for in New England, mocked the Atlas. If they and Calhoun were to get their collective wish, such a situation would be sure to result. Since the Post group so obviously shared the same sentiments as their political ally in the Senate, such a desire should have been easily recognized by any attentive citizen of the Commonwealth.¹⁸

The Morning Post clique offered surprisingly little resistance to claims that its actions on the tariff and other policies denoted a lack of interest in New England's affairs. In essence the paper spent little time defending itself against most of these charges. More often than not Henshaw's organ claimed to have no problem being identified with the political characteristics that their rivals tried to pin on his

¹⁷ Ibid, Aug. 15, 1839.

¹⁸ Ibid, Oct. 8, 1839.

adherents. As long-time advocates of the doctrines of Calhoun and his political associates, the group did not view claims of any public union with his southern disciples to be slanderous. Although forced to separate from their former alliance with Calhoun in the aftermath of his split with the party, the paper had welcomed him back to the Democratic fold immediately following his public statements in favor of Van Buren's banking policies. Their acceptance of the man was in no way limited to a simple agreement on that one issue. More than their fellow Democrats in Massachusetts and in much of the North, the *Post* group adhered to the vast majority of the doctrines promulgated by the Carolinian statesman. These points of accord occurred in a variety of areas. Even issues that contemporaries and historians have since commonly labeled as sectional in content, the clique was prepared to endorse. Their public readiness to admit to this acceptance of many ideas seemingly abhorrent to the vast majority of Whigs in Massachusetts as well as to many of their fellow local Democrats, makes the direct connection between John C. Calhoun and the *Morning Post* group even more apparent.

In fact the clique would move even further toward Democratic radicalism in order to keep in line with Calhoun's pronouncements. Abandoning all association with paper money principles, the *Post* came to endorse publicly Calhoun's recent position calling for complete and permanent separation of the federal government from involvement with all paper currency.¹⁹ This evolution of policy essentially reversed the two wings of Massachusetts Democracy. While the formerly bank and credit-friendly *Post* faction followed Calhoun's lead on this matter, their more radical rivals of the Bay State Democrat wing offered much more stunted support for these principles.²⁰ As such, the respective positioning on this issue clearly indicates the different attitudes of the factions toward the Carolinian and thus provides manifest evidence of the *Post* group's desire to re-establish a prominent connection to the man. Similarly, the *Democrat's* hesitancy to endorse the entire banking proposal of Calhoun shows its more tenuous relation to both the man and his measures. Their

¹⁹ *Boston Morning Post*, Sep. 15, 28, 1838.

²⁰ *Boston Bay State Democrat*, Sep. 25, 1838.

interests lay in supporting Van Buren as the 'Country' faction's and Democratic Party's actual leader. All decisions on political strategy and the stances adopted toward a variety of issues depended on the president's instruction. The Post did not depend so heavily on Van Buren's guidance, largely due to their outsider status. As Henshaw, Greene and company did not secure patronage from the president and entertained little hope of displacing their 'Country' rivals in positions of influence, the 'City' group had more freedom of action to follow their own conscience. That course usually ran parallel to the doctrines of John C. Calhoun.

While both factions were quick to offer support to Calhoun's change of party in the fall of 1837, only the Post was willing to argue for every facet of the senator's proposed program. After summarizing his doctrines on the flaws of national and local banking systems along with his endorsement of the limitation of paper money, the paper moved on to more specific points of argument. Calhoun had declared that the national government should completely separate itself from the receipt of paper notes for debt payment. Nathaniel Greene agreed with Calhoun that there was and always would be a strong tendency, 'to separate the monied interests from the holders of other property and the equally strong tendency to create a union of this monied interest with the state,' and that 'such a separation deserves to be most carefully watched and resisted,' in order to prevent their union's becoming the ultimate threat to liberty. Because the interests of the privileged few, men involved in the machinations of a paper money and credit markets, would continue to be served at the expense of the common classes of society under a system that accepted the continuance of paper money as a general form of currency, it was requisite to remove this medium completely from the entire financial operations of the national government. The Post predicted of politicians who had questioned the merits of Calhoun's policies, 'If our public men cannot so far sacrifice their party feelings, as to sever the union of bank and state, and to unite the interests of the monied men with those of the other classes of property holders, our country must before long fall a prey to the most demoralizing revolutions, that any modern country has ever been cursed with.' By following Calhoun's policy, a complete separation of the federal

government from paper currency would be effected. The result of this procedural change, it was claimed by the Post, would be seen in the avoidance of financial ruin and its attendant discord among all strata of American society. As future administrations could not be depended upon to realize the fallacies of governmental involvement with banking, the paper hoped the promulgation of Calhoun's ideals would lead to legislative edification, thereby ensuring the future safety of the public from the dangers inherent in the current financial system. Such a wish seems to have been based upon the theory that John C. Calhoun, and his associates in the Morning Post clique by implication, knew what was best for Americans at large. Others could not be trusted to avoid the disasters inherent in a system that allowed government, banking and paper money to combine in corrupting American society.²¹

That this implied belief was a rather large jump from the private sentiments of Henshaw and his fellows associated with the Commonwealth Bank at the time of its publication further seemed to contradict the ex-collector's previously expressed sentiments. An April, 1838 column which attested that, 'the united power of the banks and the government...can at any moment be made to strike the chord of ambition and avarice in the bosom of every influential man on the continent,' seems somewhat misplaced in a journal known to be directly involved with the management of the Commonwealth Bank, depository of Custom House duties in Boston.²² Such a divergence of stated perception from actual practice serves to reinforce the degree to which the Post faction tried to keep in line with Calhoun and his associates in Washington. Since Calhoun was now back in the column of loyal Democrats, the Morning Post group, especially David Henshaw, was willing to sacrifice former principles to utilize Calhoun's stated beliefs in shaping policy, especially for public consumption. While making these proclamations in Boston's main Democratic organ, Henshaw, Simpson, and Greene continued to follow the course of banking interests, credit investment, and paper money at least until the time of the Commonwealth's failure. Their loyalty to Calhoun necessitated the difference

²¹ Boston *Morning Post*, Sep. 15, 1837, Apr. 2, 1838.

²² *Ibid*, Apr. 2, 1838.

between words and deeds on this matter.

Of course this contradictory course was not wholly different from the reasoning for the Post's initial establishment. Six years earlier the paper had been formed to deflect attention from the Boston Statesman's direct affiliation with Calhoun. Similarly, public presentation of the group as radical on the matter of paper money, removing a perceived stigma from the faction's own ideological underpinnings, was a strategy that seemed to offer the most promise to Henshaw. Since he already agreed with Calhoun on the vast majority of issues, private divergence on one controversial topic seemed harmless in light of the grand political scheme. The fact that the 'City' group had always held more conservative views, especially on financial matters, may have made their opinions on banking and paper money puzzling to many contemporaries. On the whole, however, backing Calhoun in this instance did not differ much from the radicalizing train of thought already present in the public presentations of the clique. It mattered little to Henshaw or his faction how contradictory their approach to these issues may have seemed to political insiders. The most important consequence was that publicly the clique stood in line with John C. Calhoun, his expressed doctrines, and Democratic ideology once again.

The originally more radical Bay State Democrat group, on the other hand, found themselves on the conservative side of the paper money issue among Massachusetts Democrats. Viewing Calhoun's wholesale objection to paper money as a step too far down the road toward complete financial liberality, the paper offered objections in the same instances where the Post offered praise. Noting that Van Buren's original proposal on the matter of the separation of bank and state did not deal with the acceptability of bank notes by the Treasury, the Democrat announced that Calhoun had made unnecessary demands. In the process he had damaged the credibility of the Sub-Treasury Bill, thereby causing undue difficulties in securing its passage. The main desire of the President's bill being the complete removal of 'the public treasure from the custody of the banks,' it did not necessarily require the demand 'that the notes of specie-paying banks should not be received.' In fact,

receiving such notes might actually be favorable to the public and certainly did not offer any material risk to the treasury, noted the Bay State Democrat. The paper further claimed that no matter the ultimate desirability of Calhoun's plan, it was a better course at that time to consider the policy set forth by the president on its own, thereby increasing the chances of its gaining Congressional approval.

Calhoun's behavior on this issue had been troublesome to the Democrat. Editor Joselyn ignored national Democratic majority opinion expressed in an amendment to a bill providing for the gradual reduction of payment in bank notes, when he stated that in this instance Calhoun had acted in a manner that was not in the best interests of the party. Because of his course of action, whether undertaken for selfish reasons or out of the perception that only the complete removal of paper money from government affairs would benefit the party, Calhoun had served to complicate the very praiseworthy proposal offered by the president. Such a path could not be endorsed by the Democrat, despite the faction's time-honored radicalism regarding specie and its general disdain for paper money. In this instance in which the typical loyalties and ideologies of the Post and Bay State Democrat shifted markedly, it is easy to observe the role that one group's total affinity for Calhoun and the other's more questionable relation with him and ultimate loyalty to President Van Buren may have played in forming public opinion on the matter.²³

Realizing the influence that 'Country' Democrats held in Massachusetts, John C. Calhoun attempted to gain George Bancroft's assistance in promoting his proposed measures. Writing to the collector in the aftermath of the initial rejection of the Sub-Treasury Bill, the South Carolina senator tried to make his case. His main point was that only with firmness would the national Democrats succeed in passing their favored measures. The situation in Congress, Calhoun declared, meant they could not weaken the bill in any way. Backing down from his strong stand would open the door for their Whig rivals to exert undue control over the course of affairs in this instance. It was regrettable that Democrats had voted against the bill due to the

²³ Boston *Bay State Democrat*, Sep. 15, 1839.

specie clause. Following their unfortunate course and adopting half-way measures would water down the bill to a point where it would lose its greatest appeal, he averred. This circumstance would lead to the defeat of Van Buren's desired separation of government from banking and paper currency. Calhoun vowed, 'With this impression, I am happy to state, that the House will adhere rigidly to the specie feature of the bill...and there is an equal chance at least of its passing.' This letter was written in hopes of converting Bancroft, a man whose newspaper later indicated sentiments directly in line with those of fellow Democrats in Congress who had voted down the Independent Treasury because of doubts about the propriety of including the exact clauses inserted by Calhoun dealing with outlawing paper money from government transactions. Thus, it is clear that in spite of his personal efforts to gain adherence from the leaders of Massachusetts Democratic Party, Calhoun's supporters among the 'Country' faction remained lukewarm at best. Marcus Morton and George Bancroft never trusted the Carolinian as a leading party member and would forever prefer the leadership of the president.²⁴

The Post's unstinting support for Calhoun and his measures regarding banking and finance was mainly an expression of its belief in the righteousness of his overall political course. The faction's unqualified endorsement of the senator's program was most evident in their collective approach to matters deemed sectional in import by rivals within the Democracy and among local Whigs. Denying charges made from those outside its orbit that Calhoun would bring the interests of the South to the forefront of Democratic Party affairs in Washington, the Post publicly welcomed its southern political brethren to the fold. Unconcerned that any numerical majority of members from that region would taint the platform of the Democratic administration, the paper claimed to believe that such interests would refresh the program as a whole. The clique truly felt that in the aftermath of such an infusion of energy, the right-minded measures of Van Buren would be sustained and promoted to a wider audience.

²⁴ John C. Calhoun, 14 Apr. 1838, to George Bancroft, *Bancroft Papers*, MHS.

While still endorsing the president at the head of the national organization, the Post readily admitted that Calhoun's guidance and abilities would do nothing but improve the outlook of the party in general. As dutiful adherents to the administration in Washington, the paper had little choice but to proclaim allegiance to the president. Veiled beneath this requisite adherence, however, was a very notable fervor for the ideological positions of Mr. Calhoun. Eschewing the presentation of other Democratic newsheets, who openly announced their wish that Calhoun would leave his adamant defense of southern interests outside his plans for influencing the Democracy and would accede to all of the beliefs and ideals of Van Buren, the Post welcomed Calhoun to the party for the very ideas and shaping influence he would bring. As the paper claimed in a discussion of its original point of connection to Calhoun a decade earlier, many of the South Carolinian's doctrines about the national interest, described as sectional in origin by Whig rivals, truly carried the greatest beneficence for the country.²⁵

The Post often turned the charges of northern Whigs on their side in defending its political favorite. Typical of this approach was the presentation of the efforts of New England members of that opposing party to implement the Tariff of 1840. The paper, in echoing the words of John C. Calhoun, claimed that its own region and not the South was at fault for any divisiveness that came up on this matter. Thus, in the senator's words, it was appropriate for New Englanders 'to pause and ponder' the issue of import duties. To renew the protective system in order to preserve their narrow interests would be disastrous to the nation. 'Whatever incidental good could be derived from it, you have already acquired,' he had said. 'It would, if renewed, prove a pure, unadulterated evil.'²⁶ The Post's readiness to employ the language of a member of a distant state to describe the best interests of its own in direct opposition to its neighbors in the ranks of the Whig Party, illustrates the amount of weight it placed on his opinions. To the editor's mind Calhoun's opinion on this issue represented the most appropriate course to follow to ensure national harmony.

²⁵ Boston *Morning Post*, Dec. 15, 1837, Jan. 1, 1838.

²⁶ Ibid, Feb. 22, 1840.

The clique's leaders truly believed that it was not a matter of sectional favoritism but the good of the union that had informed Calhoun's politics.

The Post's editorials regarding John C. Calhoun were all rooted in its desire to convince fellow Democrats that the Carolinian's intellect and ability, transcending any particular policy dispute, were the most important reason for their support. His skill as a statesman more than any other consideration, the paper stated, should recommend Calhoun as an appropriate beacon for the party's future years. It further asserted that any hint of southern sectionalism that the senator brought to political affairs was of limited import. Responding to charges like those found in the Atlas that sought to present the union of Calhoun and Van Buren as an event sure to undermine the interests of the North, the Post claimed its constituents need not worry about any such contingency. Calls from the Atlas for all 'North of the Potomac to unite against the administration,' because of the newfound southern tinge added to the Democratic Party, were in vain. 'The democracy, profiting by experience,' it was claimed, 'will shake off its incongruous materials and unite in one general effort to sustain its principles so ably expounded by Mr. Van Buren.' With the added insights of Calhoun helping to shape but not solely guiding Democratic policies the party had been strengthened at the very time that the Whigs were weakened. These changes had come about for the exact same reason: the abandonment of the latter party and union with the former of Calhoun.²⁷ Any claims of vitiation of democratic ideals because of their party's recent addition were absurd and more likely a case of sour grapes on the part of their Whig rivals, in the mind of the Post group.

Despite the Morning Post faction's inclination to discount the matter of sectionalism in relation to its support for John C. Calhoun, the clique readily revisited its tendencies to extol the virtues of the South as a patriotic, democratic, and state rights-oriented region. This view was repeatedly printed in the pages of both Boston Morning Post and the Thorn. The respective presentations of these papers regarding the nation's geographic lower half, were almost always done in direct contrast to

²⁷ Ibid, Dec. 16, 1837.

Massachusetts. Emphasizing once again the tainted legacy of the Bay State as a result of its strong connection to Federalism in the earlier decades along with its current status as a stronghold of the Whiggery, the faction pointed to the antithetical history of its own state and the oft-demeaned South. In such a dichotomous relationship it was always the South, benighted in the presentation of their Whig rivals, that came out ahead in the evaluation of the papers. The latter region was the part of the country that had responded to the banking issue, as in other perilous situations of the past, by having ‘unfurled the old republican flag of ‘98.’ It was a ‘standard...never cloven down in defeat, but to be again raised in victory.’ If only the citizens of Massachusetts could follow suit in the current situation and react against all banking in the manner prescribed by the recent exhortations of Calhoun and his associates, New Englanders would finally be able to hold their heads high and prove themselves to ‘have been true to Liberty,’ as their southern fellows had already done. Depicting Whig-dominated Massachusetts as an area where actions on this and other important political issues left much to be desired, these papers found ample ammunition to present Calhoun’s politics and ideology as a noteworthy model for its readers to follow.²⁸

Massachusetts, just as the clique had presented it a decade earlier, was once again depicted as a state in which the true tenets of democracy almost universally rang hollow. As the most un-American portion of the nation, the state should look southward for guidance on how to become indoctrinated with proper political ideology. Once again reacting to the words of Whig organs like the Atlas, which had claimed that so-called southern doctrines were to blame for the potential downfall of politics in so far as they were allowed to operate in the nation, the Thorn took to offering a lengthy quotation from Thomas Jefferson railing against the Federalist tendencies of the state over three decades earlier. In language appropriate for the current circumstances the former president had said of the clique’s home state, ‘If her late humiliation can just give her modesty enough to suppose that her Southern Brethren are somewhat on a par with her in wisdom, in information, in patriotism, in

²⁸ Boston *Thorn*, Oct. 2, 1838.

bravery, and even in honesty, although not in Psalm Singing, she will more justly estimate her own relative momentum in the Union. With her ancient principles, she would really be great, if she did not think herself the whole.’ The public presentation of these caustically sarcastic words, though from another time and not by the paper’s editors, were of extreme importance. The members of the clique, responding to criticisms of their Whig rivals that their party had become too closely affiliated with the ideologies of the South and John C. Calhoun in particular, reiterated their previously prominent accusations. When the group had formerly been directly linked to Calhoun and his cohorts prior to the Nullification Crisis, their defense of interests markedly different from those specific to New England often came in the form of criticisms of the parochial ideals of their region. Calling the men who ran the state selfish and narrow-minded, politicians who cared little for other sections of the country, the Post group had always defended a policy they defined as more national in scope. To their mind, patriotism involved adopting and endorsing policies that were sometimes not in the immediate best interests of their constituents but that instead benefited the United States as a whole.²⁹

Whig papers, in gearing their arguments toward New England’s interests and the protection of the region’s rights, the Thorn and the Post claimed, had overlooked the more important duties of American citizens. Although some of the particular doctrines of Calhoun and his southern associates may have seemed at first glance to damage the interests and rights of Massachusetts and New England citizens, for the most part they were best for the majority of Americans, the clique attested. Thus, the tendency of the Atlas and like-minded papers to associate the union of Calhoun with the Democracy and the downfall of the party was similarly narrow-minded and based upon sectional bigotry. Only by eschewing such benighted practices, as Jefferson had asked the state to do in a previous time, would Massachusetts be able to profit from the full benefits of union. In the policies of John C. Calhoun the Post faction alleged not to see ‘southern doctrine’ promoted, but programs and beliefs that best suited the nation as a whole. That is the main reason why the Post had little

²⁹ Ibid.

trouble endorsing these ideals and political notions, doing little to protest against them and usually turning the criticisms back whence they came.³⁰

Prospective annexation of Texas was another matter in which the clique followed a similar course of action. Presenting the issue as one that involved the interests of the nation beyond those of sectional favoritism, the Post came out early in favor of the immediate need for such a policy. This was a case where they deemed it necessary to address the divergent arguments of their fellow northerners. In contrast to what Whig opponents and others within their own party said, it was claimed that the addition of Texas to the union, regardless of the presence of slavery within her boundaries, would not work against the interests of northerners. In fact, positing a position that would later help inform the presentation of northern Democrats regarding the matter of annexation, the paper stated that Texas would act as a siphon for slaves from the seaboard southern states. Offering further incentive to anti-slavery northerners, the Post added that in time slaves from areas like Virginia, the Carolinas, Georgia and Tennessee would be sent to Texas, thereby leaving the eastern part of the country. Under such a scenario, slavery would die a moderately slow death in the original states. At the same time, the increase in cotton supplied to northern manufacturers attendant upon the addition of Texas to the union was a future benefit whose merits were beyond argument. A new market for these very northern manufactured goods would result from annexation. Therefore, 'the northern people who have seemed rather averse to this measure, ought to be the first to favor it, even the abolitionists,' claimed the paper.³¹

Since both national and local interests would be satisfied by adding Texas to the United States, the paper offered public support for such a prospect as early as 1839. This support came well before Van Buren or his closest associates were willing to put the issue on their agenda. In fact the claims of the Post on the matter

³⁰ Ibid, Nov. 10, 1838.

³¹ Boston *Morning Post*, Apr. 24, 1839. Of course Mississippi Senator Robert J. Walker would more famously make similar claims five years later when the issue of annexation was more prominent during Tyler's presidency.

took them beyond the centrist thought of the Democratic Party and closer to the position of Calhoun on the propriety of considering the immediate addition of the current 'Lone Star Republic.' Such a public endorsement by the Morning Post, provided further fuel for the clique's rivals who repeatedly alleged the Henshaw faction's predilection toward southern ideals.³²

Further drawing the criticism of local Whig opponents bent on proving the Post clique's allegiance to the South, was the clique's extreme hostility toward Abolitionism in any form. Because the power of anti-slavery sentiments was alluded to again and again by the Post faction, this was an easy point to make. For its part the Boston Morning Post, true to its depiction of Calhoun as a champion of national harmony, was wont to equate Whig rivals with the most vile of sectional division-seeking Abolitionists. Through this portrayal, the paper sought to discredit the opposition party in general and its adherents in Massachusetts specifically. In a piece prior to the 1840 Election, entitled 'The Identity of the Old Hartford Convention Federalists With the Modern Whig, Harrison Party Carefully Illustrated by Living Specimens, And Dedicated To the Young Men of the Union,' originally printed in the Boston Morning Post, Charles G. Greene sought to make this point to his reading audience. Returning time and again to the disuniting tendencies of the former Federalist Party of New England, Greene mentioned Whig charges that current southern members of the Democracy hoped to promote the dissolution of the union or at least used threats along those lines to achieve their own selfish political goals. Such claims were farcical, the editor of the Morning Post attested, in light of the actual attempts to break up the Union during the War of 1812 on the part of the Hartford Convention men. Many of these same men, it was pointed out, had migrated to the Whig Party, only one delegate to the ill-fated Convention having ever voted with the Democracy. Thus, the current Whig Party was marred by the presence of individuals who had openly courted the union's dissolution.³³

³² A similar idea was posited by Benjamin F. Hallett in his "*Speech at Bunker Hill*" (Boston 1844). Hallett by that time had become a member of the Morning Post clique.

³³ Charles G. Greene, "*The Identity of the Old Hartford Convention Federalists with the Modern Whig, Harrison Party. Carefully Illustrated by Living Specimens, And Dedicated To the Young Men*

It was to the matter of their past apostasy that Greene turned most of his focus. The *modus operandi* for the Federalists of New England in 1814 had been to equate slavery with a political ideology that was inherently flawed. Pitting New England against the South, the delegates to the Hartford Convention had hoped to portray an antithetical relationship between the two regions that would have made their continuance as a single and united nation impossible. In railing against the perceived evils of the slave system in the South, these unethical politicians had been the original Abolitionists, promoting discord and the ultimate formation of a northern confederacy. Similar to the current crop of anti-political Garrisonites, the earlier Federalists claimed to have no interests in continuing in a nation where slavery existed as a legal system. Hence, in their willingness to disturb the harmony of national peace and the common good, these individuals, many of them modern-day Whigs, had introduced similar methods to those followed by the current Abolitionist radicals. An inability either to get along with southern members or to accept southern policy goals barred northern Whigs from ever being members of an effectively national political organization, noted Greene.³⁴

More recent remarks in the Boston Atlas, both in response to Jackson's deposit removals in 1834 and to Van Buren's decisions about the specie circular in 1837, had publicly endorsed threats of disunion and rebellion, however facetious they may have been. Thus in the words of this pamphlet, 'the old Tory threat of rebellion' was still prominent in the workings of the opposing party. These threats came not from the southern climes that New England's Whigs were wont to depict as most threatening to the future of the Union. Instead it was mainly Massachusetts political men who were responsible for sowing the seeds of discord. Given the state's Federalist background, this realization was not surprising. 'So uniformly does Federalism, from the beginning til now, run in the same kennel of vapping, bullying and rebellion!' Because of their past associations as well as the more

of the Union." [An Extra to the Boston Morning Post...] (Boston 1840).

³⁴ Ibid.

recent actions of Massachusetts Whigs, this was a political group never to be trusted by the southern allies of the Post.³⁵

Greene, true to his calling as a political newspaper editor, chose to highlight these charges against Whig opponents in order to prove the ultimate patriotism of the Post clique in uniting with John C. Calhoun's political course. He claimed that since the activities of local Whigs continued to follow a path likely to lead to further dissent and dissolution of the national compact, it was worth considering the past of this political group. Such an exercise would provide a realistic lesson for their southern counterparts. Southern Whigs, unknowingly in league with men of this sort, were signing their own death certificates, warned Greene. At the Hartford Convention some prominent current Massachusetts Whigs had been among those demanding an amendment to the Constitution that would have called for 'representatives and direct taxes...apportioned among the several States, according to their respective numbers of free persons.' Such a proposal argued Greene, was in effect the first public agitation for dissolution of the union growing out of the questions surrounding slavery. As southern states would never consent to this type of formula, given the protections they had been guaranteed on the very issue by the Constitution, such policies on the part of any political group were tantamount to advocacy of a severance of North and South.

The presence of several of these same politicians among the Whig Party, most prominently Daniel Webster, should serve as a warning to modern southern politicians to be leery in dealing with their New England associates, the editor warned. He noted that these same men, under the name of Whigs, had now 'made William Henry Harrison the bearer of their standard, and, by secret letters, through the agencies of other Northern Federalists, were striving to secure the aid of the Abolitionists against the South,' to enable them to put down the more favorable Democratic administration of Van Buren. In direct contrast the clique's alleged pro-southern sympathies were actually evidence of its desire for national harmony

³⁵ Ibid.

based on shared sentiments between the regions. Arguments by Whig rivals hoping to take issue with this depiction, to Greene's mind, were simply further attempts by that group to place North and South in direct opposition, a tactic of which they had become masters in recent years.

Greene claimed to have written this pamphlet in hopes of shedding light upon the notions and strategies of the Whigs. Attempting particularly to persuade Massachusetts men who were otherwise apt to become part of the Democratic Party if not for their disinclination toward perceived favoritism to the South in national political affairs, Greene wished to give an accurate portrayal of what was actually most dangerous to the interests of the union. To prevent the remotest possibility of the Democracy of the South and West from coming under old Hartford Convention rule in the disguise of William Henry Harrison with the unwitting compliance of otherwise right-minded northern Democrats, Greene had endeavored to explain the current situation. 'The Harrison party,' he wrote was, 'the re-organization of the old Federal Party. Driven from power by their real principles, the leaders [were] desperately struggling once more to regain their lost ascendancy, by denying their own identity.' Once Massachusetts Democrats were properly appraised of the nasty dissension-oriented tricks of their Whig enemies, he hoped that the proper course would be followed by all.³⁶

On this and other occasions, the leadership of the Post group sought to contrast their approach regarding matters of importance to the South with that of their political opponents. Hoping to paint the Whigs of Massachusetts as a group hostile to the interests of the South, in essence a group favoring policies and ideals that narrowly promoted the prospects of New England, the paper essayed to gain the attention of both its followers and others. The presentation of the similarities shared between Massachusetts Democrats and their fellow party members to the south was a recurrent theme. Greene's main goal in portraying inter-sectional affinities between Democrats was to show that he and local members of the Democracy had much more

³⁶ Ibid.

in common with southerners from the same party than with their Whig neighbors. In order to make this point Greene and his associates among the 'City' faction had few qualms about promoting the political ideals labeled as southern and antithetical to New England interests by their Whig rivals.

The public stance taken by the Morning Post's editor on this occasion and his paper on many others, was much more pronounced than their intra party rivals at the Bay State Democrat. The latter paper was largely silent on the matter of defending the local Democracy from charges of having been tainted by its recent public affiliation with Calhoun. Promoting themselves as the strict adherents to Van Buren's policies, the Democrat and its associates benefited substantially from administration patronage and thus probably felt little need to parry thrusts aimed at the alleged disloyalty to northern ideals of their fellow party members. The Bay State Democrat typically lauded Marcus Morton as a man who in his two terms in Congress had shown himself to be 'a distinguished friend of the New England interests.' The paper on several occasions offered marked praise for Morton's actions undertaken while a member of the House of Representatives. During his 1819-1821 tenure as a national legislator Morton had twice voted against Missouri statehood due to the presence of slavery within its borders. This action it was noted by the Democrat, made evident the judge's aversion to the institution. Support for such an approach by the 'Country' Party's organ helped make clear the difference between itself and the Boston Morning Post on the slavery issue and thus offers another important point of comparison between the two wings of the Massachusetts Democratic Party.³⁷

The Boston Morning Post for its part adopted a completely different approach to the slavery debate. While Bancroft and Morton utterly detested the institution, Henshaw and his affiliates' views on the matter were somewhat less clear. Though they often claimed to have no love for slavery in general, many of the public statements of these men leaves their actual attitudes open for debate. It is safe to say

³⁷ Boston *Bay State Democrat*, Nov. 9, 1838.

that none of the most prominent members of the Post clique abhorred slavery to the degree that the private correspondence of both Morton and Bancroft shows these two 'Country' Democrats to have done.³⁸ What is beyond dispute is that the Post was not averse to upholding the claims of slaveholders to the right potentially to extend their institution. Often calling the expansion of slave territory a matter that was in the best interests of the nation as a whole, the 'City' faction of Massachusetts' Democracy was normally found at the forefront of the expansionist sentiment that infused their party. Although it was not a wholly abnormal position for northern Democrats to take, the Post clique's marked willingness to support expansion even at a time when the matter was not under discussion, placed them in a different category from their local intra-party rivals and is thus worthy of note.

The presence of sentiments slanted toward sympathy for slavery and the slaveholding states among Morning Post pronouncements, was perhaps the most surprising aspect of the clique's approach to the institution. Such beliefs began to crop up in the columns of the Thorn and the Post following Calhoun's reunion with the party in 1837. Before that date pieces of this type had been absent from their papers, a pattern more typical for a northern journal to follow. The apologia for the institution which most commonly was found in the Post during these later years, followed a mode of presentation similar to Calhoun's own public expressions on the matter. Like their Carolinian leader the Post repeatedly compared the condition of the urban factory workers in England and New England, to those of plantation slaves. By noting the words of a British journal on the condition of its own country's laboring classes, which had said, 'Compare this with the condition of the Southern Black-well fed and clothed-nursed in sickness-and above all, exempt from that care which is the corroding sore of the white man ore woman having a family,' the paper made its case. Since the condition of its own fellow citizens was so far inferior to those of slaves in America, the Post claimed that all philanthropic interests in the United Kingdom should be geared toward British workers, not groups of people

³⁸ Morton, 7 Dec. 1837, 26 Dec. 1845, 13 Jan. 1846, to George Bancroft, *Marcus Morton Letterbooks*, MHS.

beyond their sphere of control.

A similar argument could be made for New England manufacturing employees. Abolitionists need not concern themselves with the plight of distant blacks when people in their own backyard were suffering from a fate as unfortunate and usually even moreso than the comparatively contented slaves of the South. 'If the philanthropy of our Eastern fellow-citizens has not sufficient [reason] to exercise itself on among the thousands of poor to be found...in the large cities of their own section of country--why then, in God's name, let them turn their attention to their Fatherland, and give relief and try for reform there.' Cries for the amelioration of living conditions for slaves, whose lives were much better off than those of the unfortunate white men of both America and England, were misplaced and somewhat hypocritical to the mind of the Post writer. It seemed foolish to 'set on a financial crusade in favor of the African race, who are in the mass much happier in their present condition, than perhaps any other equal number of laborers in the known world.' Thus the sentiments of the clique upon the favorable circumstances of American slaves was made evident.³⁹

Slaves, far from needing the assistance of Abolitionists from New England or elsewhere, had lives that were comparatively better than most of their fellows elsewhere, whether paid or bondsmen, the Post alleged. Because of this fact, the claims of northern Abolitionists and Whigs were presented as ridiculous and meddlesome. Since southern slaverholders routinely fulfilled their mission to provide the everyday comforts of life while regularly showing great interest in their workers, the institution was best left to itself. The representation of slavery as a beneficial institution that helped maintain a contented and effective labor force and was salutary in nature, helped facilitate the paper's promotion of its geographical extension. At the very least, such sentiments led the Post clique to believe that all men clamoring for the assisted demise of the institution had misplaced their concern. They need not worry themselves with the affairs of the South, the Post opined. The

³⁹ Boston *Morning Post*, Apr. 21, 1838.

leaders of that region understood their interests better than any one else. And if they had so effectively maintained their place in the American political system without damaging the interests of their northern colleagues for so many years, it was folly to deny their rights. If left alone, this beneficial course would continue and the harmony of the union be allowed to persist. In utilizing the exact same language as Calhoun to introduce and maintain their collective belief in the benefits of slavery, the clique was further proving their trust, reliance and belief in the man's political ideals. In this aspect they stood out from most of their northern counterparts in Massachusetts and elsewhere.⁴⁰

The ready alliance that the Post group had formed with Calhoun over these issues, depicted as southern in nature by rivals, shows the strength of sentiment that these Massachusetts men had for the Carolinian. That they had separated from his public ideology in the aftermath of the Nullification Crisis was a matter of record and was routinely admitted by their opponents at the time. The language of the Post, so vehement against the stance taken by Calhoun and his South Carolina contemporaries during that struggle with Andrew Jackson years earlier, had been meant to help drive a wedge further between the clique and their former idol. By issuing such harsh language against the proceedings of Calhoun while effusively endorsing the conduct of the president on that occasion, the Post clique had helped to establish themselves as the strongest group in favor of the Democratic national administration in the state. At the same time, as has been noted earlier, such strident charges against Calhoun were undertaken mostly for public appearances. The Morning Post, group as a result of its very public affiliation with the man who was Jackson's chief enemy in Washington, had felt it necessary to make the strongest possible claims against him even though still agreeing with most of his political ideology. The clique's interest in Calhoun went well beyond its members' desire to hold offices. That seems to indicate that they did not heedlessly discard the man only in order to keep their lucrative positions. Instead it appears to have been a measured and rational decision. In that case, it seems as if like many others, principled or otherwise, the

⁴⁰ Ibid.

group chose the most obvious path to power and influence, even though that remained wholly antithetical to their actual beliefs and personal affinities.

In spite of this temporary separation from his columns, the rapidity with which Henshaw's group returned to support John C. Calhoun as a national political leader removed any doubt about their true sentiments. As soon as it was publicly acceptable in Democratic ranks to offer words of praise for the man, the paper was among the nation's first to do so. It was not merely in its chronological readiness to endorse Calhoun that the faction showed its true connection to the man. Their willingness to back down from earlier vehement opposition to the ideal of Nullification and to move closer to the political universe of which Calhoun was the obvious center, is indicative of a body of true disciples returning to the fold. In many of their public statements during the years following Calhoun's re-emergence as an important player to the Democratic Party, the paper and its spokesmen were often found issuing statements and endorsing political agendas that could just as easily have come from the mouth of the nonpareil South Carolina senator. Indeed, it is quite obvious, upon reading editions of the Morning Post, that several of their important opinions came directly from his mouth, showing the exact interpretation of events and political belief that was known to belong to Calhoun.⁴¹

One of the more obvious points of commonality between the Post and Calhoun was seen in the issue of state rights. Though the paper had always claimed to hold the notion of decentralized government as one of the more important aspects of the Constitution, their statements on that matter had been few and far between since the time of Jackson's controversy with Calhoun. Backing down from an earlier tendency to proclaim the justice of the Virginia and Kentucky Resolutions of 1798 with their implied calls for the justice of state interposition, the concept refined by Calhoun into Nullification, the clique had limited its attacks simply to the Whig tendencies toward an exceedingly centralized government. With the return of Calhoun to the party, however, many of their public sentiments changed. No longer

⁴¹ Boston *Morning Post*, Sep. 15, 27, 1837, Apr. 2, 1838.

feeling hesitant about promoting an ideal so closely associated with the Carolinian, if also widely accepted among Democrats, the Post once again came out in full-fledged support of the individual rights of states. As original constituents to the national compact, states held obligations distinct from that of the nation, argued the paper. Their privileges, it was claimed, were ‘the effectual security against all anti-republican tendencies. They save the weak from the oppression of the strong, and the strong from the tyranny of the stronger. They protect the people of the United States against the encroachments of the federal Government. Above all, they guard the people against their own selves.’ Due to these qualities, state sovereignty was at the heart of America’s political program. Recent tendencies among the Whigs, most especially at the behest of their fellow residents of the Bay State, had threatened the sanctity of these essential rights.⁴²

Addressing the ultimate extension of the state rights creed, Nullification, the paper was a bit more hesitant. It began by claiming the doctrine’s questionable nature. Despite that qualification, however, its merit was put into full view. Because the very authority of state rights had been on the decline due to measures of the national government, this doctrine had managed to raise the importance of the independence of the states in most people’s minds once again. Although it may not have been a logical deduction from the venerated Resolutions of 1798, still the issue ‘called attention, at a most important epoch, to an almost dead principle of republicanism, to the rights of the states, and thus it did great good.’ Of South Carolina, the paper said, ‘We thank God, therefore, that this noble state resisted.’ As a result of the Nullifiers’ having stood up to federal authority, and the authority of President Jackson no less, ‘a reaction in the opposite direction [has] begun, and now the glorious opportunity is presented of acting over again the revolution of 1800.’ The once-vilified actions of Calhoun and his cohorts, had the beneficial effect to preserve these important rights, ‘the shield which the constitution gives the weak.’ It was high time the Post continued, for their region to take up the mantle proffered by South Carolina during that period and continue the march toward republican

⁴² Ibid, Jan. 2, 1839.

perfection. In following the model set forth during the Nullification Crisis as a positive example, Massachusetts would regain her former glory, claimed the paper.⁴³

This type of rhetoric was highly atypical for most northern newspapers at this time. Despite his recent return to the party, John C. Calhoun's past actions were still largely objectionable to most Democrats of the region. To offer any type of positive assessment of the past activities of the senator or his South Carolina associates during the Nullification Crisis was a course no other New England paper and few Democrats nationally were willing to follow. Only a strong adherent of the senator's cause would be willing to make such assertions. Because of Van Buren's association with Jackson and the implied criticism of the latter continually offered by Calhoun during the preceding half-decade, most Democrats could not be expected to support his past actions. Ultimately, it must be noted, no Democrat, North or South, who was not an outright advocate of John C. Calhoun as the most prominent member of his party, felt comfortable arguing that Nullification was a beneficial policy. That the *Post* clique was willing to make this claim shows where its true loyalties lay. At the same time, however, it should be said that the lack of outright support among other northern Democrats for Calhoun does not necessarily indicate lack of commonality between regional political beliefs. It is simply to note that Calhoun's radical course and former opposition to Jackson was too much for more moderate Democrats to publicly accept as soon as he returned to their party.

For his part, Calhoun was sanguine about the presence of such staunch advocates of states rights in Massachusetts. He even predicted that the state would be the originating point of a movement founded upon this ideological concept. 'The revolution will commence in Massachusetts,' he wrote in 1840, 'and she will become thoroughly State rights. Already I see signs which cannot deceive that the prediction is in the regular course of fulfillment.' Such signs were undoubtedly those emanating from the pages of the *Post* and its adherents. He went on, 'The spirit of enquiry is abroad with [Massachusetts Democrats], bold and independent,

⁴³ Ibid.

accompanied by a devotion to principle. It is that, which will carry through the reformation, and which will unite in principle and policy New England and the Southern Atlantick States for the first time, since the establishment of the Federal Government.’ Such language makes evident the strong connection that Calhoun held with the Post group. Since his relations with most Bay State men were tepid at best, this declaration of support obviously referenced the ‘City’ faction. Written to a member of that group, the letter makes clear that the common ground reached between Henshaw’s associates and Calhoun was established on both sides.⁴⁴

The fact that the Post was willing even to debate the merits of South Carolina’s policy on the matter of tariff enforcement was the result of two major factors. First and foremost, the paper was obviously in favor of Calhoun as a politician. They no longer had to obfuscate their sentiments for the man, and in fact at this period were confident enough about his merits to attest to having never disapproved of his conduct, even during its most objectionable phases. Calhoun was well informed of the group’s support for his measures and ideology. A recent convert to Calhoun’s cause in Massachusetts, Orestes A. Brownson, informed the Senator that of the Democratic papers in Massachusetts, ‘The Post is sound, a party paper indeed, and will support the candidates of the party.’ Its preferences, the writer opined, ‘[were] where they should be.’⁴⁵ This was a jibe leveled at the interests of the other faction of Massachusetts Democratic Party. The second factor informing the clique’s revising its account of the Nullification Crisis was related to its standing with President Van Buren among Massachusetts Democrats. As the party faction already excluded from the administration’s patronage posts and having little hope of ever attaining Van Buren’s favor due to the ‘Country’ faction’s ties to the administration, the Post group had little to lose by making this critical assertion. Because Bancroft and his associates already held all government posts and had the numerical strength to dominate the Massachusetts legislative Democrats, the Post did not worry about losing influence that could emanate from the White House or Custom

⁴⁴ John C. Calhoun, 20 Mar. 1840, to Orestes A. Brownson, *Papers of Calhoun*, vol. XV, pg. 163-164.

⁴⁵ Orestes A. Brownson, 13 Oct. 1841, to John C. Calhoun, *Papers of Calhoun*, vol. XV, pg. 790-792.

House.

That is not to say the Post faction had given up on influencing, and even regaining control of, Democratic affairs in Massachusetts. On the contrary, they had already begun to seek out different approaches to attaining their former hold on Massachusetts politics. The clique had decided to revisit its original strategy of gaining power with the backing of John C. Calhoun. This method had served them well following Andrew Jackson's first electoral victory. Endorsing outright the policies and sometimes questionable beliefs of this powerful politician, seemed to the group the best and most tenable mode of proceeding. Since Van Buren already favored their intra-party rivals, the clique's decision on the matter was relatively easily made and very sensible in hindsight. That did not mean that the clique would abandon Van Buren in the upcoming presidential campaign. He was the Democratic leader and having a member of their party in office was always more beneficial than the success of any Whig administration. As their movement away from the New Yorker following his loss to Harrison would prove, however, the patronage and political interests of the Post faction lay elsewhere, namely behind the figure of John C. Calhoun.

The very absence of such glowing praise for Calhoun in the pages of the Bay State Democrat throughout its existence would lead one to the conclusion that the members of the 'Country' faction did not hold the same high opinion of the man as their intra-party rivals. Such an assumption seems to be true. When one considers the personal opinions of the group's leaders, George Bancroft and Marcus Morton, on Calhoun's viability as a representative of the party as well as his general ideology, the difference in sentiments between the two wings of Massachusetts Democracy becomes even more apparent. While Morton had been a close friend and political associate of Calhoun since their days at law school in Litchfield, Connecticut, the connection between the two had faded to the point of nonexistence over the past several years. A once regular correspondence had ended in the aftermath of Calhoun's split from the Democracy. In the latter stages of their association,

Morton made clear to the Carolinian his disapproval of the doctrine of Nullification. This sentiment made Morton little different from most Democrats at the time. His final extant letter to Calhoun emphasized the major worries Morton held about American politics and society. He wrote,

‘It is known to you that the political affairs of our Country have taken a course which has given me very little satisfaction. Nor can I look upon the present aspect with great delight. There is danger that we may all depart more or less from our original principles. My opinion is that the danger most to be feared and guarded against is encroachment by the powerful upon the weak, and by the rich upon the poor--and not the reverse. My constant apprehension is that the weaker members of the community will be divested of, or restricted in their rights. The greatest vigilance is needed to protect the common people of the community, the industrious, quiet, producing classes of society against the overbearing influence of the rich and the powerful.’⁴⁶

Morton closed his letter by endorsing the rights of the individual states against a consolidated government as a means of protecting weaker members of society. This acknowledgment did not mean, however, that he approved of the doctrine of Nullification, as he was quick to point out on other occasions.⁴⁷

Although never directly stated in this letter, Morton admitted to others his equation of slaveholding with the powerful interests of industrial magnates of the North. In that sense his concerns here are easily seen to be dual in nature. Worried about aristocratic interests in general, best symbolized by banking, corporations, and the wealthy industrial entrepreneurs of his own section, Morton included slave holders among the enemies of the common man. Furthermore, Morton believed Nullification to be the result of the domineering attitude fostered by a slave society. In such a social environment slave masters inevitably would take on the attitude of tyrants, mainly due to their overbearing relationship with slaves. Morton concluded that having developed this mind set, the typical southerner in possession of power would tend to project his supercilious attitudes onto the rest of his surrounding society. Thus the slave owner inevitably became lord and master over not just his black chattel but working class white yeomen and independent farmers as well. Such

⁴⁶ Morton, 12 Feb. 1834, to Calhoun, *Papers of Calhoun*, vol. XII, pg. 234-235.

⁴⁷ Arthur B. Darling. *Political Changes in Massachusetts, 1824-1828: A Study of Liberal Movements in Politics* (New Haven 1925), pg. 79-81.

a circumstance inherently threatened the overall health of any democratic society, as the judge wrote associates during his long political career.⁴⁸

Morton believed that Calhoun had developed his ideas on Nullification to protect the interests of slavery. The judge opined that the Carolinian, in so doing, was perpetuating the doctrine of state interposition as a crutch for the powerful and financially privileged classes. It would allow this group to hold dominion over members of the yeomanry or producing classes. Calhoun's concept of society, as Morton interpreted it, through the extensive defense of minority rights that Nullification represented, constituted little more than promoting the strong against the weak. Morton, due to his belief in equal rights and the power of democracy, best emphasized by the common, productive, working man, could not endorse such a political or social outlook. Calhoun's vehement defense of the system of slavery merely helped to reinforce the growing gap between the two men. Because of his oft-publicized belief that the true role of a Democrat was to stand for the interests of all in society, the weak and the strong at once, Morton saw in the Carolinian's promotion of minority rights a buttressing of unjust power of those who did not need the help of the government in any form. As such, Calhoun's doctrine and the beliefs marshaled in forming it, were fundamentally flawed and worthy of reproach from all Democrats, Morton reasoned.⁴⁹

Prior to the period of the Nullification Crisis, Morton had been Calhoun's most important informant on political affairs in Massachusetts. As a long time friend and high ranking political associate, this position would seem to be logical. Following the above quoted letter, however, the two old schoolmates ended their correspondence. Tellingly, their written dialogue would not be resumed upon Calhoun's return to the party. It would seem that Morton's strong feelings against slavery along with his equation of both Nullification and the institution itself with

⁴⁸ Morton, 23 Sep. 1835, to G.B. Perry, *Morton Letterbooks*, MHS; Jonathan Earle, "Marcus Morton and the Dilemma of Jacksonian Antislavery in Massachusetts, 1817-1849." *The Massachusetts Historical Review* 4NA (2002).

⁴⁹ Morton, 13 Feb. 1834, to Calhoun, *Papers of Calhoun*, vol. XII, pg. 234-235.

attempts by an American aristocracy to remove the control of politics from the hands of the common man where it belonged, precluded any renewed political association between the two. Just as he had adamantly attested in his earlier letters to Calhoun protesting minor offices granted to former Federalists or New England aristocrats, Morton once again warned against associating with non-democratic notions and ideologies. To Morton's way of thought, Calhoun by his prior association with the Whig Party had already moved too far toward adopting political sentiments that would completely separate him from any vestige of appropriate democratic ideology.⁵⁰ As long as Calhoun's vision of an ideal American society involved the connection of state rights with the institution of slavery, thereby adulterating it with aristocratic influence, Morton would be unable to reunite with his former friend and political ally. Since Calhoun would never relent from his position or change his stance on southern rights, Morton remained pledged to Van Buren, a man whose political outlook much more closely mirrored his own.⁵¹

Additionally, Morton's antipathy toward slavery as an institution was well-known. As the annual Democratic candidate for governor throughout the 1830's, he was often times able to siphon Abolitionist votes from other parties due to the public's recognition of his hatred for slavery in the South. Because the Whig party in Massachusetts was so closely tied to the interests of textile manufacturers, a group that had a direct connection to southern cotton and hence muted any nascent opposition to slavery, many voting Abolitionists often could not follow their inclinations toward social reform that would normally lead them away from the Democracy. Morton's reputation as an anti-slavery man helped win the majority of these voters over the years. During this time period, Morton's sentiments on slavery were known mainly via his previous proclamations and actions while a member of the national Congress. At the time of the dispute over Missouri's statehood, Morton had staunchly stood against the admission of the territory as a slave state. He had first voted to prohibit slavery in Missouri, then for a gradual emancipation policy.

⁵⁰ Morton, 18 Dec. 1834, to Bancroft, *Bancroft Papers*, MHS.

⁵¹ Darling, pg. 79-82.

Once statehood was assured, he protested the inclusion of the 36'30' provision, by which slavery would be prohibited in future territories north of that boundary; he sought instead a general. In his second term as representative, Morton once again voted against Missouri's entrance into the union. Nearly two decades later, during the 1837 campaign for governor, Morton made a public declaration against the slave system. This diatribe came as a direct response to his Whig opponent, Edward Everett, who had offered a scathing denunciation of all forms of Abolitionism. Several of the statements offered during this incident were marshaled as ammunition against him by political opponents throughout the remainder of the Jacksonian period, as these questions became increasingly controversial.⁵²

While Morton detested the institution, he would not consider acting against slavery where it already existed. He realized that whether one approved it or not, human bondage had been given legal status by the Constitution. On the matter of its extension to newly established territories as well as the ability of Congress to ban slavery in Washington, D.C., however, Morton took the strongest anti-slavery line possible, diverging somewhat from Van Buren who took a much more measured approach to the matter. In an 1837 letter to Morton Eddy which he would later regret sending, Morton had made these positions clear.⁵³ Along with these sentiments he complained against those in Congress who fought against allowing petitions against the South's peculiar institution to be heard in the halls of Legislature. Opining that such a prohibition constituted a gross violation of free speech, Morton attacked this restrictive behavior. Of course, as was well known to both Morton and Eddy, John C. Calhoun had been and would remain the most prominent and inveterate voice opposing the presentation of such petitions to Congress.⁵⁴ To Morton, such a violation of constitutional right further implicated the slaveholders of the South and their closest northern allies in the unjust and aristocratic dominion over the common man. If groups of citizens presenting their grievances could not be heard by their nation's representative governmental body, Morton wondered, what

⁵² Earle.

⁵³ Morton, 7 Dec. 1837, to Bancroft, *Bancroft Papers*, MHS.

⁵⁴ Morton, 28 Sep. 1837, to Eddy, *Morton Letterbooks*, MHS.

was the sense of democracy in the first place. This matter further proved the incompatibility of slavery with American ideals. That Calhoun led the opposition undoubtedly helped reinforce the rift that had developed between the two.

The Boston Morning Post followed a different approach to the matter of congressional acceptance of anti-slavery petitions. In direct conflict with Marcus Morton's point of view, the paper averred that it was the duty of every New England Democrat to speak out against these slavery petitions. Such action would show 'the determination of the democracy of our portion of the Union to maintain in their purity the great and salutary doctrine of State Rights...It particularly shows the northern democracy will countenance no interference on the part of Congress with the institution of slavery in the District of Columbia and the territories.'⁵⁵ Acting in accord with Calhoun on this particular issue, the Post once again showed itself to be as far removed as possible from its gubernatorial candidate and official party leader. Thus, Morton's stated belief in the duty of Congress to hear and act on petitions dealing with questions of slavery provided a direct contrast between the two groups and their relationship to Calhoun.

George Bancroft maintained a relationship with Calhoun that was marked by intermittent correspondence. This interchange was equally as likely to provide written senatorial lectures by the senator in hopes of supplementing Bancroft's historical research as to serve as a form of comity. Like Morton, Bancroft could not simply ignore Calhoun's former association with principles antithetical to his own radical Democracy, honed through an earlier association with the Workingmen's Party. Similarly, Calhoun's brief affiliation with the political party that had fought and was still fighting for the vilified Bank of the United States would not permit such a vehement opponent of centralized financial institutions to form a close alliance with the Carolinian. As he had never had a personal relationship with Calhoun in the same manner as Morton, and possessed well-developed ideological similarities to Van Buren, Bancroft probably never had any need to consider Calhoun as anything

⁵⁵ Boston *Morning Post*, Apr. 4, 1839.

more than an infrequent correspondent and high ranking official of his own party. Though they would remain cordial, exchanging sentiments on his ongoing History of the United States, Bancroft never let his obvious affinities with Van Buren be threatened by a close alliance to Calhoun, as Henshaw and his fellow Post clique members had done. Further, though Bancroft was more circumspect in his sentiments against slavery than Morton, he did not harbor any sympathies for slave holders in the manner of his 'City' rivals.

Aside from their respective feelings for Calhoun, there was much else that distinguished the two factions of Massachusetts Democracy. These differences continued to produce a somewhat strained relationship between the groups that nonetheless for the time being managed to avoid outright conflict. Realizing that Bancroft by his elevation to collector had managed to grab hold of the most powerful position of influence available to Massachusetts Democrats, the Post clique chose to foster cordial relations with their 'Country' rivals. In the earliest days following Bancroft's appointment, the clique's leaders hoped to maintain their hold on Custom House influence and patronage. The only other contender for the favor of government printing contracts was Benjamin Hallett's Advocate. Formerly an Anti-Masonic newsheet, that paper had come to acknowledge its direct connection to Democratic politics, although initially unwilling to accept the influence the Post group had held on party affairs. Hallett did all that he could to win the favor of Bancroft while at the same time demeaning the conduct of Henshaw and his associates. The fact that the new collector's appointment had come at the same time as the failure of the Commonwealth Bank seems to have helped the latter's cause greatly. Emphasizing the arbitrary manner by which Henshaw and his faction had controlled party affairs during his nearly decade-long occupation of the head collector position, Hallett called for a changed policy in Bancroft's administration. It was hoped that the control that Bancroft was sure to hold over Democratic affairs, coupled with the shame brought upon Henshaw and his associates by the recent bank failure, would lead to a modified and much improved approach toward local government. Hallett wrote George Bancroft, 'The Commonwealth Office will not now be the

place to give secret laws to the party, and I am well assured you will not make that your headquarters. I want you to be the exclusive property of no little section or coterie, but to act your independent self.’⁵⁶

To Hallett’s thinking, Henshaw was now unfit to lead the party. His decision to step down from the Custom House office had come at an opportune time for the local party as well as Van Buren’s administration. Hallett urged Bancroft to distance himself further from the Post group and trust in the advice of more honest Democrats. Men like William Parmenter, Jarvis Foster, and Marcus Morton were better advisors and associates than any of Henshaw, Greene, Dunlap or the like, he reasoned. Hallett also informed Bancroft that his Advocate had lately encountered grave financial difficulties. In the words of a contemporary its ‘economical and financial affairs [were] in bad condition,’ perplexing the proprietors as to whether they should continue its operation.⁵⁷ When compared to the financial security of the Post, which Hallett noted had recently turned a profit in excess of \$25,000, the Advocate was in a troubled condition. Hallett urged Bancroft to turn his influence toward the Advocate and away from the designs of the Post. Too close association between former Collector Henshaw and that paper had helped to undermine any disinterested administration of the Custom House and allowed for the underhanded practices that then occurred. The bulk of Hallett’s correspondence with George Bancroft makes evident the former man’s belief that the Advocate and not the Post should receive the majority of government support.⁵⁸

Faced with such competition for its services, the Post faction had little choice but to submit to the dictates of Bancroft as collector, at least temporarily. The resolutions sent by the clique-dominated Suffolk County Committee endorsing his appointment were surely an attempt at appeasement. The paper of course also printed glowing statements on his qualifications for the position. It noted that ‘Mr. Bancroft’s standing as a gentleman, a scholar, and a man of practical intelligence,’

⁵⁶ B.F. Hallett, 15 Jan. 1838, to Bancroft, *Bancroft Papers*, MHS.

⁵⁷ George Harris, Nov. 1838, to Bancroft, *Bancroft Papers*, MHS.

⁵⁸ Hallett, 15 Jan, 8 Feb, 1838, to Bancroft, *Bancroft Papers*, MHS.

would 'enable him to enter upon the discharge of the duties of the station in question under the most favorable auspices.' In offering this type of praise the paper endeavored to patch up any hard feelings between its clique and Bancroft's followers. Speaking perhaps to members of its own group, this editorial called upon 'the public--democrats and federalists--to give [his term] a fair trial before they condemn it, or involve themselves in an attempt to embarrass it by unjustifiable complaint or opposition.'⁵⁹ Though Bancroft had not been the first choice of the Post, a fact that the paper attempted to deny in the days immediately surrounding his ultimate appointment, he was presented as an appropriate selection. Any sentiments that would potentially cause their associates to complain about this selection were disowned publicly in the pages of the Post. In this manner the overt attempts of the clique to foster harmony with their 'Country' rivals were successful, at least on the surface, as Bancroft continued an association with the paper, for a time occasionally penning pieces to be included in its pages.

The almost immediate decision to found the Bay State Democrat, however, followed the next year by its becoming a regular weekly paper and the official Custom House organ of the party, would seem to prove that this relationship was never as cordial as both sides publicly claimed. The alliance between the new Custom House and the Boston Morning Post was uneasy at times and nearly untenable at others. But as politically-minded men, interested in collective and personal gain, the Post faction had little choice but temporarily to allow for Bancroft's leadership to take hold. Though they did attempt to offer guidance at times, the control their intra-party rivals had over the important posts in Massachusetts governmental affairs caused the clique to remain only indirectly connected to the party's central organizational apparatus for the next several years.

Management of the Custom House, while an important asset, was not the largest factor in the 'Country' faction's increased control of the Massachusetts Democracy. In the 1839 election the persistence of Marcus Morton finally paid off.

⁵⁹ Boston *Morning Post*, Jan. 10, 1838.

Having increased his total votes received over the last several years, in large measure due to the acceptance of disparate groups and former political rivals into the Democratic ranks, Morton was able to win a disputed contest with Edward Everett by a single vote that year. Much of his success was attributable to the widespread reaction against a previously enacted Whig License Law that had limited the sale of alcohol to quantities of fifteen gallons or more, thereby placing consumption of spirits beyond the means of the common citizen. Expounding upon the undemocratic nature of such a piece of legislation, Morton was able to capture the votes of many men who normally remained immune to Democratic influence. Beyond the public rebuff of the Liquor License Law, the addition of other groups to the Democracy also helped the overall tally for Morton. The Governor-elect was able to increase his previous total by 9239. In the meantime, incumbent Whig Governor Edward Everett lost 917 votes. Thus, it is apparent that Morton's increase in total votes was more a factor of Democratic gains than Whig losses. Morton's general appeal to former Workingmen and Anti-Masons as well as the smattering of anti-slavery men still smarting from Everett's earlier words vilifying Abolitionists, no doubt helped his cause.⁶⁰

In his inaugural address Morton promised to deliver on a concrete platform quite distinct from those previously pursued by Whig governors. He spoke in favor of retrenchment in government, emphasizing reduced salaries for public officials; extension of suffrage, with the removal of all property qualifications for voting and holding office; and paper ballots to ensure electoral secrecy. Morton's most pressing concerns, however, revolved around the implementation of radically Democratic reforms to the government of the Massachusetts economy. He spoke against the dangers of paper currency. Noting its tendency to increase speculation and inflation, Morton promised to rid state government from any association with that sort of tender. Returning to a core issue, Morton also pointed out the dangers of private banking. Contrasted to this nefarious institution, he offered the symbol of an Independent Treasury as a gold and silver safehold against paper money. As

⁶⁰ Darling, pg. 240-241.

banking was in all regards a form of monopoly, Morton also criticized any sort of privileges granted to corporations or groups by legislative action. The banning of state credit to private corporations, most notably aid to railroads, was the final piece of his plan as governor.

Morton's task as Chief Executive of Massachusetts, proved to be difficult. Despite losing the state's main political office, the Whigs had emerged victorious in fifteen of twenty-eight State Senate races. With the lower branch of the legislature already firmly in their grasp and the addition of Whig Lieutenant Governor George Hull to the state's Executive Department, the party maintained a good deal of control over the government of Massachusetts. Thus, due to circumstances beyond his control, Morton's well-defined and idealistic plan was bound to fail, and did. The following year, mainly as a result of the large number of Whigs brought to the polls by the popularity of presidential candidate William Henry Harrison and the very public nature of the Campaign of 1840, Morton lost the governorship to Whig Edward Everett. Nevertheless, the electoral victory of 1839 provided strength to the arguments commonly made by the 'Country' faction that by removing the Post group from control, thus gaining the loyalties of those who formerly were unable to support their association with toward conservative interests, especially former Workingmen and Anti-Masons, and by generally broadening the Democratic coalition, the party could gain the highest office in the state. While the Post faction supported Morton for governor each year, his ultimate triumph in 1838-39 could not help but bolster the power of the already ascendant 'Country' group.⁶¹

Because of the differences between party factions, objective observers speculated on the ardor of the Post group for Morton's electoral success in his repeated attempts at the governorship. The very real animosity that the 'City' group held toward the party's leaders made such doubts somewhat plausible. After an incident where Charles G. Greene was assaulted by an alleged confidant of Bancroft at a party-wide meeting during the 1838 electoral campaign, the Providence Journal

⁶¹ Earle; Darling, pg. 264-267; *Boston Bay State Democrat*, Nov. 9, 1838.

observed, 'This little act of civility has by no means strengthened the harmony which exists between the two Loco Foco factions in Massachusetts.'⁶² Following the same incident, the Boston Atlas wondered how long it would be before Greene and Henshaw defected to the Whig Party.⁶³

In spite of these and similar instances of dissension between the factions, there is no real evidence that shows the Post clique to have worked in any way against the repeated efforts of Morton for the governorship. It must be remembered that this same group of politicians had approached him as the most viable candidate before the Democratic Party was even a full fledged political institution in Massachusetts. Despite his affiliation with the 'Country' wing of the party, their original belief in Morton as a politician remained strong. Since the group had no real reason to expect the removal of Bancroft or any of his associates from their influential posts as long as Van Buren ran the Democracy, the Morning Post clique had little choice but at least ostensibly to follow their leadership. While that did not preclude them from privately denouncing the Custom House news organ or criticizing party operation, it can be relatively safely assumed that the faction offered its wholehearted support to Morton each fall. There was no other option for any Democrat in Massachusetts during this time period, due to the judge's stranglehold on the regular nomination, largely at the behest of Henshaw and Greene.

Immediately following his resignation as Collector of Boston, David Henshaw embarked on a temporary political retirement. Following an extended tour of the West, during which time he expended considerable attention on various railroad corporations and interests, Henshaw returned to his Leicester farm. The leader of the 'City' faction was reported to have experienced little solitude or joy in his new role as a political outsider. Watching the control that Bancroft and his associates were able to establish and then expand over the state's Democracy, oftentimes first hand as a convention delegate, was reported to have made Henshaw cringe with

⁶² Providence, *Journal*, Nov. 30, 1838.

⁶³ Boston *Daily Atlas*, Nov. 28, 1838.

displeasure.⁶⁴ Coupled with the disgrace of the Commonwealth Bank failure and subsequent actions of legislative Democrats in denouncing and disavowing any connection with that concern and issuing a public criticism of his actions as a member of its board, Henshaw had little reason to be optimistic. The fact that the affiliation of these same Democratic legislators was almost unanimously with the ‘Country’ faction probably enhanced the jealousy and hostility that he was already known to hold toward his intra-party rivals. Due to their collective patronage concerns, however, the Post and Henshaw restrained their criticism of both this legislative pronouncement and Bancroft’s administration.

Behind the scenes, on the other hand, the ex-collector’s notable pride and ego would not allow him to give in to the actions of Democratic competitors. In the earliest days of his retirement, Henshaw undertook to write letters to several of the members who had passed the declaration against him. In these missives, he tried to convince them he was a persecuted man, wholly innocent of liability in the bank’s failure. At the same time, he and Greene tried to keep their loyal followers and do all possible to increase the supporters of the clique. Many of these attempts were in vain, however, due to the importance of the Custom House positions that he was no longer able to dispense. As a last resort, the clique had taken to fabricating damaging accounts about the interests of the ‘Country’ group. Claiming the newly created Democrat was ‘a sort of Locofoco of the Reformer Stamp got up by the collector to distract the party,’ Henshaw’s associates tried to reduce the influence of the Bay State group following the establishment of its organ.⁶⁵

While Henshaw would never consent to subscribe to the Democrat or visit the newly established Democratic Reading Room, Charles G. Greene did offer at least perfunctory efforts at outreach to the members of the rival faction. Greene was known to visit the new headquarters of the party on occasion, though nowhere near as often as his regular attendance at the Commonwealth Offices. He also was known

⁶⁴ Darling, pg. 266.

⁶⁵ George Harris, 11 Apr, 25 May, 12 July, 1838, to Bancroft, *Bancroft Papers*, MHS.

to receive the Democrat, though this is hardly surprising for the editor of Boston's other Democratic newsheet. Unlike the ostensibly retired Henshaw, however, Greene did come into conflict with the Democrat clique in the realm of political affairs. At a Democratic nominating convention in Boston held on October 18, 1838, Greene's name had been mentioned as a candidate for a first district Congressional post. The record shows that Greene was thereupon bested by Bradford Sumner in receiving the convention's nomination. Sumner's past Federalist party membership must have made this public rebuff particularly loathsome to the Post clique. At a later Democratic gathering, Greene apparently hoped that his fortunes would change, and his name was placed in nomination as a candidate for Congress. This second gathering had been called in a manner well-known to Post members and rivals. The objective of the meeting was not announced, and apparently only known to those affiliated with the Morning Post's editor. The supporters of Greene had shown up at the event with printed ballots in hand. It would seem that his victory was nearly ensured by this tactic. Perhaps due to the similarities of this nominating process to those that had made the objectionable behavior of the clique's candidate selection process infamous, or equally likely due to the increased access the 'Country' group had to party information due to their expanded connections, the plan was foiled.⁶⁶

Responding to the outcry against these proceedings, Greene decided to abandon his quest for a nomination, despite the Post's later claim that his friends represented upwards of two-thirds of those in attendance. A proposal was endorsed to adjourn the meeting temporarily. Upon the return of delegates, a new vote found Sumner the victor as he had been at the last gathering. Such a turn of events is instructive of the Post group's loss of influence over party affairs. Unable to emerge victorious from a gathering held in their former stronghold, following a procedure that seemed likely to have worked in his favor, Greene failed in his attempt at office.⁶⁷

⁶⁶ Boston *Morning Post*, Oct. 27, 1838.

⁶⁷ Boston *Daily Atlas*, Oct, 26, 1838.

At the same time, the new leader of the Massachusetts Democracy chose to voice his displeasure to Greene. Reprimanding the conduct of Greene and his friends at this meeting the Head Collector sought to bring order to the refractory members of his party. Bancroft made it known that while such behavior may have been allowed in the past, circumstances had changed for Massachusetts Democracy. ‘The attempt on the part of your friends to crowd you into a nomination at a disorderly meeting and without any due notification of purpose,’ he wrote the Morning Post editor, ‘was a measure of policy, which, however it might succeed for an evening, must react with prodigious energy.’ He went on to inform Greene, that if such a policy were followed in the future, harmony of action in the Democratic Party could then only be preserved by keeping the party small. Thus, any chance for electoral success would be greatly reduced. Implied in such a message, was the belief that this type of approach had allowed the former Custom House leader to maintain his hold on the party. In this new administration, however, expansion of Democratic ranks was more important than merely having the right political associates in positions of prominence. While Bancroft told Greene that such a fight would inevitably involve himself and his associates, the battle for Democratic prominence would go forward with or without the Post’s editor.⁶⁸

Despite Bancroft’s admonition, it would seem that Greene and his cronies continued to follow their long established patterns for the time being. The following year, at another allegedly ‘packed meeting’, Greene was nominated for a spot on the Democratic State Committee. Because that position carried less influence than a legislative seat, Bancroft did not protest his nomination. Greene’s subsequent inclusion on the list submitted to the County committee for state senators, however, was once again met with opposition and voted down. Similarly in the Mayoral Election of 1840, Greene was the candidate representing the Democratic Party. Due to the vast influence the Post faction held in Boston, his ability to gain the nomination of the Democracy seems easy to explain. In this instance the strength of the clique

⁶⁸ Bancroft, 19 Oct. 1838, to Charles G. Greene, *Bancroft Papers*, MHS.

once again proved to be inadequate in Whig-dominated Boston. Greene won only two wards and was easily defeated by his Whig opponent.⁶⁹ Thus, it would seem that Greene's influence was allowed in local and more minor affairs of the party. When the Democracy was considering major positions, however, the sentiments against his clique remained strong enough to reinforce the lack of power that the Post group possessed under the newly dominant Democratic organization. On the whole then at this time, the friends of Greene, Henshaw and their branch of Massachusetts Democracy, while still a seemingly significant number, were not powerful or influential enough to overcome the control that Bancroft in his prominent position within the state organization had attained.⁷⁰

Henshaw, despite his putative retirement, also essayed gaining office. As with Greene, the lack of support from the Bay State faction damaged his efforts as well. At a meeting in Boston in early April, 1839, Henshaw was nominated nearly unanimously as a Congressional candidate. The radical wing of Massachusetts Democracy was none too pleased with this result. Utilizing their statewide influence, assumedly through Morton and Bancroft, the latter group succeeded in removing Henshaw's name from the electoral ticket. In this instance, such a proscriptive policy necessitated the involvement of the Bay State Democrat to explain the party action taken against the former collector. Citing Henshaw's former interest in corporations and banking, the paper sought to paint their greatest political rival as a Democrat in name only. Utilizing the tactic that at the time sufficed as criticism against the Post faction, typically without directly naming culprits, the Democrat hauled out all of the old charges of conservatism against Henshaw.⁷¹ Hill's New Hampshire Patriot, the Post's New England sister paper, described the nearly party-wide reaction against the public diatribe issued toward Henshaw, a man called 'a decided anti-radical and a staunch democrat'. It further noted that, 'Almost every democratic journal in Massachusetts has come down upon this scion of Radicalism for his impudence.' The Democrat, in the eyes of most other party

⁶⁹ Boston *Bay State Democrat*, Dec. 15, 1840.

⁷⁰ Boston *Atlas*, Nov. 2, 1839.

⁷¹ Boston *Bay State Democrat*, Apr. 3, 1839.

members had in this instance, the paper alleged, suddenly been ‘ousted from democratic ranks and transported to the federalists!’ The piece, perhaps speaking the unwritten sentiments of the Post, questioned the merits of overly radical forms of democracy. Such action constituted the ‘Wonderful Conversion of Old-fashioned Democracy into Radical Destructive-ism.’ This depiction of events, of course, is most likely partisan and exaggerated. Henshaw’s name was permanently removed from the ballot on this instance. The leaders of the party in Massachusetts, probably felt that this Boston meeting did not represent the true interests of the state. Viewing this packed gathering as a further instance of the Post group’s utilizing old tricks to achieve undue power, the Democratic leadership acted quickly and decisively. The threat supposed to exist from such procedures as those employed by Greene and Henshaw on these occasions, very likely allowed the editor and those associated with the Democrat and the ‘Country’ faction, to maintain these public sentiments against the conservative bent of their ‘City’ rivals. In doing so, they shed light on the real strife and continuing, if sporadic, struggle for power that existed in the Massachusetts Democratic Party.⁷²

In spite of its repeated electoral failures, the Post faction was very slow in officially forfeiting the control of Democratic affairs it once had. Acknowledging its loss of influence over the convocation and operation of larger nominating conventions, the group sought to employ a new strategy in the initial period following their reduced hold on party operations. Since the ‘Country’ faction possessed numerical superiority throughout Massachusetts, the Post group was hesitant to call for a statewide annual convention to nominate major candidates for office. Though Morton’s yearly gubernatorial candidacy by this point was a foregone conclusion, and readily accepted by both branches of the Democracy, other important issues that helped direct the course of the local party were sure to come up at such a gathering. With the knowledge that their groups were no longer able to control such a conclave, the paper in July 1839 first publicly opposed the call for a state nominating convention. Following this expressed sentiment, the paper issued a specific demand

⁷² Concord, *New Hampshire Patriot*, Apr. 6, 1839.

for the type of meeting it would find acceptable to select candidates for the party. The Post maintained that more benefit would come from holding the County Conventions separately throughout Massachusetts, because a State Convention, 'would but very partially represent the entire State,' and would 'somewhat impair the influence of a Grand State Convention' to be held as a prelude to the national election of 1840. Most likely such doubts expressed at the efficacy of a wider convention were based on the knowledge that Boston interests would be vastly outnumbered at such a gathering. Most local conventions were also unlikely to embrace the desired goals of the Post group, but would carry less weight due to their distribution. In this scenario, the Suffolk County Convention would at least be the most important held in the state. Though perhaps it would be unable to generate official statewide policy goals, at least the clique's power in Boston gave the faction more influence than they could expect otherwise.⁷³

The leaders of the opposite wing of Massachusetts Democracy disagreed totally with the opinion expressed in the Post. Noting that the vast majority of Democratic papers throughout the state, with the notable exception of Post satellites, favored the statewide convention the Bay State Democrat claimed to have public opinion on its side. Furthermore, it was claimed such a convention could express the sentiments of all Massachusetts, an assertion exactly opposite to that maintained in the Post. 'If there ever was a time when a delegation could be obtained from every part of the State, that time, it appears to us, is the present.' The paper went on to state, 'we know of no arguments in favor of a grand State convention which it will be necessary for the democrats to hold next year, that are not equally applicable to, and may be urged in favor of holding a GRAND STATE CONVENTION this year.'⁷⁴

Perhaps realizing the weight of public opinion combined with Custom House patronage strength marshaled against them, the Post clique would subsequently change their tune. However, while declaring its new intent to accept the call of a

⁷³ Boston *Morning Post*, Jul. 3, 1839.

⁷⁴ Boston, *Bay State Democrat*, Jul. 5, 1839.

state convention the following month, the Post offered a qualification to such an endorsement. It stated that the most favorable place for such a gathering was Boston. Responding to requests to hold the State Convention at another location, such as Northampton, Springfield or the more centrally located Worcester, the paper declared the capital to be the best site. Despite its reputation as the ‘stronghold of federalism,’ and the weight of custom that informed sentiments toward Worcester, the Post declared calling delegates to Boston represented the best hope the party had for a broad attendance. Such a statement, overlooked geography, of course. The Post’s argument, largely unstated, was rooted in the matter of population density. Since many of the delegates would be sent from areas immediately surrounding the city, it would ostensibly be easier for them to arrive in Boston, compared to the more distant sections of the state. The argument was made on the basis of convenience to the largest number.⁷⁵ Despite the merit of such a statement, however, below the surface it is easy to understand the reasons for the Post’s endorsement. Though the group had lost some of its strength in the city in relation to their ‘Country foes,’ largely due to Bancroft’s influence at the Custom House, the group was still best described as the ‘City’ wing of the party. Their interests controlled Boston’s Democratic affairs.

Recognizing this level of influence, while heeding the majority opinion for a State Convention, the clique hoped to get the best possible deal out of such a potential gathering. Though they would likely still be outnumbered by delegates arriving from the interior of the state, most particularly those from southeastern and western Massachusetts, the added weight given to Boston delegates especially due to their greater ability to attend such a convention, the Post clique hoped would limit its overall weakness. Under different circumstances the clique had been able to utilize its favored local status to manipulate the course of gatherings, especially nominating conventions. Since as the incumbent governor, Morton was sure to be nominated by acclamation, with the full endorsement of the Post group, it was hoped that the recommendations for lesser offices and policy goals would not be scrutinized as closely by ‘Country’ Democrats. Thus, the Post group, despite its lagging

⁷⁵ *Boston Morning Post*, Jul. 26, 27, 1839.

popularity, would be able to have a more realistic chance of helping to shape the course of party affairs under such a setting. Unfortunately for the clique, the firm control that Bancroft and Morton exercised over the party would not allow for any such local influence to carry weight.

Similarly, Henshaw was unable to utilize his expertise in Custom House affairs to dictate the Bancroft's policies. That is not to say he didn't attempt to exert some measure of guidance on the doings of that office. Because of his near ten years of experience at the post, it was natural to expect that Bancroft would seek Henshaw's assistance upon assuming the tasks of head collector. Since Henshaw was about to retire to Leicester, a town about sixty miles west of Boston, the direct assistance of the former collector was not possible. Hence with the assistance of other prominent Democrats, particularly Amos Kendall and Levi Woodbury, an arrangement was worked out. Henshaw's Deputy Collector, William Bailey, was retained to assist with Bancroft's initial period of orientation. Cynics opined that this continuation in office would also help perpetuate the ruling ideologies of David Henshaw through his able proxy. Bancroft, however, perhaps intending to move away from any association with the former Custom House leader quickly decided to follow his own course. As a result Bailey's guidance was largely ignored.⁷⁶

The situation came to a head when Henshaw himself tried to pass onto the Custom House between sixty and seventy thousand dollars of depreciated notes of the Commonwealth Bank. Henshaw apparently was attempting to jettison this discredited currency, in hopes that the government would accept it at or near face value, due to its extensive past associations with the Bank, but Bancroft decided not to take the notes without authority from the Van Buren administration. Henshaw, thinking such an approach to be an undignified slight toward him, was said to have grossly abused Bancroft in the Custom House Office in the presence of several witnesses. In response, Bancroft spread word about the attempts of the former collector to pass off fraudulent bank notes upon the Custom House. Over the next

⁷⁶ *Boston Atlas*, Nov. 8, 1839.

several weeks an accord was struck between the two Democratic leaders, largely through the influence of Kendall, and ostensible harmony once again regained hold of the party. Largely to appease Henshaw Bancroft appointed several of the latter's associates to positions in the Custom House of Boston and used his influence to pass out similar posts elsewhere. Following this *détente* Bancroft was said to have begun taking advice from the likes of Colonel Seth J. Thomas, Peter Dunbar, Advocate Editor Benjamin F. Hallett, and the Reverend Orestes A. Brownson, all men who were or would become affiliated with the Post faction. For the most part, however, the course chosen by the collector remained distinct from that advocated by the 'City' Democrats.⁷⁷

Despite these seemingly cordial relations, the animus between Henshaw and Bancroft endured. While it was publicly kept below the surface for the most part, the common antagonism between the leaders of the opposing factions was well known to those with political insight. Though helping to spread rumors, many of them libelous, about both Bancroft and his Bay State Democrat, the Post group was able to keep the power of the newly founded Democratic organ in check. While the Democrat did succeed in increasing its operations, becoming a full-time daily paper in 1840, its subscription lists never matched those of the more established Post. In fact, the paper was unable to survive past the 1844 national election, while the Post maintained its strength, not ceasing publishing until 1919. Much of the cause for the Democrat's relative lack of success, of course, derived simply from Boston's inability to support two daily Democratic newspapers. The Whig majority in the city was substantial. At the same time the well-earned reputation of the Post as an ardent source of Democratic ideals, and the fact that it had been in publication for nearly two decades, made for many loyal readers. Its subscription list no doubt included many whose political viewpoints were more in line with those found in the Bay State Democrat. Whatever the causes, the malicious conduct of Henshaw and to a lesser extent Greene and their associates regarding the upstart paper could not have helped. Utilizing the strength gained by their reputation, the group, it is safe to say, was able

⁷⁷ Ibid.

to keep their fellow Democratic paper operating at a reduced scale, as many had accused them of doing to the Democracy in general during their period of control.⁷⁸ At least in this manner, Henshaw exacted some measure of revenge.

Their efforts to restrict the growth of the rival Bay State Democrat prove that, regardless of Henshaw's ostensible retirement and Greene's failure to attain office, the Post clique had not surrendered its desires to gain strength and influence in local party affairs. Another influential player on the Massachusetts Democratic scene soon joined their camp, further assisting their cause. Following his failed attempts to gain the majority of newspaper patronage from the new Custom House Collector, Benjamin Hallett found himself in an unenviable situation. Since his Daily Advocate was failing, without the financial means to continue on its own, and facing as it did the competition of the formidable Boston Morning Post, Hallett found his role as newspaper editor and political spokesman on the verge of being compromised. His initial recourse of drawing Bancroft to the Advocate as a contributor and partial owner had failed. Bancroft had continued to write sporadic pieces for the Post and showed no interest in becoming involved with Hallett's paper. The decision to found the Bay State Democrat only assured that a desired union of Custom House and Boston Advocate would never occur. At the same time, the Post, perhaps fearing the influence that the Democrat might be able to gain because of both the power of office and the fact that the majority of the state's Democrats sided with the 'Country' faction, sought assistance by all possible means. Although their relations with Hallett and his paper had been stormy at best, the Post group decided to pursue a union of editorial talents. Knowing of his fiscal difficulties as well as of the continued rebuffs from Bancroft, Greene and Henshaw approached Hallett with an offer to buy out the Advocate. The proposal allowed Hallett to become a member of the Morning Post's corporate board as well as to assume the role of assistant editor of the paper.⁷⁹

⁷⁸ G. Harris, Nov, 1838, to Bancroft, *Bancroft Papers*, MHS.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

Benjamin Hallett's former alliance with the 'Country' faction of the party was well known. As an ultra-radical whose upbringing had come in the Anti-Masonic Party, he was well versed in what was termed 'equal-rights' doctrine. His hatred of corporations and banking had precluded any prior union with the Henshaw wing of the party. In fact, the ruling power exercised through Custom House control of the Post faction had been partially responsible for Hallett's late union with the Democracy. Only the appointment of Bancroft to a position of leadership, with his known animus against banking of all sorts, had allowed the Advocate's editor to bring his paper into the Democratic fold. His sentiments toward the Post group, however, continued to be tainted by skepticism. Until his sudden union with the Morning Post, in fact, Hallett had publicly questioned their belief in basic Democratic principles. That they had evolved closer to the position of radical democracy endorsed by the 'Country' group, seemed a highly dubious proposition to Hallett. He believed that the recent actions of Henshaw had made the ex-collector unfit to lead the party or have any position of real influence. Though Henshaw was a talented politician, in Hallett's mind, his lack of discretion and forbearance hindered his ability to direct party affairs. As a recent convert to Democracy, Hallett would do his best to co-exist with Henshaw, but the known political differences between the two men seemed to be too vast to overcome without difficulty.⁸⁰

Similarly, the relation between the Advocate and the Morning Post was nearly strained beyond repair. The two papers did not share the unwritten agreement to coexist peacefully that prevailed between the Bay State Democrat and Post. Benjamin Hallett's paper, despite its joining the ranks of Democratic newsheets, was constantly at odds with its fellow daily sheet. Disputes between the two were commonplace. As a result, no reader of Boston's newspapers would doubt the animus that existed between the editors of these papers. The Post commonly took issue with Hallett's insistence on illustrating the alleged differences between the 'City' and the 'Country' group. It had specifically accused Hallett of being culpable in engendering negative sentiments toward 'City' Democrats from the state's interior

⁸⁰ Hallett, 6 Jan, 15 Jan., 8 Feb., 1838, to Bancroft, *Bancroft Papers*, MHS.

sections. Along with the Whig Atlas, Hallett had been ‘contending...to break down the democracy of Suffolk, by arraying the democracy of the State against it.’⁸¹

Warning that such action would create divisions where none truly existed, the Post asserted that Hallett’s right to claim membership in the Democracy hinged on his ability to cooperate with the rest of the party. In pointing out what he thought was the flawed conduct of the ‘conservative’ elements of the party while comparing their doctrines with those of the more palatable radical Democrats, Hallett showed himself actually to be a friend of neither group in the mind of the Post’s editor. For Hallett and his former Anti-Mason allies to be accepted by the Post clique, they would have to act in harmony with the wish of all Democrats for concord and unity of sentiment, the Post claimed.⁸²

It would appear that, for business purposes, that is precisely what Hallett did. Grasping upon what he now regarded as the Post faction’s manifest change in ideology, in having adopted the principles of Radical Democracy in the columns of the organ in recent years, Hallett found himself able to overcome his former animosity toward the clique, and especially the Post’s editor. The Post’s repeated references to former Anti-Masons, as natural brethren to the Democracy, no doubt helped the Advocate’s editor, one of the former leaders of that party, to modify his opinions. Within months of the change of leadership in the Custom House, rumors began circulating that the two papers were to be united. In July, 1838, the Boston Atlas, while noting the strong divisions that existed between the Morning Post and the Advocate on men, measures, and political ideology, concluded by reporting a surprising piece of newspaper gossip. ‘Things now seem to wear a new aspect,’ wrote the Atlas, ‘and there is evidently a cooing, between the Post and Advocate, for some purposes best known to themselves. It has even been hinted that those two papers are to be united, and to make something of two nothings.’ Whether or not this proposed union was based upon the common desires of the papers’ leadership for some political candidate was unknown, the

⁸¹ Boston *Morning Post*, Mar. 25, 1837.

⁸² Ibid, Feb. 1, 1837.

Atlas said. But in fact by this time, having been denied the patronage of Bancroft's Custom House, Hallett was looking to preserve his paper in whatever fashion possible. Submerging his interests within those of Greene and the Post was the only true alternative to a man whose involvement in the newspaper business surpassed any of his other interests.⁸³

It is unclear exactly how much added strength Hallett's addition to their ranks brought the Post faction. Despite his vocal advocacy of their cause once he became a member of their political group, Hallett's connection to the measures and interests of the clique are hard to define. He was not as ardent a Calhoun man as either Henshaw or the Greene brothers. Similarly, his stances on abolition, the expansion of slavery, and state rights were not exact matches to those of his new allies. But it must be noted that Hallett never subsequently indicated any disagreement with the other leaders of the Post faction. For all intents and purposes he appears to have been completely absorbed into their political movement.

When the merger between the Advocate and Boston Morning Post was completed late in 1838, George Bancroft implored Hallett to keep himself removed from the doctrines of the late Custom House clique. He wished his friend to maintain his own views in print, thereby acting as a curb upon the routine presentations of the Post, that differed so much from those formerly included in the Advocate and currently in the Bay State Democrat. Bancroft was worried that an alliance with Henshaw and Greene would corrupt the purity of Hallett's Democratic principles.⁸⁴ Whether this warning was prophetic or not is debatable. What is sure is that the two papers underwent a smooth merger, that surely brought many readers of the once independent Advocate to the subscriber list of the Post. Though the not too distant public disputes between the two papers undoubtedly kept many of Hallett's followers from renewing their subscriptions, it is also quite probable that his continuing on the editorial staff and among the proprietors of the Morning Post

⁸³ Boston *Daily Atlas*, Jul. 21, 1838.

⁸⁴ Bancroft, 8 Dec. 1838, to Hallett, *Bancroft Papers*, MHS.

reassured many otherwise skeptical readers. And so, with the addition to their ranks of Benjamin F. Hallett, a man once described by the Post as a ‘soldier of fortune’ in the employ of whichever party paid him the highest wage, the clique’s reach was undoubtedly expanded.

The Post group was further augmented by their increased connection to the orator Orestes A. Brownson. The proprietor and editor of the Boston Quarterly Review, had been a long-time believer in many of the ideals that connected the Post men to Calhoun. Until he began writing for the Quarterly Review, in 1840, however, Brownson had remained largely removed from Democratic affairs. Much of this separation had come from Brownson’s animus toward President Van Buren.⁸⁵ He was known to engage in denunciations of the president and condemnations of the Massachusetts Democrats who were too closely tied to the Administration and its policies.⁸⁶ Due to Brownson’s language and his otherwise Democratic sentiments, Bancroft was urged to disassociate himself from the man, lest he incur the suspicions of fellow party members in Washington and elsewhere. Such attitudes did not allow Brownson to unite overtly with Democrats of any sort, despite the state rights ideology he so proudly expressed.⁸⁷

In fact, the extremism inherent in several of Brownson’s beliefs scared off many Democrats. This radicalism kept the ‘Country’ faction from forming any connection with him. A correspondent to Bancroft wrote of knowing of no Democrat who approved of Orestes Brownson’s political course. ‘The Democracy of Massachusetts is no more responsible for Mr. Brownson’s notions than the Whigs are for Mormonism,’ he wrote. Yet in the coming years Brownson’s connection to the Morning Post faction and more specifically to the South Carolina senior senator demonstrated him to be a leading member of Boston’s Calhounites.⁸⁸ While his sometimes too radical pronouncements in the Boston Quarterly Review compelled the

⁸⁵ Orestes A. Brownson, 26 Sep. 1836, to Bancroft, *Bancroft Papers*, MHS.

⁸⁶ T. Ritchie, Oct. 1840, to Levi Woodbury, *Levi Woodbury Papers*, LOC.

⁸⁷ B.F. Hallett, 8 Feb. 1838, to Bancroft, *Bancroft Papers*, MHS.

⁸⁸ McAllister, 15 Aug. 1840, to Bancroft, *Bancroft Papers*, MHS.

rebuke of Greene, Henshaw and their followers, the presence of repeated words of praise for their common political idol were welcomed. These words were especially important because temporary political considerations would not always allow the Post to be as ardent as Brownson in pronouncing benedictions upon John C. Calhoun.

Brownson's ideas on social and moral reform seemed to many contemporaries more in tune with the views espoused by Whig leaders. Indeed the aforementioned correspondent to Bancroft was not alone among those who suspected Brownson of Whig leanings. The orator's political affiliation in fact would not be restricted to one party or another.⁸⁹ On the other hand, Brownson's ideas on government, and individual and legislative rights put him more in line with Democratic leanings. He urged northern Democrats to conciliate the South out of interest for the nation as a whole. Much like the Post group, Brownson's ideology was based on the sovereignty of the states and as a result he purposefully undersold political policies that solely favored the North. In 1841 he urged the northern members of the Democracy, while supporting the Constitution, to 'raise the State Right Flag, or we shall not be able to maintain an open field for the carrying out of our democratic principles.' Worried that aristocratic elements in the South, that smacked of Whiggery, had made it hard for that section to lead the fight for individual interests, Brownson said it was the duty of the natural allies of southern interests, state rights northern men, specifically those in the manufacturing state of Massachusetts, to uphold national interests through such measures as tariff reform.⁹⁰

Despite her aristocratic leanings, the South offered a natural counterpoint to centralized government, to Brownson's way of thinking. The region's worries about slavery's being undermined by the more populous Eastern and Middle States helped to drive the movement toward state sovereignty. With these southern equal and state rights men, true Jacksonians or Calhounites, united to the true Democrats of the North, Brownson hoped a natural coalition could be formed. Calling such a

⁸⁹ Thomas Frothingham, Feb. 1842, to Bancroft, *Bancroft Papers*, MHS.

⁹⁰ Boston *Quarterly Review*, Jan. 1841.

potential political group the Constitutional Party, composed of the smaller states, the slaveholding states and of the ‘real Democracy of the country,’ Brownson made tacit reference to the fact that New Englanders in general would not support such a plan. However, by removing themselves from the false Democrats and true Federalists in their midst and joining with the true republican spirit found in abundance among the mass of their southern compatriots, northern state rights Democrats could found a more perfect political entity.⁹¹

Such language and ideology make it easy to comprehend that Orestes Brownson was one of the most ardent supporters of John C. Calhoun in Boston. This connection went beyond mere sharing of political party affiliation. More than Greene or Henshaw, Brownson publicly stood for exactly the same doctrines espoused by Calhoun in the halls of Congress. To a greater extent than his associates who more prominently tied to the ‘City’ faction of Massachusetts Democracy, Brownson was able publicly to declare his position on issues in a voice and with a strength of opinion that frightened some of his more moderate fellow citizens. Even Democrats, and more importantly even Calhoun men, found his manners and modes of action questionable and at times downplayed their overall agreement with his ideals. The Post, though oftentimes praising the opinions set forth in the Boston Quarterly Review, never offered an outright endorsement of the course of action Brownson was following.⁹² Yet Brownson’s intermittent collaborations with the paper along with his increased interactions with the clique made him an important ally. The orator’s unapologetic and ardent defense of and support for Calhoun made him the single most prominent voice in Boston connecting the politics of Massachusetts Democracy with those of the Carolinian. Though his sentiments on the factional squabbles within Massachusetts Democracy are not as clear as his enthusiasm for Calhoun, Orestes A. Brownson’s ardent stance in favor of the senator is reason enough for his inclusion among the membership of the Morning

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Boston *Daily Atlas*, July 20, 1843. The *Atlas* noted the connection of Brownson and Henshaw in its pages while mentioning each man’s interest in John C. Calhoun’s career. The paper highlighted the secretive nature of this connection, one that was never made clear in the pages of either the *Morning Post* or Boston *Quarterly Review*.

Post faction. The union, however obscured at times, between the editor of the Quarterly and those men associated with the Post clique could do nothing but further emphasize the strong appeal that John C. Calhoun seemed to hold for several of the important political leaders of Massachusetts.

While the animosity between the 'City' and 'Country' groups was real and simmered below the surface continuously, there were only a few occasions when the public was made aware of the differences between factions of the Democracy. Though few and not typically long-lasting, arguments found their way into the pages of both the Bay State Democrat and Boston Morning Post. Since the latter still attempted to cultivate cordial relations with Bancroft as the main power broker in the state, its criticisms of his conduct or that of the Bay State Democrat, were usually limited in scope. The most common form of protest by the Post against the Democrat seems to have come in the form of slights, in denying the latter paper's importance as a Democratic organ.⁹³ The Democrat, on the other hand, representing the ruling interests of the party, probably felt more confident lashing out at the Post clique, and did so on a few occasions. The most common criticism by the Custom House organ was leveled against what it called the conservative faction of the Democratic Party. Though it was never mentioned by name, such a reference was certainly meant to indicate the Post faction, most especially the ties of its leader, David Henshaw, to banking. Despite the Post group's relatively recent conversion to Radical Democracy, the Henshaw clique was often accused of merely putting on the airs of true Democrats. Beneath their veneer of 'equal rights' and support for the Sub-Treasury were the self-same 'Fifty Million Dollar Bank Men' who had formerly directed the Democracy of Massachusetts. Though never mentioned by name, the ill-disguised criticism of these allegedly false Democrats would be hard to mistake. In typical words of the Democrat, 'The democratic cause [had] already suffered enough, quite enough from false friends, under the guise of *Conservatism*, and wherever we find this spirit manifested, PRINCIPLE demands that it should be exposed.' As the party organ in Boston, the Democrat hoped to call attention to the

⁹³ Boston *Bay State Democrat*, Mar. 26, 1841; Harris, Nov. 1838, to Bancroft, *Bancroft Papers*, MHS.

enemies of its own ideals. The true Democracy's main opponents came from within and for the most part were men who had previously directed the party. It had been their lack of leadership acumen that had caused the party to be perpetually limited in size and to suffer accordingly.⁹⁴

Expounding upon the differences between conservative and radical Democrats, the paper carried its assaults further. It defined radical democracy as 'opposed to all acts of incorporation for business purposes...opposed to granting exclusive privileges...opposed to monopolies of all kinds whatsoever...opposed to our present banking system, as being injurious to the interests of the whole people,' and in the process it made apparent the intent of its categorization. Since the Post group had been involved in all of these detested activities, they seemed to be the inverse of radical or loco-foco Democrats. No matter their currently claimed political ideology, this piece made clear that these men were firmly committed to the forces that opposed actual democratic rights for the masses. An essential part of the indictment against party leaders who had violated true democratic principles in order to perpetuate their control of government offices, was the assertion that they had forfeited their rights to lead the people of Massachusetts. The private words that the Democrat knew to have been uttered by the clique against 'Country' men as 'utopian schemers,' and anti-government locos, proved the base conservatism and anti-democratic tendencies of the group. Again, though they were not directly named here, such sentiments are thinly veiled assaults against Henshaw and his associates.⁹⁵

Other veiled criticisms of the Post clique tended to question their true adherence to Democratic principles. The Democrat noted the existence of men who 'act with the democratic party, who have yet to learn what democracy is.' The editor went on to say of these false Democrats, 'They have yielded their assent to the doctrines, and supported them, for the time being, because it was in their interest to

⁹⁴ Boston *Bay State Democrat*, Sep. 27, 1839.

⁹⁵ *Ibid*, May 10, 1839.

do so, and not because they have an inherent and abiding love for them.’ Such a charge was an obvious reference to the recent change of political ideology on the part of the Statesman clique, who had recently denounced all banking, corporations, and paper money, in order to accord better with more radical doctrines. Continuing in the same vein the paper noted, ‘A real democrat is true to his promises and his professions, and would part with anything and everything, rather than his principles.’ The paper directly warned against individuals who espoused Democratic beliefs merely for their own private gain in the form of office or government patronage. While always espousing his cause with the utmost vigor, the true Democrat did not slink away in defeat when events did not follow his prescribed path. The paper continued in this vein, noting that actual and principled Democrats would not fade into retirement when the course of events turned against them but continued fighting for the party, doing all within their collective power to promote and spread its ideals. The example of Henshaw’s wallowing in defeat and disturbing party harmony due to his recent setbacks would seem to have proven him not to be a Democrat of the ilk venerated here. More particularly, in several instances the ‘Country’ faction, through its only public organ, chided their ‘City’ rivals, questioning the merits of their approach both while in power as well as since handing over practical control of party functions.⁹⁶

Especially pointed out in referring to the unacceptable conduct of the Post faction, were their previously mentioned attempts to undermine the Bay State Democrat. Such an effort further proved their lack of interest in the well-being of the party and its principles. The only way for the undermanned Democratic Party of Massachusetts to gain power was through promoting their program and proselytizing as many undecided voters or former Whigs as possible. In hoping to limit the spread of Democratic ideals, Henshaw, Greene and their associates acted directly against the interests of the party to which they were publicly pledged. “Let the love of democracy stimulate its advocates to do something towards giving a wider circulation to the great truths which it teaches; and let the spirit of democracy be made manifest

⁹⁶ Ibid.

in the lives and conduct of all who adopt it as their political creed, so that it may find favor among all classes, and be acknowledged as the only rule of political action worthy of the support and approval of intelligent men.’ No matter their personal opinions of the Democrat as a paper, the Post clique as influential party members should have been expounding its virtues as a party organ and not raising doubt about its merit. By attempting to limit the distribution of the paper and hence the ideas of the Democracy, they were proving themselves to be what the article had earlier alleged: men involved as Democrats not out of principle but in hopes of personal gain.⁹⁷

In the period leading up to the national canvass of 1840, the Post and the Democrat kept their grievances toward each other largely from public view. Heeding the advice of a political ally, Bancroft and his associates decided ‘carefully [to] avoid everything like open warfare with them, [treated] them respectfully for the present.’ At the same time, they were to ‘watch them closely--and guard...against their contaminating influences.’⁹⁸ For the time being the votes that the Post clique were providing to the Democracy marked them for continued inclusion in party affairs. That did not preclude the Bay State Democrat from offering criticisms toward the opposite wing of Democracy, however. Using coded language, much of which was incomprehensible to all but men who possessed some insight into the political realities of Massachusetts, the verbal assaults very rarely mentioned the clique or its members by name. Additionally, despite the presence of these diatribes, in reality they were few and far between. Both factions knew that any small chance their party had of promoting Martin Van Buren in Massachusetts hinged on ultimate unity of all Democrats as well as expanding the party’s membership. Since new groups such as former Anti-Masons and Workingmen were currently unaffiliated with the Whig Party, it was hoped that these ‘natural Democrats’ would significantly enhance the president’s appeal in what was sure to be a heated electoral campaign. Thus the differences between the ‘City’ and ‘Country’ group, between Bancroft and

⁹⁷ Ibid, Apr. 19, 1839.

⁹⁸ G. Harris, Nov. 1838, to Bancroft, *Bancroft Papers*, MHS.

Morton on one side and Henshaw and Greene on the other, were allowed to remain in relative obscurity. Some members of the new leadership faction lamented among themselves what they perceived as the retardation of party growth brought by years of Henshaw's leadership. Though ultimate blame was cast upon Van Buren for not entirely removing the Post clique from their positions of power upon taking office, for most 'Country' men the weeks immediately preceding this vital presidential election were no time to bemoan their failures.⁹⁹ As a result, both Post and Democrat appeared united in the fall of 1840, wholeheartedly endorsing Van Buren for president and Morton for governor. Unfortunately their most vigorous efforts would be to no avail, as both candidates would be beaten rather handily in Massachusetts.

Van Buren's defeat at the hands of the 'Log Cabin and Hard Cider Campaign', was difficult for the Massachusetts Democracy to swallow. It's weight fell more heavily on the Bay State men, however. Relying on the 'Little Magician' for their most lucrative patronage positions, the 'Country' faction now faced an uncertain future. Marcus Morton, in his private correspondence with Bancroft, held out hope that the latter would retain the collectorship. He urged his friend at the very least to remain at his post, forcing the Whigs to execute a public removal. Such an action, Morton alleged would redound to their infamy. Furthermore, he reasoned, if Bancroft were removed the mass of Democrats would rally behind him, furthering his hold on the party leadership. Such persistence would help to distinguish him and his followers from the other Democratic faction.¹⁰⁰ Despite the urgings of his colleague, Bancroft resigned from the post upon Harrison's inauguration. Without the patronage of the Custom House behind it, the Democrat faction's news organ began a true struggle for existence. William Joselyn wrote Bancroft only four months after the latter's resignation as collector, to announce he was vacating his position as editor of the Bay State Democrat, despite his continued belief in the party's principles. While the 'Country' faction remained in control of the party in Massachusetts, it was quickly losing its grip on power in the aftermath of the Whig

⁹⁹ Alexander Everett, 20 Oct. 1840, to Bancroft, *Bancroft Papers*, MHS.

¹⁰⁰ Morton, 27 Dec. 1840, 4 Mar. 1841, to Bancroft, *Bancroft Papers*, MHS.

presidential victory.¹⁰¹

This reduced control by the ‘Country’ faction, accelerated the fracturing of the Massachusetts Democratic Party. No longer obligated to foster complete public harmony with the failed election behind them, both factions became more willing to air their disagreements. Oftentimes criticisms of each side began to be made publicly, with names of prominent opponents printed in the respective papers. Whereby in the past, disputes over the propriety of nomination meetings and the association of the factions with respective principles of radicalism or conservatism went either unremarked or were reported anonymously, Democratic political life in the aftermath of Van Buren’s defeat was more open to public view. The 1840’s quickly became a decade in which the animosities between the factions that had remained hidden in private correspondence or reported only by Whig sources, were readily printed in the pages of the Democratic organs that previously had carefully refrained from detailing such problems. In the years to come, these fractures would center around the rival preferences of each group for the leadership of the national Democracy. During the period immediately following Harrison’s victory, however, the issues that found their way into print were of a more local nature. But these conflicts over disputes endemic specifically to the Democracy of Massachusetts helped shed light on the bitterness that truly existed within the ranks of the party.

In November 1841, the recently removed Postmaster of Boston, Nathaniel Greene, older brother of Charles G. Greene and original editor of the Boston Statesman, was nominated by a political gathering as a candidate for Mayor of Boston. The elder Greene, like his brother, was a founding member of the Post faction and what his allies would call a ‘lifelong Democrat.’ In the words of the Morning Post, his nomination was ‘perfectly satisfactory to the representatives of the democracy of Boston.’ The fact that such a decision represented a ‘unanimous nomination for that office by the Democratic Ward and County Committees,’ and was readily accepted by Greene, seemed to make him an ideal and potentially popular

¹⁰¹ William Joselyn, 12 Jul. 1841, to Bancroft, *Bancroft Papers*, MHS.

candidate for the office.¹⁰² The Bay State Democrat, however, was not so quick to support the alleged Democratic nominee for the office. Reporting that in the aftermath of this nomination, Greene had wavered about his willingness, claiming a lack of interest in accepting any nomination that was not of a ‘neutral and independent character,’ the paper questioned his affiliation with the party.¹⁰³ Worried about being duped by a false Democrat into voting for his candidacy only to find him hostile to their intentions upon gaining office, the Democrat declared itself justified in withholding its favor for this noted Jackson supporter, much to the dismay of the Post.

The debate over Greene’s worthiness for Democratic consideration set off a heated debate about each faction’s commitment to party principles. Both sides attempted to prove themselves to have been members of the Jacksonian Party from a time further back than the other. The Democrat accused the Post of showing constrained support for Morton and Van Buren in the preceding elections. Greene’s alleged lack of eagerness in declaring himself the Democratic representative for the office was noteworthy to the Bay State Democrat faction. Such a course showed Greene to be an opportunist, one of the ‘professed [Democratic] supporters which, to our mind, [is] anti-democratic and highly censurable.’ This critique engendered a response from the Post that attempted to paint the ‘Country’ group as more recent converts to the city’s original Jackson men. The Morning Post’s efforts to read his faction out of the Democratic Party, ‘or cast reflections upon us for being a new convert,’ were outrageous, noted Editor Joselyn. ‘Our anti-bank and anti-corporation doctrines have been often repudiated by the late Commonwealth-Bank advocates.’ Nevertheless, the Democrat claimed, it had lived through the dark period of clique leadership, to help the Democracy emerge stronger because of the increasing weakness of this group. The fact that one of their nominal leaders had to ignore his true party leanings proved the depths to which the Post group’s popularity had sunk, in the paper’s opinion. The Democrat claimed, “It is

¹⁰² Boston *Morning Post*, Nov. 21, 1841.

¹⁰³ Boston *Bay State Democrat*, Nov. 22, 1841.

altogether too late to advocate the ‘conveniently small’ doctrine. It has had its day, and has passed away,” Such issues as state banks and ‘South Boston Lands,’ were Post concerns and beyond the scope of the Democratic Party. Past brandings of the Democrat group’s members as downright radicals and Loco Focos, showed the true leanings of the Post faction. The Post men had been accused of nothing but conservative sentiments in their political souls, no matter their public presentation of the issues most important to the party.¹⁰⁴

The Post on the other hand, took issue with any charges that sought to question Nathaniel Greene’s Democratic credentials. From the days long prior to the period that the Bay State Democrat had supported Andrew Jackson, Greene as editor of the Statesman had been publishing the earliest public advocate of Democracy in the state. Noting that Democrat Editor Joselyn had been affiliated with the Anti-Masonic Party until as recently as 1834, the paper questioned his right to criticize their Democratic credentials.¹⁰⁵ Additionally, the Post noted that their intra party rival news source had pled for ignoring national political affiliations in the last election. Such a course of action would have tended to limit outright Democratic support for the previous candidate, Charles G. Greene, thereby promoting the interests of Whig Mayor Chapman. Thus, any hint of Nathaniel Greene’s tending toward downplaying his party affiliation was blamed on the course of action followed during the previous mayoral race.

The Post testily averred that it had no responsibility to answer for Greene’s party affiliation given the Democrat’s previous course of action, in addition to his obvious connection to their party. In fact, the Post’s claims would seem to lend credence to the Democrat’s claims of Greene’s disavowed status solely as the Democratic candidate. While continually boasting of his credentials as a Jackson man, the Post noted that impartial consideration of Chapman’s tenure in office, would allow for unbiased Whigs to vote for Greene. The latter’s decade-long tenure as

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Boston *Morning Post*, Nov. 22, 1841.

Postmaster of Boston proved his ability to operate an important government office. 'If elected,' it was claimed, 'he will be the Mayor of the whole city, and not exclusively of a party nor of the clique of a party,' in an obvious jibe against the Democrat faction. It is quite probable that due to their waning influence among the state's Democrats, the Post group had restrained their prior tendencies to shun potential Whig support. With only moderate support from members of the Democrat clique, Nathaniel Greene and other potential Post candidates for office were quite likely beginning to seek support from elsewhere, as future events with relation to national political affairs proved.¹⁰⁶

The Post continued on the offensive, turning the tables on the Bay State group. The paper opined that the latter's lack of ready endorsement for one of their candidates showed a measure of selfishness. In essence, the Democrat, through such tactics, hoped to keep the party small. It was further charged that the lack of strength the 'Country' group had in Boston caused them to endeavor to restrict the ability of the rival clique to run Democratic affairs in the city. If their own candidate were to appear weaker than otherwise would have been the case, the Post alleged, such lack of support would further the ability of their rivals to dominate affairs. 'We think the feeling which governs the Bay State Democrat in this matter is rendered perfectly evident by the spirit evinced by its editor and his correspondents. It is no wish to aid the democratic party--it is no regard for principle or consistency that urges it on, but a design--a narrow, mean, and malignant one--to prevent the democratic party of Boston from casting its full vote in favor of its regularly nominated candidate for the Mayoralty, because he is not one of the little clique who sustain [this] paper, and use its columns to promote their selfish ends.'¹⁰⁷ Such a selfish approach to politics necessitated Greene's seeking out Whig votes, in the mind of the Post. Therefore, it was the conduct of their newspaper rival and members of its faction that deserved outright censure from the Democracy of Massachusetts and not the tried and true, original Jackson Party member Nathaniel Greene. This

¹⁰⁶ Ibid, Nov. 24, 1841.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid, Nov. 21, 1841.

strategic approach seems to have aided Greene's cause somewhat. Though losing the election to Chapman, the former Statesman editor was able to increase his brother's 1840 vote total by nearly a thousand. At the same time, his Whig opponent lost six hundred supporters from the previous campaign. Nonetheless, the strength of the Whig Party in Boston proved too much for the Democrats to overcome.¹⁰⁸

The furor caused by the debate over Nathaniel Greene's fitness to run as Democratic candidate for Mayor brought to light the very real tensions between the two factions of the party. Such a public dispute highlighted the fact that the once and current leaders of the Democracy had many differences between them. The removal of the desire to keep such flare-ups out of the pages of their respective news sources makes very evident that each side was increasingly moving toward disassociation from the other. Repeated attempts to question the legitimacy of the other faction as members of the national Democratic Party, would offer further proof of the incompatibility of these two groups. Announcing the lack of Democratic principles of the Post faction, and particularly of David Henshaw, would become a commonplace occurrence during this time period. Alluding to his 1837 pamphlet *Remarks Upon the Rights and Powers of Corporations*, the Democrat noted the ex-collector's penchant to support the privileges of chartered financial concerns. Such a tendency flew in the face of what their party stood for. Adding that the same figure who had penned this piece, though 'a man of talents,' possessed 'an inordinate ambition and love of power,' the paper further sought to question his overall merit as a politician. Similarly, the Democrat repeated Henshaw's famous line that 'the more democratic banks...the better,' and adduced his authorship of the infamous 1831 petition for the Ten Million Dollar United States Bank, to disprove his credentials as a party leader. Since the Post group was wedded to the influence of Henshaw, the paper implied all of their actions had been and would continue to be tainted by his very presence. Despite their recent attempts to paint themselves as adherents of Radical Democracy, the Post group had always pursued a course differing from the

¹⁰⁸ Ibid, Dec. 13, 1841.

Radicals' political pronouncements. The paper concluded that any man who actually believed in 'the corporation system,' no matter what he said, was not and could never be a Democrat. Thus, all members of the Post group were unable to sustain their claims to membership in party circles.¹⁰⁹

As a result of the presence of these undemocratic beliefs among their rivals, the Democrat declared the time for separation had come. 'The chaff must be winnowed from the wheat; and the sooner it is done the better,' the paper claimed. Since no man could be a Democrat who favored any legislation that offered benefits to the few over the many, special privileges of any kind, or unjust institutions, it was best for Henshaw and his ilk to abandon the Democracy to its true adherents. 'If there is--and we believe that there is--a difference of opinion among those who call themselves democrats, on the subject of corporations and exclusive privileges, the sooner a separation takes place the better.' Pointing to the recent defection of Isaac Hill's Patriot group, a conservative group allied to the Post faction in Massachusetts, from their more radical Democratic counterparts in New Hampshire, the Democrat called for a similar process in Massachusetts. The fact the 'old Commonwealth bank clique,' was 'not yet defunct, and is making another effort to rise, and again to riot in exclusive principles,' necessitated forcing their withdrawal from the party at the present time. Such proceedings would work to benefit each side. The true Democratic Party, in the opinion of the paper, would be purified and no longer be required to worry about the wishes of those with viewpoints antithetical to their own. At the same time, conservative elements would be free to unite with their Whig compatriots and embrace their true ideology in favor of corporate interests, banking, and more centralized government on the whole. This process would remove the corrupting influence from the Democratic Party, allowing true party principles to flourish in Massachusetts.¹¹⁰ Such language was tantamount to a public call to evict the Post group from the party. The language did not have to be parsed in any way. To the mind of the 'Country' faction, the differences between

¹⁰⁹ Boston *Bay State Democrat*, Jan. 11, 1842.

¹¹⁰ Ibid, Mar. 1, 10, 1842.

themselves and their 'City' foes was too great to keep under one Democratic umbrella. As pure Democrats carrying on the tradition of Andrew Jackson, these men felt they were the only representatives of the party in Massachusetts.

The Post faction continued to spar publicly with their rivals at the Bay State Democrat. Repeating the notion that the latter faction's aim was to keep all Democrats who did not strictly follow their guidance out of office, the Morning Post tended more and more to follow its own course. Emphasizing the obvious differences with the Democrat became a more common approach with the Post group. Hurling the earlier charges made against them back onto the current leaders of Massachusetts Democracy, the clique sporadically alleged that Bancroft and his faction aimed to promote only men who accorded completely with their political ideology, in essence keeping the party small. While the increased popularity of Democratic candidates on the statewide level would seem to disprove the Post's allegations that the Bay State faction sought a small party, it is true that the 'Country' group wished to keep itself distinct from the 'City' faction. Morton, upon winning another close race for the governorship in 1842, told Bancroft that while he would seek suggestions for policy ideas from most quarters, the Post group's leaders would be excluded from such access. 'I should like to read my message to Henshaw,' he wrote, 'but I know he would quarrel with some of it and personally it would not be well to consult him with others.' It would seem that by this time, members of Morton's and Bancroft's faction wanted nothing to do with the leader of their Democratic rival. The same could be said for their sentiments toward much of the Post faction. In light of these realities, it becomes easier to comprehend the reasons that the 'City' clique sought assistance from other political sources.¹¹¹

By the initial stages of the electoral campaign of 1844, the divisions between the two factions of the Democratic Party in Massachusetts had been reified. The Post group, always true believers in many of the doctrines of Calhoun, and having been reunited with their political idol since the beginning stages of Van Buren's

¹¹¹ Morton, 15 Jan. 1842, to Bancroft, *Bancroft Papers*, MHS.

presidency, was now in a position to offer their outright support for the Carolinian. That his potential rise to the presidency enhanced any chances they had to retake control of the Massachusetts Democracy made such an endorsement more appealing. The 'Country' group, on the other hand, having always had its interests tied to the ascendance of Martin Van Buren, ardently wished for their benefactor again to gain the nomination of the Democratic Party. Having lost all of their important offices upon the inauguration of the Whig William Henry Harrison and his successor John Tyler, the Democrat faction wished to support their political mentor both because of his radically Democratic ideology and because of the patronage posts a reclaimed presidency would bring to them. The respective support for the two presidential candidates helped to drive the wedge that already existed further between these two groups. What once were the 'Country' and 'City' factions of the Massachusetts Democratic Party were more aptly described as its Van Burenite and Calhounite wings for the remainder of the 1840's.

Chapter 7:

Presidential Politics in Massachusetts: The Impact of Tyler's Cabinet Reshuffling and the Election of 1844 on the State's Democratic Party.

With the removal of George Bancroft from the position of Head Collector of Customs in Boston following William Henry Harrison's ascension to the presidency in March of 1841, the Massachusetts Democratic Party had lost most of its capability to dispense patronage. Due to this sudden deprivation of political and financial clout, the 'Country' group no longer had one of its most important assets in the struggle for dominance within the Massachusetts Democracy. Nonetheless, that branch of the party continued to assert its influence. In the fall of 1842, Marcus Morton was once again able to attain the governorship. The formation of the Liberty Party had so fractured an electorate closely contested between the existing parties that the contest needed to be decided by the State House of Representatives. Due to manipulation by several Whig legislators who feared that the balloting could potentially throw the election to the Liberty candidate, Samuel Sewall, Morton was able to become governor for the second time in five years. While in the future the presence of the Liberty Party would cost the Democrats potential voters, on this occasion the new group's participation in the balloting helped bring about another Democratic term in office. Thus, despite having lost the control of the Custom House and the other appointive positions in the state with the defeat of their political benefactor Martin Van Buren, the associates and members of the Bay State Democratic clique would continue to direct the affairs of the Massachusetts Democracy for the time being.¹

The coming years, however, helped to bring about a decisive change in the affairs of the party in the Bay State. Smarting from the continued slights offered by its stronger

¹ Darling, *Political Changes in Massachusetts, 1824-1828, A Study of Liberal Movements in Politics* (New Haven 1925), pg. 289-291.

'Country' foes, the Boston Morning Post clique sought to enhance its political power in two important ways. First, the faction continually increased their overt support for John C. Calhoun as the Democratic politician most likely to bring prominence to the party. Since Van Buren had been defeated by the Whigs in 1840, the Post followers would repeatedly reason that it was time for new blood in the upper ranks of the national Democracy. For a variety of reasons, Calhoun was presented as the man who gave the party the best chance for electoral success in 1844. From a very early period following the Whig presidential triumph, the Post began endorsing Calhoun as a potential presidential candidate. In doing so, the clique raised the ire of the opposing faction in the state's Democratic Party. Thus by 1843, the Post and Democrat factions were openly asserting their beliefs in the respective merits of John C. Calhoun and Martin Van Buren for the Democratic nomination. The Post group's leaders ultimately hoped to utilize their close connection with Calhoun, as they had a decade and a half earlier, to gain the most important political and financial posts in the city with his anticipated assumption of the presidential mantle.

Before that election could take place, however, national affairs would further instruct the course the group took in hopes of enhancing their power. With the death of William H. Harrison a mere 41 days into his term as president, John Tyler of Virginia ascended to the nation's highest political office. Tyler, though sworn into office as a member of the Whig Party, did not fully accept the political ideology of that party's majority. Thus, events during the years to follow helped separate the president from the favor of his fellow Whigs. Within two years of his taking office, Tyler had for all intents and purposes been read out of the Whig Party. At the same time, because of his affinity with many of the most important ideas and policies of national Democrats, several members of that group came to see Tyler as a natural ally. Most prominent among the Democrats sympathizing with Tyler was John C. Calhoun.² Upon the tragic death of Secretary of State Able Upshur in March, 1844, Calhoun was asked to assume

² John Nivens. *John C. Calhoun and the Price of Union: A Biography* (Baton Rouge 1988), pg. 272-273; Irving H. Bartlett. *John C. Calhoun: A Biography* (New York 1993), pg. 306-310; Edward Crapol. *John Tyler the Accidental President* (Chapel Hill 2006), pg. 211-212; Robert Seager II. *And Tyler Too: A Biography of John and Julia Gardner Tyler* (New York 1963), pg. 214-218.

the post. The Carolinian assented, to the outrage of many Democrats.

The Post group was not among those offended by Calhoun's decision. In fact, the close ties maintained between Calhoun and the clique had already helped assure the nomination of David Henshaw to the post of secretary of the navy a year prior to Calhoun's assumption of office. To the dismay and outrage of the 'Country' faction, Henshaw endeavored to secure the confirmation of the Senate to take his place in Tyler's cabinet. This event helped bring the already strained relations between Post and Democrat factions to the point of severance.³ Calhoun's and Henshaw's union, as well as that of the Post with their favored potential presidential candidate, was further solidified by this affair. The presumed defection of these two men as well as their most prominent followers to the ranks of a nominally Whig administration, helped to bring an irretrievable end to the relations of Post and Democrat factions as members of the same political party. The presidential campaign of 1844 further reified this severance.

With the election of James K. Polk to the presidency in 1844, the 'Country' group was able to regain their hold on the Custom House. At that time Marcus Morton was nominated to the post of head collector, pending congressional approval. Sensing their ability to regain the helm of the Massachusetts Democracy undermined by Henshaw's course of action, the Post group marshaled all of its energies to defeat this appointment.⁴ Despite their constant support for Morton as a candidate for governor, the clique turned against him in this instance. Their main tactic of assault became repeated and very public references to Morton's abolitionist tendencies. Publishing verbal assaults both in the Morning Post and in pamphlet form that claimed Morton was among the most ardent Abolitionists in Massachusetts, the group hoped to engender disfavor for the nominee among southern Senators.⁵ Their assault brought about the inevitable response from the Democrat faction, offering counter charges against Post clique members including David Henshaw and Charles G. Greene. Much in the same way that the Bay State Democrat had maligned the qualifications of Henshaw for the secretary of the navy position two

³ Boston *Bay State Democrat*, Jun. 25, Aug. 2, Aug. 7, 1843 ; Boston *Morning Post*, Sep. 14, 1843.

⁴ Boston *Morning Post*, Jun. 12, 1845.

⁵ *Ibid*, May 29, Oct. 16, 1845.

years earlier, the Post faction raised questions about the propriety of approving Morton for such an important office.

The airing of these issues, with the very public resentment they predictably brought to the fore, was enough to demonstrate the very real differences that existed between the two factions of Massachusetts Democracy. A division that could be belittled or even denied two or three years earlier was now public and well-established. In the years to come, the Democratic Party in Massachusetts, always disturbed by faction, would hardly be able to exist as one coherent unit. Though it would remain a single entity for the next several years, the issues surrounding the electoral campaign of 1844 as well as the patronage disputes occasioned by the appointments of the ensuing National Democratic administration of James K. Polk, served terminally to damage the relations between the most influential leaders of the two dominant wings of the party in Massachusetts.

Van Buren's defeat, while upsetting to all Democrats, held different meaning for the respective factions in Massachusetts. For Bancroft, Morton and the controlling interests of the Democracy, this electoral loss offered little consolation. Though they remained dominant within their party in the state, much of the 'Country' faction's strength was reduced with the termination of their political favorite's term. Upon Harrison's assuming office, Bancroft ceded his post as Custom House leader, much to the chagrin of Morton who had advised him to make the Whigs publicly remove him, in hopes of generating sympathy for their unjust actions.⁶ At the same time, the loss by Van Buren after a tumultuous and somewhat ineffective term as president, damaged his future chances to lead the party. Though the Bay State Democrat group would not admit any deficiencies in the now ex-president, their unqualified attachment to him, for reasons political and financial, made his discomfiture all the more disturbing. Because of their obvious connection to Van Buren's electoral fortunes, their paper continued to proclaim the right of the defeated presidential candidate to contend for the nation's top honors in the contest to be waged in 1844. Disputing the accusations of Whigs and

⁶ Marcus Morton, 27 Dec. 1840, 4 Mar. 1841, to George Bancroft, *Bancroft Papers*, MHS.

fellow Democrats alike that his loss to Harrison had created significant obstacles that Van Buren as a politician and statesman would always be unable to overcome, the Democrat focused its early efforts on questioning the merits of the election itself.⁷ Whig tactics in getting out the vote and painting their candidate in the most favorable light when contrasted to the calumnious depiction of the incumbent president had been the reason for the New Yorker's downfall, as the Democrat continued to aver. Since his qualities represented the best the party had to offer, the paper easily claimed that Van Buren had been and remained the most capable figure to hold the highest office in the years to come.

The Post group on the other hand, despite being disappointed by the Democratic electoral defeat, harbored secret optimism. With Van Buren's temporary demise, the clique no doubt saw an opportunity for their favorite to ascend to a position of leadership within the party, ultimately becoming its standard bearer in the election four years hence. The readiness with which the paper took to promoting John C. Calhoun's cause informs this theory. From the earliest days following the outcome of the national canvass, Calhoun was presented as the most desirable spokesman for both explaining the party's defeat and guaranteeing the perpetuation of its collective principles. The Post's presentations also implied the shortcomings of Van Buren. Similar flaws, it was noted, were nowhere to be found in the character of the South Carolina statesman. Thus, political prudence necessitated turning to the latter as the most appropriate representative of the Democracy. As a distinguished statesman and respected senator, the Post claimed, he ought to be a politician the people felt able to look toward. In him 'we find an honorable example,' worthy of leading the 'standing army of unterrified democrats.' The Post wholly endorsed both Calhoun's statement that the party in the future, as it had in the past, should be based on 'the old republican State Rights principles, in their fullest extent,' and the forceful manner in which he upheld genuine democratic values. Believing that the program pursued by his own state had brought about the best hope for the maintenance of this ideology, Calhoun hoped to project those values to the rest of the union. The Post found nothing amiss with this desire. The supporters of Van Buren likely would have withheld absolute support from such a proposal. The Post group at

⁷ *Boston Bay State Democrat*, Dec. 5, 12, 1840.

this time found such ambitions worthy of acclaim. In fact, it is interesting and perhaps instructive to note that Calhoun and not the ex-president was, in the eyes of the Post faction, most able to assume the important role of strengthening and supporting his fellow Democrats during this time of party crisis.⁸ While the claim was never made that Calhoun was more desirable than Van Buren in this role, the very presentation of the senator as a potential leader for the party while its official head was still in office showed that the Post group's interests and desires were far removed from those of the Democratic majority even at this early date.

From this time forward Calhoun would be continually referred to the pages of the Boston Morning Post as the most prominent Democratic legislator. The respective positions the Carolinian adopted on each pending political issue, the political ideology he espoused in his many speeches in the halls of Congress, and most particularly the repeated presentations of him as a life-long champion of state and popular rights, were routinely alluded to in the pages of the journal. For all intents and purposes, Calhoun became the party's nominal national leader as the Post group saw it. Without a Democrat in the White House, Charles G. Greene and Benjamin Hallett chose to offer the powerful senator to their readers as the individual in Washington most ably defending their rights. Such a continual depiction made it a logical step for the paper to promote the Carolinian as its favored candidate for the presidency. That time was in the future, however. For the immediate year and a half following the defeat of Van Buren in his re-election attempt, Calhoun was given the putative platform from which to represent the mind of the national Democracy. Or that is how the Post would have had their readership view the party's inner workings. In this fashion, the clique was able to make the subliminal transition from officially supporting Martin Van Buren as their party's standard bearer, to granting that distinction to their long-time favorite. Not surprisingly, there was no such monopolizing of direction and control over political issues forthcoming from the editors of the Bay State Democrat, whose candidate was temporarily retired from politics in the aftermath of his disappointment in the 1840 presidential campaign.

⁸ Boston *Morning Post*, Nov. 24, 1840.

In the rendering of the Post, Calhoun as the lion of the Senate held the hopes of the Democratic opposition to foil a Whig administration in his hands. Because of his willingness to do political battle with the Whigs, Calhoun's opinions and speeches on the two most important issues of the day were referred to again and again. Both the re-establishment of the United States Bank and the Distribution Bill, calling for the parceling out of land sale monies to the various states to fund internal improvement projects, were vehemently opposed by the Carolinian. Though the vast majority of Democrats nationwide agreed with his position on these vitally important issues, the views of the Carolinian senator were to be found in the pages of the Post far more often than those of any other figure. To a certain extent, his pronouncements were treated as the official Democratic Party line in a way that would not have been approved by many other members of the party, including the Bay State group. The Post's presentation often implied that if Calhoun agreed with a matter or statement of policy it was worthy of endorsement, and if he disagreed it was worthy of censure. Calhoun's stance on the matter of banking and the fact that he had rejoined the party in opposition to financial institutions altogether, had served to erase any stigma that had emerged due to his earlier defection. The Post seconded an account from the National Democratic Review, that stated 'Mr. Calhoun never showed himself a greater man than at the crisis of 1837; and the reconciliation of the democracy with him was like that of old friends, still true at heart...a reconciliation cementing with a closer warmth the attachment whose temporary interruption is thereafter forever forgotten.' As such, he was absolved of past blame and had proven himself worthy of defending and being able to defend the true interests of the Democracy. His lifelong interest in the cause and loyalty to it, proven by rejoining the national party at a time of crisis, had helped manifest Calhoun's merit.⁹

In the summer of 1841 when the bill to re-establish the Bank of the United States had passed the Whig dominated Congress and subsequently had been vetoed by President Tyler, Calhoun was visited again for his opinion. Speaking in Congress the senator commended the president for his veto and called for further action against the 'money power' in the face of the Whig attempts to rekindle the bill that were sure to come.

⁹ Ibid, Jul. 26, 29, 1841.

Following the lead of Calhoun, the Morning Post actually praised the actions of Tyler. During these earliest stages of the president's defection from the Whig Party, it was noted that Tyler's political ideology was actually much closer to that of Calhoun than any other Whig statesman. 'John Tyler,' the paper had earlier proclaimed, 'is a politician of the State Rights school--his political creed concurs with that of Mr. Calhoun and his party--and he is a [known] mortal opponent of the whig doctrines.' Having defected from the party during the Nullification Crisis, largely in response to Jackson's Force Bill, Tyler was pictured as an actual Democrat and a man whom it was possible for members of the party to work with. The paper had speculated that his original purpose in agreeing to run on the Whig presidential ticket was a veiled hope to draw away the Calhoun wing of the Democracy.¹⁰ While the future actions of Tyler, Calhoun and David Henshaw proved this statement to have been somewhat prophetic, for the initial period following his assumption of the nation's leading political office, the Post was merely willing to give limited and seemingly random support to 'His Accidency.' Despite his official membership in a vilified party, Tyler's now public antipathy to a national bank placed him squarely in the same column as that of the Post and its political associates on the most pressing issue of the time period. For the time being the Post would once again follow the lead of Calhoun, offering temporary praise of the president for his vetoes of the Bank and other issues, while rebuking other actions taken during his early tenure in office that adhered more strictly to Whig ideological guidelines.

Similarly, Calhoun's vehement opposition to the Distribution Bill was commonly praised in the pages of the Post. The bill called for the disbursement of proceeds from public land sales to the various states in order to fund hoped-for internal improvement projects. To the minds of its opponents, most especially Calhoun and his allies, the proposal seemed a blatant attempt on the part of the Federal Government to extend the system of extensive duties on foreign imports. Since the surplus revenues from public lands were to be given away to state legislatures, it was argued that the Federal Government would have little choice but to maintain a high rate of duties on

¹⁰ Ibid, Jan. 8, 1840.

manufactured goods imported into the country. In order to raise revenues to replace those given to the states from the Distribution Bill, it was reasoned, tariffs would remain high. Thus, the promised end to protective and excessive taxes on imported goods would be evaded as a result of this ruse. As free trade men, the Morning Post clique logically came down on the side of those arguing against the Distribution Bill because of its implications for the Tariff issue. Because of their long-standing ideology in favor of low duties, they would seem to have been natural allies of Calhoun on this matter.

In highlighting the South Carolina senator's more radical pronouncements pertaining to the bill in question, the Post helped illustrate the degree to which their political standards and ideological underpinnings were meant to agree with his own. It was not simply a matter of keeping land prices and tariff duties unnaturally high that caused such opposition to the bill. There was something more sinister in Whig proposals, the clique claimed. Returning to the single idea upon which their political system of belief was based, both Calhoun and the Post focused upon the threat to state rights inherent in such a potential legislative enactment. If the government in Washington were able to dispense funds to the various states to help them fund projects for improvement at its pleasure, dire consequences could result. By codifying the measures that constituted much of the bill, states would no longer be required to levy their own taxes to raise revenue for such projects. Thus the matter would be out of the control of their legislatures and more importantly their citizens. Ultimately, future opportunities to decide the merit of actions to occur within the borders of otherwise sovereign states would revert to the Federal Government. As a result it was worried, citizens of various states would be obliged to look first to Washington for matters best handled in a more local manner. In that way the power of individual states would be reduced greatly.

Summarizing Calhoun's arguments in Congress during August, 1841, the Post noted the bill, 'aimed a fatal stab at the Constitution. The most disastrous changes in our form of government would result from it.' Most importantly, in the view of both Calhoun and his backers, 'it would change the entire relations between the federal

government and the States, and between the people and the State governments. It would subvert all the objects for which the general government was created--all its good objects--and leave it impotent for every purpose but mischief.' The bill threatened to introduce the specter most feared by Calhoun, and quite often vilified as portending the downfall of democracy in the pages of the Post. The states would as a result find themselves 'in a condition of dependence on government bounty,' and all political questions would require states to look to the Federal Government. Thus the thralldom hoped for first by the Federalists and more recently by their Whig descendants would be achieved through this piece of legislation. Seconding the language of the Senator, the Post concluded, 'The effects of this policy were the very reverse of the Constitution which were to insure tranquility, and provide for the common defense. Discord and anarchy would necessarily result from such a measure,' due to its weakening of the state governments. In the final analysis of the Post after reviewing the speech of Calhoun, the Distribution Bill if passed would result in another threat to the national interest. His vehement defiance of such an act was further proof that the Carolinian was an apt figure to represent not just the party interests, but those of all Americans.¹¹

The passage of the Land Distribution Bill in September 1841 prompted resolutions from Democrats associated with the Post clique at a party meeting in Boston. Declaring the bill to be 'unjust and unconstitutional, depriving our National Government of its most important source of revenue, and forcing it to burden the people with heavy taxes to supply the consequent deficiency,' those attending the meeting vowed to 'rally under the banner of repeal...till this most odious bill be blotted from among the laws of the Union.'¹² It would seem as if the accusations surrounding this bill, more than anything else at the time, enabled the clique to return to the issues and imagery that were most clearly associated with their political icon. The additional powers such a bill gave unfairly to the central government in Washington served as a direct threat to the interests of the states and those of the union as a whole. Returning to the Hayne-Webster Debate of 1830, the Post once again vowed its determination to prove the necessity of the

¹¹ Ibid, Aug. 30, 1841.

¹² Ibid, Oct. 2, 1841.

maintenance of the inherent powers of the states. Responding to criticisms in the pages of local Whig papers that the nation was founded upon the ideals of majority or popular sovereignty, which had no connection to sovereignty of the states, the Post offered its oft-issued analysis. Predictably, this rendering was the one espoused by Hayne, serving as spokesman for Vice President Calhoun during the early stages of the Nullification movement.

Promoting their founding ideology the Post claimed, ‘The Constitution does not, again, emanate from the people; but from the people existing in distinct and independent states or sovereign communities...That is, the people organized into separate, independent, sovereign communities, make the Constitution, and it is only the people thus organized that can alter it.’ By extension, the Federal Government had no right to impose its will upon the people in the manner that the Distribution Bill allowed. The enactment of such legislation would surely help to undermine the very basis upon which the nation was built, reasoned the paper. In denying the doctrine of state rights as a national starting point, the bill seemed to allow for an unlimited government almost to the extent of monarchical rule. The states stood as a bulwark against the overriding will of a majority, claimed the Morning Post. Without their strength, ‘the majority would rule, and this majority would have the power to rule as it pleased.’ Responding to critics who noted the Democracy’s insistence on representing the will of the mass and that of the common man, the editor stated, “In practice, again, the stronger interest in the community would always command a majority of votes, and consequently have always the power to use the government for its own especial protections. To it would bend individuals and all weaker interests, and the government thus...would have a direct tendency to make the many mere ‘hewers of wood and drawers of water’ to the few.”¹³

Here one can see the utilization of the argument which informed the doctrine of Nullification, that of extreme state rights, guiding the ideology of the Post. In this rendering of the nation’s political basis, the sovereignty of the states protected the interests of the nation’s weaker members. As had been the case a decade earlier, this

¹³ Ibid, Oct. 12, 1841.

rendition of the rights of the people as dependent upon those of the states was marshaled as a form of opposition to allegedly unjust tariff laws. The fact that such reasoning was most popularly associated with Calhoun and had been directly linked to the Nullification movement, did not seem to deter, and in fact arguably encouraged, the Post toward its reiteration. While state rights in and of itself was a commonly utilized platform and political basis for the national Democratic Party, it is important to realize the very extreme nature of this version of the doctrine. Likewise worthy of mention, is the fact that such radical sentiments toward the rights of the states seem almost out of place coming from New England. Similar proclamations were never made by the Bay State Democrat. In fact, the noted antipathy held toward the institution of slavery by the leaders of that group, particularly Marcus Morton, coupled with the feeling that Nullification and extreme state rights were simply coded language for the defense of slaveholders' interests, made such advocacy beyond the realm of probability.¹⁴ Only the Post clique, because of both their attachment to Calhoun as a politician, as well as their sincere belief in the right of state sovereignty, seemed likely to adopt such a stance in Massachusetts. Along with their New Hampshire allies, Isaac Hill, Abner Greenleaf, and Levi Woodbury, the Post group stood largely apart from typically accepted New England opinion on this matter. Unsurprisingly, these individuals and the various factions associated with them would become the most prominent supporters of Calhoun in the region.

Not since the earliest days of the controversy over the Tariff of Abominations, before Calhoun's split with President Jackson, had the Post been willing or able to publicize such beliefs. That is not to say that its leaders had abandoned their extreme state rights sentiments. More likely, the belief system that defined the national Democratic Party at the time made it nearly impossible for any individual or group within it to espouse opinions that would have seemed adverse to the position taken by Jackson as president. Since Andrew Jackson had stood against supreme state sovereignty,

¹⁴ See especially Morton's 1834 letter to Calhoun, in which the latter explained his concerns about the institution as worrisome due to its tendency to tie slaveholders to tyrannical power. Because of this belief, Morton was unable to support Calhoun's political career. Also see Earle for an analysis of how important anti-slavery was to Morton's political ideology, especially following the election of 1844.

regarding the principle as likely to lead to disunion, it had become nearly unanimous doctrine among men who claimed to be Democrats that any principles hinting at Nullification were to be either muted or renounced altogether. The Post faction as the leading Jackson men in Massachusetts followed this prescribed course, as has been noted. By the time Van Buren had been defeated and the last representatives of Jackson's reign removed from the executive branch, however, it is likely that the clique felt more able and was finally willing to pronounce their support of ultimate state sovereignty. In so doing, the leaders of the group followed a course that in previous days had been equated with dangerous principles. Taken in tandem with their earlier expressed views that Calhoun's actions since rejoining the Democracy absolved him of any blame previously associated with his past apostasy, it becomes obvious that the clique was attempting to maneuver ever further toward the point where the Carolinian would be accepted as the most prominent Democrat. By warning against impingements by the Federal Government upon those of individual states in similar language to that utilized by Calhoun and Hayne in the earlier debate, the paper was very likely trying to soften the negativity still extant in Massachusetts toward such a doctrine. At the very least, the Boston Morning Post and its most prominent adherents hoped to locate in the issues of the Land Distribution Bill and ultimately the old bugbear of tariff duties, ground upon which Calhoun's advocates could stand with men they hoped to convert to their political leanings.

The renewed arguments over the issue of protection kindled many of the same partisan sentiments between the Whigs and Democrats as had commonly attended the matter. In the current climate, Massachusetts Whigs sought once again to portray local 'Loco Foco' support for eliminating protective duties as a course intended to benefit the South at the expense of their own region. The Post's position on the matter was largely summed up by their ally, Charles G. Atherton. This New Hampshire Representative was a noted affiliate of Isaac Hill's 'conservative' Democratic faction in the North, a group in lockstep with the Post clique. In a speech delivered in the House of Representatives on December 23, 1841, Atherton had spoken on the president's recent message relating to current tariff legislation. His views largely summarized those of the

Calhoun wing of the Democracy in Washington and Massachusetts. Arguing against the merits of what he viewed as a system of duties that went far beyond that required for mere revenue measures, Atherton claimed to be representing the interests of New Hampshire and his region in general. Largely in response to those critics both in the capital and closer to home who viewed any anti-tariff language as toadying to the South, Atherton stated that the evils of protection corrupted the entire nation. The fact that most of the clamoring against it came from the southeastern states did not automatically indicate that his constituents, living in a region dominated by manufacturing interests, were exempt from the iniquities of such legislation. He claimed the system of protection was merely a glorified mode of excessive taxation. 'Can the people of the country,' he asked, 'be made to believe that taxation can be so laid as to become, in itself, a blessing?' Industrial interests were so strong that they had little need of such protective measures, which in turn only served to hinder the progress of the common man. Furthermore the necessities of government did not require such taxation, Atherton claimed. Due to the unjust nature of high tariff duties, he stated, 'my constituents believe that such a system is unconstitutional, and unequal, and unjust; that Government was not instituted for any such purpose, and that taxation is an evil to which we are subjected for the compensating benefits of the blessing of Government.' Those who supported such measures were merely perpetuating despotism through legislative privilege. These beliefs, Atherton made great effort to point out, were not based on Southern opposition, but represented the opinions of many New Englanders.¹⁵

Whigs in Massachusetts sought to paint the sentiments expressed by Atherton and seconded by his allies in the Post faction as detrimental to the interests of the region. Expressing support for measures that sought to remove the time-proven doctrine of protection from the table of national legislation was radical and an untenable position for any New England politician to hold. The Atlas accused Atherton and his northern allies of being part of a 'Loco Foco party, who voted in a solid column with Southern fanatics on the subject of free trade.' By doing so, they had helped defeat legislation for a

¹⁵ Charles G. Atherton, "*Speech of Hon. Charles G. Atherton, of New Hampshire, On the Reference of So Much of the President's Message As Relates to the Tariff. Delivered in the House of Representatives, Dec. 23, 1841*", (Washington D.C. 1841).

protective duty. Vehement language against import duties had even killed proposals for a revenue measure, which both Atherton and the Post group were known to endorse, if merely for the reason that such measures did not include guarantees for protection of industry. On this issue, once again the clique and its allies were painted by their rivals in the state of having submitted the will of the region to the interest of radical elements in the South.¹⁶ The tendency of the Post clique toward a public embrace of the ideals of Calhoun and his closest spokesmen in Washington helped these Whig critics to re-focus their public jibes away from assaults on the former leader of the Democracy, Van Buren, and project them more effectively southward.

The timing of the Post's published support for John C. Calhoun and his closest political associates also made the connection between the clique and the Carolinian leader difficult to dispute. In the period when Van Buren held obvious control of the interests of the Democratic Party, automatic support for the most radical Democratic measures now endorsed by Calhoun was harder to find. That is not to say that the paper withheld support from Calhoun or that it failed to second his political beliefs. We have already seen how the paper's alleged pro-southern sentiments had been extant from its earliest days and increased with Calhoun's rejoining the Democracy in September, 1837. In the preceding years, however, the paper's approach to matters of state and southern rights was much more muffled. When pieces did appear addressing these matters, their language was always moderate, stopping short of endorsing any sentiments that could be seen as threatening disunion. Though the paper's stance on the Nullification Crisis had swung more in favor of the course followed by South Carolina in recent years, such statements still were rarely made and when they were, were highly qualified. When endorsing the path followed by Calhoun in the aftermath of the Whigs' 1840 electoral victory, however, the paper became much more likely simply to echo his ideas- both his contemporary ones and those from earlier days. Such ideas had previously been off limits for a Democratic paper to promote. As the 1840's moved along, no longer obligated to attach its public interests to the Van Buren wing of the party, the paper was able to offer words of support for Calhoun's policies. Many of these would previously

¹⁶ *Boston Daily Atlas*, Apr. 2, 1842.

have appeared highly questionable, considering the history between the Carolinian and those in charge of the administration. In that way, these pronouncements from early in the Harrison and Tyler administrations marked the beginning of the Post group's public association as the leaders of the Calhoun branch of the Massachusetts Democratic Party.

In the period immediately following the Democracy's electoral defeat in the presidential campaign of 1840, the paper's opportunity to offer support for John C. Calhoun was somewhat limited. The Post could do little beyond holding up Calhoun as an ideal Democratic politician. In spite of these limitations, by continually offering such a depiction it became easier for the clique to make the transition to outright support of their favorite candidate for the election of 1844. At the time, the repeated public endorsements of his statements and actions in Congress constituted the foremost support the faction was able to give. Adversaries of the clique took note of the favoritism granted to Calhoun and the ideas oftentimes associated with his politics. The most common charge against the Post as the most vocal advocate of this state rights approach to government was that such a rendition of the basis for union constituted a betrayal of the interests of New England.¹⁷ For their part, the Morning Post group was again fighting such charges.

Following up on their previous criticisms of the Whig Party in Massachusetts, the faction continually labeled that group as the mere remnants of Federalism, political men who advocated disunion in pushing forward such tenets as centralized government and abolition. It was alleged that the political actions of local Whigs, as the earlier pamphlet published by Greene and Hallett had noted, were intended to drive a wedge between the sections, causing the South to revolt. Upon that projected occasion, it was opined, the northern states with New England at their head would regain powers long since ceded to more populous, newly annexed areas that shared interests with the South. Otherwise, the defection of the southern states would lead to their degradation in the opinion of all union-minded individuals and cause the South's favored policies to become detested by

¹⁷ Ibid, Apr. 2, May 5, 1842.

the majority of northern citizens.¹⁸

Whigs, led by their leading local organ the Atlas, contended that the Post Democrats were blowing smoke by misrepresenting the current beliefs of their party. It was the favoritism shown by the clique toward ideals seen as southern in nature, most visibly portrayed in their affiliation with the Calhounite wing of the party, that proved the group to be the only ‘disunionists’ currently involved in Massachusetts political affairs. Inherent in their support for Calhoun, the Atlas claimed, was disparagement toward Massachusetts and New England as a whole. Such a demeaning attitude was detrimental to the interests of their section and lamentable to the editor of the Atlas. It proved the Post and its allies to be mere toadies to southern interests. These criticisms were always leveled either directly at the Post or the Democracy in general. Mention of the Bay State Democrat was never made. This silence on Bay State complicity in the matter of apostasy toward the North is instructive in that it shows that even opponents of the leadership wing of the Democracy in Massachusetts realized that the Post group was behind all tendencies in the state toward supporting Calhoun. The ‘Country’ faction, for good reason, was never mentioned in such rhetorical assaults. By excluding this group from their criticisms of disloyalty toward Massachusetts and unwarranted support of the South, the Atlas and its Whig allies were admitting the lack of connection between the Democrat faction and Calhoun. At the same time, such an omission adds further evidence of the split over potential presidential candidates that existed in the Massachusetts Democratic Party.¹⁹

Seizing upon the most prominent of the political issues that had helped to define the career of John C. Calhoun and one of the underlying tenets upon which his connection to the Post was built, local Whigs sought to attack the clique over its conspicuous stance against import duties. The importance of the debate over the tariff was of disproportionate interest to Massachusetts industry, due in large part to the prominence of local textile mills. Because of the hostility the paper had shown toward

¹⁸ *Boston Morning Post*, Jun. 2, 1842.

¹⁹ *Boston Daily Atlas*, Apr. 13, 1841.

continuing the protective system, the Atlas in particular further lashed out at the Post for its lack of interest in the affairs of New England. Besides the fact that protective duties represented a sound and reasonable policy for the welfare of the nation as a whole, the Atlas claimed, their benefit was made doubly important due to local industrial concerns. Any endorsement of contrary measures, to the mind of leading Boston Whigs, represented hostility toward American industry and more importantly, the well-being of the Bay State. Speaking pejoratively of a local group of ‘Tories’ led by the Morning Post, the Boston Atlas stated, ‘They have ever been distinguished for their opposition to the doctrine of DISCRIMINATING DUTIES, and for their adherence to the theory of free trade, or an equal, or horizontal tariff. To their perpetual disgrace, they have always raised the cry of monopoly, and have waged uncompromising war against all the enterprises which have elevated Massachusetts to her present proud position.’ The interests of Massachusetts, it was claimed, were only truly represented by the ‘American system, which [protected] American labor.’ All those who argued contrarily were friends neither of the laboring class nor the state in general.²⁰ In fact, the Atlas later wrote, those who prated of equal protection to all American interests, best represented by a revenue-based non-protective tariff, meant ‘nothing more than every Southern nullifier...professes to be willing to allow.’ To prove this point, it was averred that ‘even Calhoun, Pickens, and the whole tribe of South Carolina politicians, would say precisely the same thing.’ The mechanics and farmers of New England, the Atlas declared, would be too wise to fall victim to such nonsensical babbling.²¹

By painting the Post group as being in complete accord with the dogma of Calhoun and members of the so-called ‘Carolina School’ of political thought, the Atlas was hoping to draw support in its battles against these opponents. Assuming that all readers viewed the policies of the Carolinians, and most particularly Calhoun, as deleterious to the union in general, the Atlas hoped to shed a negative and infamous light upon the Post faction. Seizing upon that group’s increasingly well-known connection to Calhoun, the paper sought to utilize its depiction of the differing interests between the

²⁰ Ibid, Oct. 19, 1841.

²¹ Ibid, Mar. 25, 1842.

sections in order to prove itself the champion of New England. During this time period one of the more common characteristics marshaled to represent the strife between the Post and its Whig adversaries was to portray the latter as representing the interests of New England against the former, in thrall to Calhoun. Speaking of the paper's future course on the matter of protection, the Atlas, predicted 'We suspect that print will let the Tariff details alone, until it hears what Calhoun, and Benton, and Woodbury think about it.'²²

The Post responded to such claims by alleging that the Atlas group was the direct descendant of the Federalists. These men represented the most extreme Whig supporters, whose policies sought to push the South into such an intolerable position as to threaten the union. During this process, the Morning Post positioned itself as the protector of a moderate policy that favored neither section, while protecting the rights of the states and by extension promoting local interests through assuring national harmony.²³ This battle over the proper course for national affairs to follow took on a sectional tone during much of the time period, with the Post more often than not publicly endorsing the interests and rights of the South. At the same time, the Atlas unabashedly proclaimed itself working to ensure New England interests, sometimes at the expense of other regions.²⁴ As we have seen, the Bay State Democrat was a bit more tepid in offering outright support for its region but did note its desire to favor local interests whenever issues came to be decided on a sectional basis. Thus, the Post became known as the paper-and with it the associated faction-that represented southern interests in the most northern-oriented of regions. Their Democratic rivals at the Bay State Democrat during the same period were wholly unwilling to commit themselves to such a policy, largely out of their distinct aversion to slavery in all forms, or perhaps more importantly due to their connection to Van Buren. The Whigs, on the other hand, chose to ignore this burgeoning division in the opposite party, typically offering the belief system and leanings of the Post as representing the entire Massachusetts Democracy. This was the easiest and most extreme path to follow, and it made profitable fare for the daily political

²² Ibid, May 5, 1842.

²³ Boston *Morning Post*, Aug. 6, 1842.

²⁴ Boston *Daily Atlas*, Oct. 19, 1841, Mar. 25, 1842.

newsheets.

Carrying its recriminations against the Post group further, the Atlas pointed to the constant presence of Levi Woodbury among those associated with the clique. The New Hampshire senator's connection to Calhoun was well-known among many political insiders. The Whig organ predicted that Woodbury would stand as Calhoun's vice-presidential candidate in the coming election if the latter were to receive the nomination. Woodbury's beliefs and ideals, both private and public, would become fodder for the assaults of the Boston Atlas. His direct affiliation with the Post clique allowed Woodbury to become a typical whipping boy for the opponents of Democracy in Massachusetts. Particularly irritating to their minds, was the alliance that men from New England seemed to be making publicly with Calhoun and his supposed southern interests. Such a union constituted a general selling out of principles to the Atlas. It was said of Woodbury that he was 'leaguering and plotting to be the Loco Foco candidate for the Vice Presidency on the same ticket with the arch-nullifier, John C. Calhoun!' In a typical vein, the paper went on to ask, 'Are the people of New England prepared to sustain this unholy alliance and conspiracy against their birthrights and interests? Are they willing to encourage and countenance those who support Levi Woodbury and John C. Calhoun, who avow themselves, unhesitatingly, to be the advocates of measures and views which would drive every manufacturer to Europe, and close every workshop in the country, reducing us to a worse than colonial vassalage to Europe, and to a worse condition than the hewers of wood and drawers of water.' Such extreme imagery, when utilized to represent Woodbury and Calhoun, was meant to repulse the mass of New Englanders. The Post faction was not dissuaded by such a depiction. Agreeing with both Democratic leaders in their denunciation of tariff measures, this group of allegedly benighted leaders of the 'Loco Foco press of New England,' was willing to go to the wall with these men, supposedly antithetical to their region's interests. Such a course of action was particularly galling to local Whigs.²⁵

The policy followed by the Post, claiming the interests of state rights as well as

²⁵ Ibid, Aug. 8, 1842.

offering a heated defense of Calhoun's merit as a statesman seeking the welfare of the nation in its entirety, though reviled by the Atlas and other Whigs, was supported from another news source in the city. The ideology of ultra Calhounite Orestes A. Brownson and his unaffiliated Boston Quarterly Review, an organ of the most radical tendencies, gained the endorsement of the Morning Post. At the same time, this newsheet's pronouncements caused great concern to the Bay State faction. Prominent members of the 'Country' group were known collectively to abhor the doctrines proclaimed in the Quarterly. Brownson, an occasional writer for the Post, was known to harbor similar sentiments to those of Henshaw, Greene and their closest associates. While his Quarterly Review consistently proclaimed unabashed belief in the evils of Federal Government, the benefits of state sovereignty, and outright abhorrence for any outside interference into local matters, in language too boisterous for even the Post, the latter paper was loathe to criticize its ideological compatriot. At the same time, the most prominent members of the Bay State group were continually concerned about the statements printed in Brownson's newsheet, believing they could not help but damage the collective image of the Democracy and most particularly the leaders of that organization in Massachusetts.

Brownson's sentiments, voiced both in his own paper and in tandem with the Post clique, earned the enthusiastic support of Calhoun. Such doctrines as those recently espoused by Brownson and the leaders of the state rights faction of Massachusetts Democracy, would be sure to unite the southeastern states to their counterparts in New England, noted Calhoun. Because of men like Brownson, Henshaw, and Greene, the Carolinian averred, 'the revolution will commence in Massachusetts and she will become thoroughly state rights. Already I see signs that the prediction is in the regular course of fulfillment.' The loyalty of those Democrats promoting his particular brand of ideology convinced Calhoun that Massachusetts was solid in the cause that would become his own. 'The spirit of enquiry is abroad with you,' he wrote to Brownson prior to Van Buren's defeat, 'accompanied by a devotion to principle. It is that which will unite in principles and policy New England and the Southern Atlantick (sic) States for the first time, since

the establishment of the Federal government.’²⁶

In Calhoun’s mind, as well as those of the leaders of the Morning Post clique and most assuredly that of Orestes A. Brownson, the principles which united these different elements of their common political party would make for an effective and regular promotion of democratic ideals. Such a statement was a veiled jibe leveled at the supporters of Van Buren in the state and elsewhere, who the Calhounites thought simply defended their own favorite for selfish reasons, unmindful of the more pressing needs of the national Democratic Party. Calhoun’s interests in the state were best represented by his friends in Boston, as he informed Brownson. In making this claim, Calhoun implied that the credentials of men from outside that geographic locale, especially the ‘Country’ faction of the party, were not to be relied upon for support.²⁷ With the base found in Boston, however, Calhoun hoped to be able to offer sufficient resistance to other potential rivals in the coming struggle for the Democratic presidential nomination. Martin Van Buren, to be sure, was most prominent among these future opponents.

Considering their own political leanings, it is not surprising that associates of Bancroft at this same time urged the then-collector to distance both himself and his paper from the ideas of Brownson. In August one of these political allies, claiming that the editor of the Quarterly Review did not represent true Democratic interests and stood as a threat to the leadership of the party due to his radical pronouncements, averred that any credit given to his statements would lead to the impairment of the political fortunes of the party in Massachusetts.²⁸ By tying the public presentation of the Democracy to pro-southern points of view as was his wont, in much the same manner that the Atlas tried to do with the sentiments of the Post, Brownson was bound to damage all Democratic candidates in Massachusetts. Particularly galling to Bancroft and his associates was the fact that Brownson’s support of Calhoun had always been directly related to the editor’s sentiments hostile to Van Buren. Believing the Carolinian to be

²⁶ John C. Calhoun, 28 Mar., 1840, to Orestes A. Brownson, in Clyde N. Wilson, *The Papers of John C. Calhoun* (Columbia, SC 1979), vol. XV, pg. 163-164.

²⁷ Calhoun, 31 Oct. 1841, to Brownson, *Papers of Calhoun*, vol. XV, pg. 790-792.

²⁸ McAllister, 15 Aug. 1840, to Bancroft; T. Ritchie, Oct. 1840, to Levi Woodbury; *Bancroft Papers*, MHS.

the best candidate for the presidency, Brownson was unwilling to let even the party's standard bearer stand in his way. Such a public position was sure to turn all but the most staunch Calhoun supporters away from Brownson and surely necessitated the Bay State group's distancing itself from him. By doing so, the 'Country' faction proved it shared no affinity with either his ideas or those similarly expressed in the pages of the Boston Morning Post. Though rather hesitantly, the Democrat declared its differences from the opposite wing of the party. Unfortunately for the Bay State leadership, neither the Atlas nor other Whigs in the city publicly noticed this distinction; they would continue to connect the political career of the Carolinian statesman directly to the fortunes and beliefs of the collective Democracy in Boston. The distinctive claims of Brownson, Greene, and Hallett did nothing but encourage this standard operating procedure for their Whig opponents.

This Whig tendency to tie Calhoun's interests to the Massachusetts Democratic Party, despite its oversimplification of matters as they actually stood in the state, would be carried over to the campaign against Marcus Morton during the gubernatorial election of 1842. Because Morton was known to harbor anti-slavery sentiments, unlike his Whig counterpart, many Abolitionists were seen as potential Democratic voters. With the introduction of the Liberty Party into state politics at the beginning of the decade, each annual election had seen rising numbers of voters defecting from the Whig Party to this fledgling institution. Thus by 1842, it was apparent that most men who resented the South's institution were poised to vote for either Morton or the Liberty Party candidate. Morton's diligence in keeping his anti-slavery sentiments from the public over the past several years, however, caused many Whigs to believe that most potential defectors would abstain from voting for him to join the Liberty Party in the fall campaign. Formed specifically as a political organization directly opposed to the extension of slavery, in contrast to the cryptic approach followed by Morton on the issue, the Liberty Party represented a very ready refuge for Whigs outraged by their own party's sentiments against Abolition as well as the perennial Democratic candidate's unwillingness to act publicly against an institution he abhorred. The recently introduced importance of abolitionism in the gubernatorial campaign forced the Whigs to ramp up their extreme

presentation of the state's Democracy even further. In doing so, they once again emphasized the particular connection to Calhoun and 'southern policies' that defined the Post clique but not Morton or his political associates. Knowing that conflating Morton with the followers of Calhoun would deter any political Abolitionists from voting the Democratic ticket, local Whigs increased their charges of southern leanings against their most prominent political foes in state.²⁹

This tactic of tying Massachusetts Democrats so closely to Calhoun as to portray them as not caring for their own region was made easier due to the rampant sectionalism that Massachusetts Whigs adopted. Their case was founded on the assumption that allies of the South generally were enemies of the interests of Massachusetts. Since some influential Democrats, most especially the faction with the most widely distributed Democratic news organ in the state, shared obvious points of similarity with the most prominent southern statesman, it became very easy for Whigs to lump all of their political opponents together as men indifferent to New England's welfare. Such an approach explains why papers like the Boston Atlas rarely alluded to the obvious dissimilarities between the Post and the Bay State Democrat on several important political matters, most especially in the connection each had to Calhoun and Van Buren respectively. Painting the Democracy in general as in lock step with the radical politicians of the South was a much more effective way for Massachusetts Whigs to depict their in-state rivals as fighting for the wrong side of every issue. The campaign for governor as well as those for various national offices represented opportunities for Whigs to raise the divisive specter of sectionalism.

Realizing the importance of anti-slavery principles to potential defectors from their ranks to the Liberty Party, local Whigs sought to illustrate the threat such apostasy brought to New England interests. The editor of the Boston Atlas opined, 'that every vote counted for the Liberty Party Ticket is one vote for the Loco Foco Candidate for Congress; is one vote for Northern Men with Southern Principles.' The denunciation

²⁹ Earle, Jonathan, "Marcus Morton and the Dilemma of Jacksonian Antislavery in Massachusetts, 1817-1849." The Massachusetts Historical Review 4.NA (2002).

went on to point to several issues most commonly associated with Calhoun's most prominently noted ideals. Supporting Liberty candidates, it was further offered, represented a 'vote for the Gag in Congress; one vote against the Right of Petition, For Slavery in the District of Columbia, and a veto in advance upon every law which may be made to abolish it there.' Such a presentation, of course, melded Marcus Morton's political policies with those of the most pro-southern wing of the party. The important distinction between the two Democratic factions was overlooked, however, due to the damage it would do to the Atlas' extreme presentation of their rival.³⁰ By this depiction, any vote for the "Loco Foco" politicians in the coming election represented a vote for 'candidates, who [would] do the bidding of John C. Calhoun or any overseer who may take charge of them, and sacrifice, without a moment's hesitation, every great interest of their country, as the same men have already done over and over again.' Thus, Calhoun and his southern associates were seen to be the directors of Massachusetts Democratic affairs.³¹ Allowing such men into office, whether the governor's chair or in Congress, served to further damage the best interests of the nation, while crushing those of New England.

In the gubernatorial election, the worst fears of the Whigs became reality. None of the three major candidates, Morton, Whig Edward Everett, or Liberty candidate Samuel Sewall, had managed to gain a majority of votes. Thus by state constitutional rules, the House of Representatives was to decide the governorship. Because of the relative level of success attained by the Liberty Party, however, the makeup of the incoming legislative session remained in question. Liberty men constituted six of the twenty-four legislators who had won clear majorities during the immediate state canvass, adding to their already sizable numbers in the legislature. Two representative slots requiring a second run-off campaign would thus go a long way in deciding the gubernatorial election. Because of this situation, the Atlas called upon all undecided voters or defectors to return to the party in the pending second election as a matter of principle. Asking, 'what have those, who consider the abolition of Slavery as

³⁰ Boston *Daily Atlas*, Oct. 27, 1842.

³¹ Ibid, Oct. 28, 1842.

paramount to all other subjects, to gain by the predominance of Loco Focoism in Massachusetts?’ the paper went on to point out once again the pro-southern tilt local Democrats seemed to have taken.³² In the end, Whig politicians proved to be more realistic than their most prominent news organ. Realizing perhaps that Marcus Morton represented a far more available option for the governorship than Sewall, who had received less than seven percent of the vote, Whig Legislators crossed lines and voted for the Democratic candidate. In this fashion, Morton was able to win his second election in five years.

The realization that Morton stood apart from the elements of the party that the Atlas railed against, abhorring Southern doctrine and slavery at the same time, represents the most logical explanation for this somewhat surprising endorsement of their most hated rival. While public presentation would not admit the very real differences on the matters of national import that separated the Post group from Morton and the ‘Country’ faction, most political insiders in Massachusetts recognized and acted upon these divisions. Morton would certainly not be a ‘Northern man with Southern principles,’ as Whig organs commonly branded Democrats from their region. Similarly, he would not be led about or directed by the whims of his old law school mate, John C. Calhoun. The political course followed by the Whigs proves that Massachusetts political men realized the distinctions between the Post and Democrat wings of the Democracy. Therefore, while papers like the Atlas could rightly point to attitudes among some prominent Democrats that favored Calhoun and what he had come to represent, the actual political situation of the time period did not allow practical Whig leaders to carry such connections beyond the boundaries of reality.³³

Despite the moderate actions of Whig Legislators, the Whigs’ persistent combination of both Democratic Party wings into one undifferentiated entity would continue until the respective organs of the ‘Country’ and ‘City’ factions made their presidential favorites and corresponding policy differences public. And even when the

³² Ibid, Nov. 23, 1842.

³³ Earle.

Atlas acknowledged distinctions between the Democratic factions, it still followed a similar course. Emphasizing the connection to Calhoun whether by a direct endorsement, such as the Post would make, or simply through the indirect means of party affiliation, the Whigs continued to berate potential Democratic voters with the calculus that said a vote for any non-Whig candidate would merely serve to ‘lessen the number of real liberty men in Congress, and strengthen the ranks of the slaveholders, the advocates of gag-laws, of Southern demagogues, and Northern dough-faces.’ Liberty Party votes or those given to Democrats would amount to political suicide for those who favored the doctrines of Abolition. Only by voting for the regular Whig representative, it was claimed, would ‘men who [were] Northern in their feelings as well as in their abode, who will not sacrifice the interests of their constituents to sectional cupidity or to party ends,’ be able to serve the interests of New England.³⁴

While continuing to present all Democrats as enemies of regional concerns, the Whig Atlas indeed came around to promoting the division between Democratic Party wings in Massachusetts as the next presidential canvass approached. In the months preceding the election for the Massachusetts Legislature, the Atlas chose no longer to ignore the Democratic divisions over potential candidates and platforms in the next presidential canvass. Thus by the summer of 1843, the Whig organ pointed out that while the two primary Democratic papers in Boston had not yet formally announced their favored candidates, it had become evident that the Bay State Democrat was to become the Van Buren organ and the Boston Morning Post to favor Calhoun. At this early date, the differences between the two were downplayed somewhat for political party purposes and it was averred that a vote for either man would serve to imperil the tariff laws needed by Massachusetts industry. ‘If the Whigs of the vacant districts are ready to sell themselves to Calhoun or Van Buren--if they are prepared to adopt, as the policy of the country, all the views entertained by either of those two individuals--if they are willing to abandon the principle of protection of our own labor, at the very moment we have achieved that protection, and are beginning to realize its blessings--they have but to go out, on Monday next, and assist in electing the Locofoco candidates, or to stay at home

³⁴ Boston *Daily Atlas*, May 20, 1843.

and permit them to be elected without their assistance.’³⁵

This statement is important as it shows that despite their policy over the past two years of equating all local Democratic support to votes for Calhoun and his ‘southern program,’ by the spring of 1843 the Atlas’ editors thought it time to admit the fact that Massachusetts Democracy was not a uniform entity. For the first time since Van Buren’s electoral loss, it was acknowledged that the previous scorn heaped upon Massachusetts Democrats for favoring policies that were rabidly against the interests of New England had to be restricted to those who supported Calhoun. Though, because of his past course of action, particularly during the Nullification Crisis, and his current clamoring for the rights of southern interests, Calhoun was seen as the easiest target for Northern Whigs to level their venom toward, the position of the Bay State faction no longer allowed for the easy equation of Democracy with South Carolina politics. On the eve of an important election, it is likely that the editors of the Atlas realized that their time honored approach of denouncing the Democrats as Calhounites to a man, in hopes of promoting their own Whig political program, stood a reduced chance of success. Since the relative disunity of the Democracy was no longer largely hidden from the public, the Atlas was most likely forced to refer to the fact that those in possession of the party’s apparatus and power were in fact Van Buren men, not as easily connected to such allegedly abhorrent ideas as the Gag Rule and extreme state rights.

At the same time, by attempting to conflate the policy of all Democrats with the line followed by Calhoun as the most extreme anti-tariff politician of the last two decades, the paper had chosen to maintain some measure of obfuscation, for it continued attempting to tie all local Democrats to the same whipping post. Such an approach was deemed likely to garner votes in manufacturing-interested Massachusetts, ignoring the over-simplification of Democratic divisions that had been insisted upon since the election of 1840, yet still acknowledging that the party in Massachusetts could no longer be treated as a monolithic entity. In the months to come, the Whig papers would not be the main sources pointing to the differences between the members of the ‘City’ faction and

³⁵ Ibid, May 31, 1843.

their 'Country' rivals. That recognition seemed to be better left to the Democratic organs themselves, which were about to embark upon a major battle, in which they thought supremacy within the party was at stake.

The untimely death of President Harrison in April, 1841 brought matters of national significance to the forefront of Massachusetts politics. These issues would involve the leaders of the Post faction in a political battle that found them seeking to regain their former stranglehold on Democratic Party control. During this process, involvement with Calhoun as their national leader remained at the heart of the clique's approach. Calhoun's coming union with the nominally Whig administration of President John Tyler came to be a major bone of contention between the two factions in Massachusetts. The threatened formation of a new party, based on the union of Calhoun, Tyler and the various associates of each man, served to throw the Massachusetts Democracy in disarray. Those who were constant supporters of Van Buren would have no trouble denouncing the South Carolina senator as a traitor to his party's interests during this process. Repulsed by his actions, the Bay State Democrat repeatedly denounced the Carolinian as he prepared to canvass for the Democratic nomination in 1844. At the same time, the leaders of the Post clique were not only more willing and able to accept the assistance that Tyler's actions brought to their desired political program, but were prepared to go a step further. Viewing the example of Calhoun's eventual movement into Tyler's Cabinet as secretary of state, as instructive for their own potential strategy to regain prominence within Democratic ranks, the leading members of the group sought to follow his lead. Their approach brought about David Henshaw's attempt to assert his former hold on Massachusetts Democratic Party control by ascending to the National Cabinet. In turn, other members of the Post group positioned themselves for various offices within the city and state, in hopes of grasping the patronage that had most recently belonged to the 'Country' faction and since had been assumed by local Whigs.

The ascendance of John Tyler to the presidency upon the death of William Henry Harrison had great political ramifications for the Democratic Party in Massachusetts.

The implication of these changes, however, was initially somewhat difficult to predict. Tyler had originally been a Jackson Democrat. He had left the party at the height of the Nullification Crisis, largely in opposition to the President's Force Bill. As an ardent supporter of state rights, Tyler was closer in sentiment to the ideological platform of the Democrats than to the Whig Party. Not much deliberation seems to have gone into Tyler's selection as Harrison's vice-presidential candidate; it would appear that the popular Whig campaign slogan 'Tippecanoe and Tyler Too,' well represented the role intended for the Virginian in the coming administration. The new president's views on the most important policy questions of the day were given little consideration. Thus upon his becoming president, it is not terribly surprising that this opponent of greater federal powers would veto two National Bank Bills. It would appear on the surface that Tyler was a Democrat in all but name.³⁶ Indeed as Chief Executive, he became a President without a party. His entire cabinet resigned, with Daniel Webster holding out longest as secretary of state merely in hopes of negotiating a satisfactory settlement on the Maine boundary dispute with Great Britain.

Due to the radically changing nature of his administration, his well-known appreciation for state rights and Democratic platform measures, as well as his rapidly developing affiliation with Calhoun, the leaders of the Post faction began to waver on their early opposition to Tyler's administration. On the one hand, the president was a Whig, and thus in the highly polarized political climate of the time, beyond endorsement. For a true Democrat to offer support of any nature to a Whig president, especially in the aftermath of the heated and slanderous campaign of 1840, was tantamount to treason. On the other hand, Tyler's strong stance against the Bank of the United States, in tandem with his sentiments against protective tariffs, endeared his policies to most Massachusetts Democrats.

While both organs in Boston began hedging their criticism of the president in the aftermath of his recent actions, it was the Post that more readily offered its support to Tyler from the time he began publicly abandoning Whig political ideals. That is not to

³⁶ Dan Monroe. *The Republican Vision of John Tyler* (College Station, TX. 2003), pg. 47-77.

say that the paper immediately became an outright supporter of his administration. Even while the editors acknowledged its points of accord with their own views, the Post's obvious interest in remaining Democratic in name as well as deed would never allow for an outright endorsement of a Whig president. In the immediate aftermath of both Bank vetoes, the paper endorsed John Tyler's actions as manly and in the best interests of the country as a whole. In doing so, they him offered unwonted praise. Tyler's vetoes, said the Post, were important for saving the country from the 'curse of another National Bank.' Despite their majority in Congress, national Whigs would be unable to override either veto and thus stood powerless to reestablish the Bank of the United States despite their boasts in the aftermath of the previous autumn's contest.

Because of his actions in standing above the course prescribed by the Whig legislative leadership, Tyler deserved the thanks of his countrymen. 'For his firm adherence to his often expressed principles,' principles that the Post increasingly noted were significantly different from those that constituted the major tenets of the Whig Party, 'for his noble disregard of the whole tribe of trading politicians and stock-jobbing harpies,' Tyler had proven himself a commendable statesman. 'In vetoing the Bank Bills,' the editor concluded, 'John Tyler rose above party, and looked to the welfare of the nation.'³⁷ The actions of Tyler in dispatching both bank measures was enough for a Boston Democratic Meeting, in September, 1841, under the influence of the 'City' faction's leadership, to pass a resolution formally endorsing the merit of his political activities.³⁸

Yet, despite the commendable nature of his policy toward the B.U.S., the clique was unable to give uniform praise to the president. Although they exulted in the tumult his vetoes had caused in the Whig Party, reporting comically on the lamentations of that ostensibly downtrodden political group, the Post faction and its affiliates held back their most extreme praise due to his nominal presence in the Whig Party. Additionally, although he had vetoed two proposed United States Banks, the *Virginian* was known to

³⁷ *Boston Morning Post*, Sep. 16, 1841.

³⁸ *Ibid*, Oct. 2, 1841.

endorse financial institutions that, while not national in nature, still represented larger scale banking than the Post had recently supported. The same Boston Democratic Meeting that endorsed resolutions commending Tyler's recent vetoes also passed a resolution of criticism for the Executive. Despite his consecutive rejection of National Banks, Tyler's having assented to a repeal of Van Buren's hard-won Sub-treasury was formally disapproved by this gathering. The disappointment over this later political act, in the words of the meeting, was as 'equally strong and heart-felt' as the glee with which these same men greeted his National Bank vetoes. Based largely upon their ideological affinity with John C. Calhoun, the meeting called the Land Distribution Bill 'unjust and unconstitutional.' To their mind, the bill had deprived the National Government of 'its most important source of revenue,' forcing it to 'burden the people with heavy taxes to supply the consequent deficiency.' As an utterly iniquitous measure, the Distribution Bill was to be resisted with all of the strength the Democratic Party could muster. To those attending this meeting and no doubt to the Post clique in general, a president who could sign such a proposition into law, did not properly represent their principles in the manner of a true Democratic politician. As such, Tyler's purportedly correct actions were tempered by his equally prominent failures.³⁹

While admitting his faults, however, the Post claimed Tyler to be a Democrat at heart. Imperfect though he was, such warts were inevitable for any man who had associated with Whigs as his closest political confidantes over the past decade. Any Whig claims that Tyler was suddenly an apostate to their party were simply untrue, opined the Post. His ideological commitments on all important matters, most especially banking and consolidated government, were well-known. As their party had nominated Tyler merely in hopes of drawing electoral strength in the form of southern and state rights Democratic apostates to their ticket, Whig leaders should not have been surprised or outraged by the president's simply following his true political beliefs. Mr. Tyler, the paper said, was a man 'known to be anti-bank, anti-tariff, a strict constructionist.' Indeed it was further stated that, 'had Mr. Tyler not been known to entertain the opinions he did, he would not have been nominated, for he would not have served the purpose of

³⁹ Boston *Morning Post*, Oct. 2, 1841; Barnstable (MA) *Patriot*, Sep. 22, 1841.

the party at that time.’ Tyler’s recent actions, in spite of their imperfection in the minds of true Democrats, the Morning Post claimed, should be hailed by men of both parties. They had marked him an honest man, ‘refusing to belie in office what he had professed at the hustings.’ It was the mistaken nomination procedures of the Whig Party that had caused their newfound political disappointment. The Post continued by stating that Tyler should be publicly proclaimed for what he was: a Democrat, with democratic principles. He was a man who, despite his need for a bit of ideological tinkering, stood apart completely from benighted Whigs and served the best interests of the country. The paper hoped that with time Tyler’s Whig-oriented sentiments could be moderated or completely reformed. His background as an adherent of the tenets of democracy was well-known and provided a solid foundation for Tyler’s future political education and formal entry into the actual Democratic Party at a not too distant date.⁴⁰

Though never able completely to approve the course followed by the Tyler administration, the Post faction continually offered praise for the republican and statesman-like course followed by the president. In so doing, they hinted at a desire to dispel the elements of disapproval from other Democrats over his policies. Pointing to the unexpected course his administration had taken, the Post hoped to quiet criticism of the president from those outside its faction, most notably the Bay State Democrat group. By the end of Tyler’s term in office, the paper could note the relatively universal support for the administration’s policies from Democratic organs throughout the country. It hoped ‘that his services to the cause of democracy [would] henceforth be universally acknowledged by the democratic press,’ upon the announcement of his withdrawal from the presidential campaign in August, 1844. Hoping to dispel the critiques levied against them as having abandoned Democratic principles in their cautious endorsement of Tyler, which had come largely through their interest in Calhoun’s fortunes, the clique manifested the differing levels of approval with the administration that existed between itself and its Democratic rivals in Massachusetts.⁴¹

⁴⁰ Boston *Morning Post*, Oct. 9, 1841.

⁴¹ Ibid, Aug. 28, 1844.

At the same time that the Post clique was increasingly likely to defend Tyler from the denunciations of those within his own party by early 1842, there was still little impetus to cast their fate with the oft-maligned president. Despite rumblings and aborted attempts to organize a party behind Tyler, such a movement never gained much strength in Massachusetts.⁴² It is evident that the fact such a party was likely to have drawn affiliates from the Democracy would not have allowed the Post faction to offer support to this or any similar political organization. This stance was made easier by the knowledge that Tyler still remained distinctly separate from the clique on matters of extreme importance to their overall political ideological underpinnings.⁴³ Perhaps because of the intransigence of his seeming natural allies in Massachusetts about helping to organize a presidential party, close associates of President Tyler approached the proprietors of the Bay State Democrat to attempt to work out a deal during President Tyler's visit to Boston in the summer of 1842. These agents of the president, as Marcus Morton later reported, hoped to buy out the obvious Van Buren interests of a paper now struggling without the assistance of Custom House patronage in order to transform it into a newsheet that proclaimed the interests of Tyler. Despite the financial difficulties of the Bay State, its owners rejected such an offer and continued their endorsement of Van Buren.⁴⁴ Such an attempted buyout was unrelated to the degree to which Democrat faction members were affiliated with Tyler's ideals. Instead, the fact that the Post was far more successful financially led to the Tyler agents' seeking out the Democrat as a source for presenting their political point of view.

Despite the obvious affinities shared by the Post clique and President Tyler, it became obvious that no direct union between the paper and the Administration was advisable at any juncture. There are several key reasons for this fact. First and most important, the Post clique had pledged their absolute support to John C. Calhoun in the two years since the election of 1840. This political favoritism, having existed for over a decade, excluding the intervening period of Calhoun's separation from the party, was not likely to be sacrificed for outright support of Tyler. Secondly, despite the movement of

⁴² Worcester *Palladium*, Feb. 9, 1842.

⁴³ Ibid, Feb. 23, 1842; Boston *Morning Post*, Oct. 9, 1841.

⁴⁴ Boston *Bay State Democrat*, Jan. 2, Mar. 25, 1844.

Calhoun to the Tyler sphere during the time period in question, such a political evolution did not preclude his desire to run for the presidency in 1844. Quite to the contrary, both Calhoun and the leaders of the Post clique saw their potential appointment to Tyler's Cabinet as well as the various patronage posts his influence could provide, as a means to reassert some semblance of influence or even control over the respective national and state Democratic Parties. Becoming secretary of state in an administration that was only nominally Whig did not bar Calhoun from candidacy for the Democratic nomination. Likewise, ascending to secretary of the navy as he would in the later years of the Tyler administration, did not bar David Henshaw from the Democratic Party. While each man would be pledged to the national government as high ranking members of it, neither they nor their fellows saw such a move as limiting their affiliation with the party. At the same time, public endorsement of Tyler above all others, would eliminate any argument that the clique remained beyond his sphere of influence, thereby limiting their ability to offer the utmost support to Calhoun's hopes. Third, the Post, unlike the Democrat which would cease to exist by the end of 1844, had no financial concerns. Their relatively recent union with Benjamin Hallett had helped increase subscription rates.⁴⁵ In contrast to the struggling Democrat, a paper that even with Custom House patronage could never gain much influence in Post-dominated Boston, the clique's news organ had become the most widely distributed Democratic paper in New England. The owners of the Morning Post needed no monetary assistance from the president or his supporters. Finally, the leaders of the clique, having struggled so hard against attacks coming first from Hallett's Advocate and then from the Bay State Democrat, impugning their support for democratic principles, could little afford to muddy their connection to the party further. Already seen by most Democrats outside Boston as the organ of conservative men who did not agree with the main tenets of party doctrine, the paper had struggled for years to change public perception of its Democratic credentials. Formally endorsing a Whig president, no matter how tenuous his connection to that party, was simply not a feasible approach for the Post to follow.

For its part, the decision of the Democrat leaders not to entertain thoughts of a

⁴⁵ Darling, pg. 220.

merger with Tyler elements in the city was portrayed years later as one that had not been difficult to make. Despite the paper's demise by the end of 1844, men such as Bancroft, Morton and Josselyn stated that their dislike of the Whig president together with their support for Van Buren in the election to come, would never have allowed for any merger with the administration to take place. Considering the quick demise of their organ, this expressed revulsion at the proposed union seems to have been accurate. As events later proved, no matter how much the Bay State men approved of the course followed by Tyler, insofar as it was contrary to the hopes of their greatest Whig enemies, the Democrat would never form any sort of affiliation with the administrative party. Unlike the leadership of the Post, the 'Country' faction's strong connection to Van Buren and their undying hopes for his coming candidacy caused them to distance themselves further from Tyler's administration.⁴⁶

At the same time, with Calhoun soon to join the ranks of the administration in its most influential and important Cabinet post, the Morning Post had no such debate over endorsement of and eventual connection with the president. This association, however, was always to be through the medium of Tyler's new secretary of state. Though they supported many of the President's actions, it was the presence of Calhoun as a guiding force of administrative foreign policy that helped bring the Post faction closer to Tyler's supporters. They would never join the ranks of those calling for the formation of a new party with John Tyler as its champion. The Post clique hoped throughout this time period to maintain Calhoun as their leader. Viewing his political maneuverings as those of a disinterested statesman, doing what was best for the country despite elements of criticism from members of his own party, the paper upheld the Carolinian as its exemplar in a manner that it did not follow with Tyler. Thus while the Post became a de facto Tyler paper in Boston, this affiliation was done merely out of a desire to maintain the new secretary of state as the faction's idol.

In the years to come, having gained inside knowledge of the political machinations of the fledgling Tyler party through his associates' attempted purchase of

⁴⁶ Boston *Bay State Democrat*, Feb. 12, Mar. 25, 1844,

their paper's interests, the Democrat repeatedly maligned their rivals at the Post as having been unable to withstand similar overtures for support. When the latter paper began to offer more overt assistance to the president, with its leaders aping Calhoun's approach to capture administrative patronage and power, the Democrat had ample rhetorical ammunition to marshal against its Democratic rivals. Their criticisms, however, largely overlooked the simple fact that the Post's actions did not constitute an abandonment of former principles. The faction's leadership were merely maintaining their long-standing course of strengthening the position of Calhoun as a national candidate for the Democratic presidential nomination along with their own interests in local affairs.⁴⁷

The close ties between the Post group and Calhoun, however, did not preclude the former from endeavoring to establish a more direct political association with Tyler. In fact, their esteem for Calhoun and his policies may have helped to facilitate the movement of the clique toward the president's inner circles. In June, 1842 Tyler visited Boston on a northern tour, hoping to gain some basis of support for his political future. This was the same trip that saw the president and his representatives approach the Bay State Democrat faction, hoping to buy out its interest in the paper to promote his own policies. While that attempt failed, on other fronts it appears Tyler was more successful. During his visit, the president was said to have paid several visits to Henshaw. On one occasion a party was thrown by Henshaw's associates, where the president and his closest attendants were the guests of honor. The same gathering included invitations to influential Democrats. Those affiliated with the 'Country' faction were loath to attend, according to the Bay State Democrat. This course of action marked them as distinct from their 'City' rivals. As a Democrat out of office, Henshaw's interaction with the Whig president appeared suspicious on the surface to his political rivals. Similarly damning in the eyes of those associated with Van Buren's interests, had been the visit of Charles G. Greene to Washington, along with other members of the clique, earlier in the spring. Rivals' allegations made against the Post duo, proved to be prophetic in light of developments that came about in the not too distant future. Such actions seemed to indicate that the Post group had designs to propel themselves into Tyler's

⁴⁷ Ibid, Mar. 29, 1843; Morton, 23 Jan. 1846, to John Fairfield, *Marcus Morton Letterbooks*, MHS.

administration.⁴⁸

In fact, the disarray that plagued the administration in Washington presented ample opportunities for personal advancement to members of the Post group, most especially David Henshaw. His positioning for office, however, would not have been possible without the endorsement of Calhoun, who was at the same time becoming more closely allied to the Chief Executive. Knowing that various administrative posts were in flux due to the reshuffling of the Cabinet, Henshaw rightly saw an opportunity to gain a position of prominence. It is to be remembered that his initial desire in the immediate aftermath of Jackson's election was to gain the post of secretary of the navy, usually reserved for a New Englander. At this time, with his political patron once again possessing a great deal of control in another administration, it is quite likely that Henshaw's old ambitions were rekindled. Without the influence of Calhoun, however, it was improbable that such a move would have been contemplated. The assertions of the Democrat faction that Henshaw was once again revealing himself to be an unprincipled political opportunist, while displaying little decorum in the process, overlooks the important reasons behind his having adopted such ambitions.⁴⁹

Regardless of its origin, Henshaw's impending union with the Tyler administration set in motion a public war of words between the two factions of Massachusetts' Democracy that threatened the dissolution of the entire local party organization. Appalled by the idea that a leader of the state's organization would contemplate union with a Whig administration, the Bay State Democrat issued denunciations against Henshaw, the likes of which had been previously unseen. The ultimate fears of the 'Country' group were two-fold. Their main concern was that in finagling a Cabinet post, Henshaw would be able to regain for the Post clique much of the power and political momentum that it had previously lost over the past decade. In hopes of reversing their fortunes, Henshaw and his followers had elected to ally themselves with the failing Tyler administration. By undertaking this union, they

⁴⁸ Boston *Bay State Democrat*, Jul. 24, 1843.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

sought to gain hold of the powerful patronage offices lost as a result of Van Buren's ascendance within Jackson's administration, while splitting the Democracy in hopes of limiting the influence of their intra-party opponents. In that manner, the clique could return to their alleged policy of keeping party membership small. Once they had control of either the Democratic Party or a newly organized pro-Tyler political faction, with access to offices ensured, the group would care little for the overall success of such an organization within their state. Following their proven tactic of seizing political control while driving fellow party members out, acting as 'schismatic Democrats,' the clique hoped to become dominant in the affairs of Massachusetts Democracy once again.⁵⁰ The Democrat sought to present this version of affairs to the Democratic reading public. Their ultimate hope was that repeating such charges would help speed the ejection of Henshaw and his minions from the Democracy once and for all.

The fall of 1842, however, was no time for outright animus between the two important factions of Massachusetts Democracy. There was still an election for governor, in which their candidate had one of his precious few chances for success. During this time period, the obvious rift which had begun to become public between the 'City' and 'Country' factions was toned down as both sides hoped for a Morton victory to assist the overall position of their party within the state. Despite the strong relationship between Calhoun and the Post faction and its inherent implications, the Democrat group kept quiet on this pending issue. Both groups worked in tandem to help wage Morton's campaign on behalf of Massachusetts Democracy. Bancroft, despite no longer having access to the financial power or prestige associated with the Custom House, still largely controlled organizational affairs in Massachusetts. As such, he was directly involved in dispatching Democratic speakers to different meetings and local conventions throughout the State. At the same time, the Post group utilized their continued influence in Boston and surrounding areas in attempting to marshal support for Morton's candidacy. Thus the pattern of 'Country' faction activity in the interior and southeastern parts of the state and 'City' group efforts in the capital was once again utilized to help attain maximum Democratic gain. Such an effort allowed the groups to work in geographically separate

⁵⁰ Ibid, Jun. 23, 1843.

regions of Massachusetts to help bring about the same goal: Morton's electoral triumph.⁵¹

At the same time that it was coordinating campaign activities with its rival faction, the Post clique continued its self-presentation as a purely Democratic entity despite its burgeoning alliance with the administration. In so doing, they offered further criticism of the national Whig Party for the recent shortcomings of the Congress it controlled. Interestingly enough, however, these pronouncements usually stopped short of directly blaming President Tyler. In keeping with their posture as true Democrats, the Post faction was never hesitant about implicating some of the president's actions in the generally negative impact Whig Congressional policies had upon American society. Focusing its attention on the Distribution Act, approved by a Whig-dominated Congress and signed to law by the president, the Post noted the obvious flaws of such a bill. This legislative action, it was said, '[made] the independent states of this Union complete subjects of the general government.' In addition, the legislative members of the party had passed two bills to establish a national bank.

During the fall electoral campaign, the praise the Post had previously lavished on the president's vetoes was predictably muted, in the hope of ensuring Democratic harmony against all Whig elements. National Whig measures to force redistricting in various states for partisan purposes, allegedly promoting regions that tended to favor their party's candidates, were also criticized. Such a charge became more important since a Massachusetts redistricting measure was one of the main points of contention between the parties in this gubernatorial campaign. Additionally, the Post charged that, in contrast to their campaign promises to bring about better economic times, to increase wages and lower taxes, the Whigs had done the opposite. Though it had absolved Tyler from blame on these and other issues in the past, such qualifying terms were not to be found in the fall of 1842, further offering proof of the Post's overall desire to dispel any rumblings from outside their faction questioning their actual Democratic merits. Such campaign rhetoric was aimed at rousing Massachusetts Democrats, and emphasizing the flaws of Whig rule in general as policies for their fellow party members

⁵¹ Darling, pg. 285-87.

to fight against. Mentioning neither Tyler's strengths nor his flaws was deemed appropriate under the calculus that dominated such a campaign. This deliberate disregard of the president's own role on the part of the paper was made doubly important when considering the charges of alliance with him that were known to have sprouted in the past several months, along with the clique's very real shared interests with Tyler's newest advisor, Calhoun.⁵²

The Post faction would carry their cries for Democratic unity to an extent almost ludicrously extreme during the extended period that constituted the fall 1842 campaign. With the original deadlocked situation of the 1842 gubernatorial election, neither the Whig nor Democratic candidate having been able to obtain a majority largely due to the involvement of the Liberty Party, the Post found it appropriate to deny its obviously partisan interests in the coming presidential contest. Though all knowledgeable politically-minded men in Boston knew that the clique had favored Calhoun's political success since its earliest days, the paper chose to downplay those attachments during this time period. Calling themselves future supporters of whichever Democrat was able to secure the popular nomination, the Post faction disavowed any direct interest in Calhoun's candidacy. Such claims came at a time when Van Buren Democrats were speculating that the Carolinian would not pledge himself to any man chosen by a national Democratic Convention, unless he was its candidate. There were claims that Calhoun, if he were unable to gain the Democratic nomination, would enter the lists of presidential hopefuls as an independent or 'Tyler Party' man. The Post denied the merits of such speculation, while insisting that it had no strong opinions in favor of either Calhoun, Van Buren or whoever else might attain the party's confidence, so long as that man were a true Democrat.⁵³ This type of sentiment would be issued repeatedly in many editorial pieces that appeared in the paper over the coming months.⁵⁴

It seems as if the Post continued to present itself as a neutral Democratic sheet

⁵² Boston *Morning Post*, Oct. 26, 1842.

⁵³ *Ibid*, Nov. 22, 1842.

⁵⁴ Similar sentiments were echoed repeatedly in the columns of the paper from November 1842 through 1843.

regarding the pending presidential nomination campaign for much of the period after Morton's victory as well. Indeed, in the early months of 1843 local newspapers charged the Post with duplicity in hiding its well-known preference for Calhoun and thus appealing to the public as a Van Buren paper of sorts. Brownson was known to have divulged to an associate that the clique's master plan regarding the coming presidential election was to keep up a front of support for Van Buren, while actually promoting the interests of Calhoun behind the scenes. The ultimate intention of this alleged scheme was to succeed in having several of their own affiliates named as delegates to the National Democratic Convention by pretending to be open to the interests of Van Buren. If the Post were able to remain publicly neutral or even to favor Van Buren, this task would be easier to accomplish. Once at the National Convention, these Post associates were supposedly to declare themselves in favor of Calhoun. Enemies of the Post complained that such duplicity would undermine the will of the Massachusetts Democracy. Whatever the truth behind such allegations, the Post's friends were widely known to be die-hard supporters of Calhoun. While they may have been able successfully to deceive the less informed public on the matter of neutrality for a future Democratic candidate, their maneuverings did little to fool the leaders of the 'Country' faction, or most Whigs for that matter.⁵⁵ But, with subsequent events leading to a more public affiliation of the clique with both Calhoun and Tyler, this alleged plan of obfuscation was rendered untenable.

Even before the Post group's public commitment to Tyler's administration, the 'Country' leaders were sure of the counterfeit nature of that faction's alleged neutrality and were well aware of the pending union among Henshaw, Calhoun, and Tyler. This knowledge led to a great deal of concern on the part of the 'Country' faction's leaders. While awaiting his fate in the extended electoral campaign of 1841-42, Marcus Morton speculated on what might be his initial days of administration during a second term as governor. Writing to George Bancroft in January 1842, he asked which Democrats he should consult on the important affairs related to his nascent regime. As a leader of the party, Morton realized that Henshaw normally would deserve some measure of input on

⁵⁵ *Boston Daily Atlas*, Jul. 20, 1843.

how the state's gubernatorial policy should unfold. In the past, Morton indicated he would not have hesitated in at least extending a courtesy gesture toward the former collector, in spite of their well-known ideological differences. Circumstances had changed, however. Beyond the divisions between the factions that had been expanding for some time, Morton noted, the loyalties of Henshaw and his group were now extremely questionable. Intimating the lack of assurance he had in the leaders of the Post group as actual Democrats, presumably because of their wary flirtation with the Tyler administration, the candidate for governor informed Bancroft of his intention not to contact Henshaw at all on future state political matters.⁵⁶

Although Morton did intend to consult Benjamin F. Hallett, the man directly mentioned as a possible recipient of Tyler's and Calhoun's patronage during the past summer, this differentiation with regard to the men from the Post clique can be easily explained. Rumored to be heavily involved with the 'Tyler conspiracy,' as Morton would later dub the political maneuverings to come, Hallett was nevertheless not as steeped in sentiment for Calhoun as his various associates at the Post.⁵⁷ Hallett was a recent addition to their faction, and his ideology had always been closer to that of the Bay State men. Earlier, the differences over the important tenets of democracy kept him away from the Post clique. In fact, these differences had made the Post group and Hallett's friends at the Advocate heated enemies. Now, even though he was a member of their group, many believed Hallett's connection to have been driven largely out of financial interests. In a word, he had joined this faction in order to save his newspaper interests along with his position as a leading voice in Democratic affairs in Massachusetts. Hallett's union with the Post faction, it was assumed, had nothing to do with any deeply felt belief in the political merits of John C. Calhoun, or a desire to fight for his ideological tenets. As such a questionable member of the Post's Democratic circle, Hallett was seen as much less of a threat than Henshaw or any of the hard-core Post clique leaders. Though he may have been a disreputable 'soldier of fortune,' Hallett was not a fanatical Calhounite Democrat and therefore not as worrisome an

⁵⁶ Morton, 15 Jan. 1842, to Bancroft, *Bancroft Papers*, MHS.

⁵⁷ Morton, 23 Feb. 1846, to John Fairfield, *Morton Letterbooks*, MHS.

allegedly as Henshaw, Greene or their ilk.⁵⁸

Calhoun's influence upon President Tyler became evident by this time period and in turn influenced Massachusetts political affairs. In Boston, effects of the senator's role as political counselor were to be seen in the removal of Levi Lincoln as port collector. Having been allowed a mere fourteen months on the job, the staunch Whig and former governor Lincoln was replaced by Calhoun man, Lemuel Williams. Though never prominent in the inner ranks of the Post faction, Williams had been one of the original Democrats of Massachusetts. Brought into the party's ranks due to his affinity for both the person and ideals of Calhoun in the late 1820's, Williams was one of the few former Federalists who had been allowed to remain in association with Henshaw's group and thus had maintained his status as a Democrat. Williams' initial involvement in the Democracy paralleled Henshaw's in a way. At the same time that the latter had famously served in the post Williams was now to occupy from 1829 through 1838, the new Boston collector had been acting in the comparable office in New Bedford. Williams' term in that position lasted from 1829 through 1837. The public careers of each man had apparently suffered somewhat upon the ascendance of Van Buren as the leader of the national Democratic Party. With the increased influence of Calhoun, with whom he like Morton had been a student at Litchfield Law School, Williams once again found himself in a favorable patronage position.⁵⁹ While his tenure in office as collector would be relatively short, Williams continued as a valuable informant to Calhoun of the progress of political affairs in Boston during the latter's attempt to gain the presidency. Perhaps because of his less visible status in the Post clique, the new collector's appointment caused little stir either in Whig papers or with the Bay State Democrat. It did of course illustrate that the flux of affairs in Washington, coupled with Calhoun's increased role in the Tyler administration, had already begun to take effect on party affairs in Massachusetts. Despite the mutual truce that had developed between the Democrat and Post factions, after the latter group's threatened affiliation with Tyler became a reality, this appointment served as the warning that a full-fledged grasp at

⁵⁸ Morton, 15 Jan. 1842, to Bancroft, *Bancroft Papers*, MHS.

⁵⁹ Lemuel Williams, 15 Sep. 1843, to John C. Calhoun, *Papers of Calhoun*, vol XVII, pg. 448-449.

power by the clique was in the offing.

Rumors regarding the future appointment process were quick to follow Williams' installation into office. In August, a mere two months following Lincoln's removal from the collectorship, word got around in Democratic circles that B.F. Hallett was the favored candidate of the Post clique. It was unclear whether or not the current collector would step down in favor of the more prominent Post faction member. Though this scenario never came to pass, the worries of those outside the clique's inner circles were evident.⁶⁰ Despite the fact that Hallett, having been raised in the school of equal rights, was seen as a man with truer party principles, his direct involvement with many of the clique's affairs made his alleged candidacy more troubling than was the relatively satisfactory appointment of Lemuel Williams. While it was reasonable to remove Levi Lincoln from the position, given Tyler's break from the Whig Party, replacing him with a 'Loco of the most radical stamp,' as the Atlas had called Hallett, seems to have been an untenable proposition at this time. By the following year, however, with the interests of the Post faction now directly tied to the newly formed Tyler-Calhoun union, a more suitable and higher-ranking member of the group seemed called for to direct the affairs of the Custom House. The new leader would be more responsive to the interests of the group as a whole, and hence more outrageous to the city's Whigs and, more importantly, the neglected members of the Democrat faction.

In preparation for the hoped for reshuffling of the local Democracy resultant from the union with the administration, Henshaw endeavored to visit Calhoun at the nation's capital in the early part of 1843. On this trip he was accompanied by Calhoun's friend, ardent supporter, and intermittent Post contributor, Orestes A. Brownson. Similarly, Charles G. Greene undertook a 'voyage of discovery' to Washington during March and April of 1843. On this visit, the editor of the Morning Post was said to have explored the prospects that a union with the Tyler administration would bring to the clique in Boston as well as the national prospects of Calhoun in the coming presidential

⁶⁰ Darling, pg. 285.

campaign.⁶¹ The details of the various consultations held in Washington during that period are unknown. Based upon events that followed shortly thereafter, however, the import of the consultations can be deduced. Henshaw, considering his opportunities as a result of John C. Calhoun's strong ties to President Tyler, was to resume his career in politics. At this point, however, the former collector's role was to become more national in scope. The first step was to gain selection as the Democratic candidate for one of Massachusetts' seats in the National Congress. A nomination in the Fifth District, dominated by Boston, seemed the most logical place to start. Even with their recent reduction in power, the Post group still had a stranglehold on the Democratic Party in that city. The Whig majority in that part of the state, however, would clearly work against Henshaw's chances for electoral victory. The real emphasis, in such a race, successful or not, was to re-introduce the one-time party leader on the political stage and open the door for his nomination to a more prominent national post. Once again it would appear that Henshaw had his eye on the secretary of the navy post within Tyler's cabinet. With the influence of Calhoun, he hoped to be able to attain the prominent position that had eluded his grasp fifteen years earlier. The ultimate desire of Henshaw as a political operator most likely was that, with the power and patronage that a Cabinet post would present, he would be able to manipulate and control the distribution of local offices in Massachusetts. By that means, the Post clique hoped to regain much of the power it had lost when Van Buren's favorites were allowed to monopolize control of Massachusetts Democracy.⁶²

The leaders of the clique, in the meantime, continued to deny the existence of any pending association with the Tyler administration. While their enthusiasm for Calhoun as a potential presidential candidate was well known, the group and its news organ persisted in presenting themselves as impartial and loyal Democrats. The Post continued to issue statements against the trading away of Democratic interests while at the very same time its rivals argued Henshaw, Brownson, and later Greene, were

⁶¹ D.D. Brodhead, 9 Apr. 1843, to Levi Woodbury, *Woodbury Papers*, LOC; *Boston Bay State Democrat*, Jul. 24, 1843.

⁶² *Boston Atlas*, Jul. 20, 1843; *Boston Bay State Democrat*, Jun. 24, Jul. 6, 24, 1843.

attempting to enhance their own political position.⁶³ Hedging their bets against the potential failure of their scheme to regain control of the party, the clique sought to expand upon its options. If they were to come up short in their hoped-for gains in federal power and patronage, it was quite possible that the group would then be unable to control the nomination of delegates to the National Convention. If that were the case, an attempt to insert Calhoun men in the delegation surreptitiously as neutrals or Van Buren supporters would be necessitated.

On the other hand, even if the manipulations of the clique succeeded as far as its leaders hoped, with Henshaw gaining the nomination as secretary of the navy, Charles G. Greene becoming Postmaster of Boston, and Rantoul or Hallett inheriting Williams' collector post, the clique would potentially still need the support of their fellow Democrats. With power in their hands, Henshaw and his company of 'City' Democrats would probably then wish to attain their old role as leaders of the Democracy, not of any mere splinter group of the party. Though most politically-involved Democrats could rightly guess that the connection the clique had to Calhoun, coupled with his direct role in helping them gain their lucrative and important posts, would inevitably cause the new leaders of Massachusetts Democracy to attempt to force his cause on the other followers of the party, such a conclusion was not foregone. If Van Buren remained the popular choice of Massachusetts voters, a situation beyond the abilities of Post clique manipulation to amend, it was quite possible that the clique would have to swallow the dictates of the popular will. In such a scenario, maintaining an active support of the interests of the national party in an unbiased fashion would potentially save the Post group from having to give up their newly earned positions. Even if Van Buren became president once again, it was hoped by the faction that they would be able to remain in office, as a result of their self-presentation as men wishing only for what was best for the party. Measured by that consideration, the Post's public neutrality made perfect sense, even if the leaders of the Van Buren group knew it to be patently fictitious.⁶⁴

⁶³ *Boston Morning Post*, Jun. 15, Aug. 10, 1843.

⁶⁴ *Boston Bay State Democrat*, Jul. 24, 1843.

This effort remained unlikely to succeed, however. Van Buren knew of the enmity of the Post group toward him. Since he had already been able to remove that faction from control of Massachusetts Democracy during his earlier term as president, there would be little to deter him from doing so again. The former president did not feel that the manipulations of the Post group were likely to succeed. In a letter to Morton he wrote that the worries the latter had about the undue influence of the clique, based mainly upon their impending patronage connections, were unfounded. Since even the public knew of the allegedly unsavory character of this political clique, along with their obvious connections to Calhoun, any proposed hijacking of the nominating convention by David Henshaw and company would never come to pass. In the ex-president's mind, obvious office-seekers would be censured by the public before they were able to bring the influence of their positions to bear. Henshaw as the leader of this faction was the implied candidate of such harsh criticism. The strong language issued against the Morning Post faction's leader, makes it readily apparent that even if his political manipulations were to succeed, Van Buren could never have retained this man in any position of leadership and would have turned over the important offices in Massachusetts to his own followers, taking them away from the clique's directors in Boston.⁶⁵

Van Buren also praised the work of Bancroft in helping to organize resistance to the Post group's schemes to control the selection of delegates to the national convention. Bancroft's stand against allowing county committees to recommend delegates, seen as a potential boon to Calhoun because of his allies' evident ability to control those surrounding Boston, earned Van Buren's commendation. Both men hoped that one general resolution at the state convention would provide the entire slate of delegates to represent the state's Democratic majority, which they were certain favored the New Yorker. Several local conventions would muddy the issue and allow for delegates to proceed to Baltimore able to pledge support for whomever they chose. This latter process, it was assumed, would ensure at least a minority of voices in favor of Calhoun. Van Buren and Bancroft desired to utilize the perceived majority support that the former president possessed to place Massachusetts firmly in his column at the Baltimore

⁶⁵ Martin Van Buren, 1 Jun. 1843, to Morton, *Morton Letterbooks*, MHS.

Convention. Both were worried that the Post group's ability to make endorsements at the county level, would better serve Calhoun's purposes as an allegedly weaker candidate.⁶⁶ This issue once again proved that the leaders of the 'Country' faction along with their presidential candidate, knew of the counterfeit nature of any words from the Post group in support of Van Buren.

At the same time, the 'Country' Party's previously firm grasp upon the Democratic Party was no longer sufficient to ensure outright support for Martin Van Buren as the candidate in the coming election. Calhoun's strength among the Democrats of Boston and surrounding areas was not a marginal interest. Due to the power wielded by the Post clique in that region, along with the influence that Suffolk County's density of population gave it, the advocates of Calhoun at any statewide meeting always had the ability to make themselves heard. The presence of Calhoun's political bloc at a state convention held in Boston during early March, 1843 made his potential competitiveness for Massachusetts Democratic delegates more apparent. At this gathering a resolution calling for an outright avowal of support for Van Buren's candidacy was proposed. Those loyal to Calhoun, however, were able to offer enough resistance to quell any momentum the proposal might have gathered. As a result, no public endorsement of Van Buren was made at that time.

The disunited status of the party in Massachusetts on the matter of the pending nomination was evident to all Democrats and knowledgeable Whigs. While the Post group remained publicly uncommitted, their involvement in national political affairs always began with Calhoun. Political insiders speculated that the clique's great influence within Boston, along with the patronage power brought by their rumored alliance with Tyler's administration, would allow for the Carolinian's name to sweep through the ranks of the party. Even though the majority of Democrats in the state did not favor Calhoun for the nomination, it was worried that the Post group's machinations would allow them to dictate the outcome. The results of this March convention further fueled such concerns among 'Country' Democrats. In this instance, the ability of the

⁶⁶ Van Buren, 29 Mar. 1843, to Bancroft, *Bancroft Papers*, MHS.

Calhoun men to lay the resolutions in favor of Van Buren on the table without committing themselves to their favored candidate worked ‘very much to the discomfiture of the adherents of the Little Magician.’ If the Post group were already able to exert their will despite not having statewide support, Bancroft, Morton and their associates were profoundly concerned about how much more dire the situation would look if and when the rumored patronage available to the Post clique from a union with Tyler became a reality. Despite Martin Van Buren’s reassurance that their rivals would be defeated by a public sentiment that was known to favor his cause, the Democrat men were deeply uneasy about the course of events within their party in Massachusetts.⁶⁷

Morton expressed his great anxiety directly to several associates, most interestingly during the course of his first letter to Calhoun in nearly a decade. Certainly realizing that his words to his former intimate friend were directed at one of the main sources of the problems that beset the party in Massachusetts, Morton alluded to the local factions that had developed and had recently been solidified. ‘It is not to be disguised,’ he wrote, ‘that among our friends, there is a division of opinion in relation to the next Presidential candidate, which notwithstanding all our efforts to preserve union, may have an unfavorable influence.’ Of course, left unsaid is the fact that Morton himself was a firm advocate of Calhoun’s greatest rival. Additionally, Morton was far too diplomatic to state directly that he was one of the leaders of the resistance against Calhoun’s candidacy within Massachusetts. Furthermore, the governor’s previously expressed worries about the implications of an alliance between John Tyler and the Post faction, a contingency whose possibility was greatly enhanced because of Calhoun’s own ties to the president, were left unmentioned.⁶⁸

It is not beyond the realm of possibility that Morton’s letter was meant to stir a measure of guilt in his old friend. Believing that Van Buren had the best chance to succeed as the Democratic presidential candidate, Morton truly thought Calhoun’s endeavors to attain the nation’s highest office worked against the interests of the party.

⁶⁷ Van Buren, 7 Oct. 1843, to Bancroft; Morton, 5 May 1844, to Bancroft, *Bancroft Papers*, MHS.

⁶⁸ Morton, 19 Feb. 1843, to Calhoun, *Papers of Calhoun*, vol. XVI, pg. 680-681.

His strength in Boston, due to the efforts of the Post faction, directly worked to the detriment of the man Morton thought to be the most desirable representative of the Democracy. Though Morton could not have expected to dissuade the ambitious senator from his life-long designs on the presidency, his letter to Calhoun in a very veiled fashion further expressed the great mental anguish that Massachusetts' Van Burenites felt because of the strength of the Carolinian's appeal within the state and the substantial political capital this popularity provided the Post clique.

The political savvy of the Post faction was particularly troubling to their 'Country' rivals when they considered the course Massachusetts Democracy should take. On March 7, 1843, three days after the failed attempt to pass resolutions in favor of Van Buren at the Boston state convention, a correspondent to George Bancroft noted, 'Calhoun and his trading political friends have met with no favor,' among the people. To the writer's mind, 'Van Buren [had] the people, but Calhoun the politicians,' or the men whose careers and wealth depended upon involvement in political affairs. Due to this situation the writer worried that the popular will would be ignored in the coming presidential canvass in Massachusetts. Frustrated that their own hold on the majority of the party's membership was being undermined by the influence allowed to 'office-seeking Tyler-Calhoun people,' the leaders of the Democrat faction sought a defensive strategy. It was hoped that once the nature of the negotiations between Tyler, Calhoun and the Post faction's leaders were made public, all true Massachusetts Democrats would resist and expel the 'City' branch from the party. Aware of Henshaw's maneuvering for the secretary of the navy position, Bancroft and his associates hoped to utilize the announcement of his nomination to turn public sentiment further away from the clique and ultimately to bring about senatorial rejection of the appointment. Because of their belief in Henshaw's unsavory character, reinforced by his current machinations, the 'Country' group would of course be unwilling to offer any public support for the man in his future public endeavors.⁶⁹

It is quite probable that Bancroft and his leading associates among the Bay State

⁶⁹ J.G. Abbott, 7 Mar. 1843, to Bancroft, *Bancroft Papers*, MHS.

Democrat faction, viewed their group as maintaining a firm hold on the sympathies of the Democracy of Massachusetts. Such a grasp would have provided a justification for their resisting Henshaw's designs in all forms. The recent actions of the Democratic state legislators, in one of their conclaves, to recommend Van Buren officially for the presidency offered further indications of 'Country' party control.⁷⁰ Since the Post group had little authority with the members of the party serving in the State House, this group's action was wholly outside their scope of influence. Although the Post faction was able to control party affairs in Boston, operating all meetings and conventions in the city and Suffolk County, the Whig-dominated nature of Boston would not allow for any of their candidates to gain election to the Legislature. At the same time, the comparative strength held by 'Country' party members in outlying and western districts allowed their members to comprise the body of legislative representatives serving the party from those regions. With their higher ranking status, these officials were often allowed a great deal of weight in the state's political matters. Most especially, with their associate Morton back in the governorship, the Democratic political office-holders representing Massachusetts were largely able to maneuver around any desires of the Post group.

As a result of this political reality, the Post faction was left with little say in the important decisions of Massachusetts Democracy. While on occasion the faction was still able to impede the progress of the 'Country' leadership and its legislative allies, most especially in the denial of a state convention vote of support for Van Buren, for the most part it must be noted that Bancroft and his associates had little reason to listen to the appeals of Henshaw and his group of intimate political friends. For that reason the Democrat group felt itself better able to resist the proposals of the Henshaw clique and became much less moderate in their approach toward the clique during this time period. Conversely, the realization of their weakness and the hostility of their intra-party opponents toward their favored programs, most likely helped push the Post faction closer to the Tyler administration. At the very least, it led to their becoming less willing to bow to the dictates of the putative leaders of the Democracy in Massachusetts. The strength of the Democrat faction and the stubborn resistance of the Post group,

⁷⁰ *Boston Bay State Democrat*, Mar. 9, 1843.

compounded with the previously unavailable political options now open to Henshaw's clique, thus compelled the two wings of Massachusetts Democracy to pursue divergent and mutually exclusive paths in the months to come.

The first direct confrontation between the hostile factions came with David Henshaw's decision to run for Congress from his home district of Worcester County. Though Bancroft at first viewed this attempt as the far-fetched design of men 'faithless' to true Democratic interests, he soon determined that Henshaw's surprising level of residual influence made the nomination a true threat to the political monopoly exercised by the 'Country' group in that part of the state. In fact, judging from the ease with which Henshaw was able to attain the nomination at a convention held in Worcester during March, 1843, it would appear that the old Post leader still commanded quite a bit of admiration among his neighbors. Having pondered returning to the political arena for some time, as his attempt at office shortly following his initial retirement in 1839 had proven, Henshaw saw a great opportunity on this occasion. On March 14, Colonel Merrick, a previous favorite for the nomination, withdrew his name from consideration. Shortly thereafter, the Worcester County Committee decided to call an immediate convention for the purpose of finding a suitable candidate for the congressional post. Such a quick turn around raises questions of whether or not Henshaw had a hand in either Merrick's decision or the timing of the convention. Both doubts were raised by the Bay State Democrat in calling Henshaw's nomination a sham procedure. The hastiness with which the meeting was called appears questionable, particularly in light of the previously accepted organizational tactics by the Post group during their earliest days of control of the state's Democracy. Upon the opening of the convention, Richard Dowley, a delegate from Worcester, presented Henshaw's name for the position in the national House of Representatives. Whatever the merits of the convention and regardless of whether his recommendation was made by a small clique of friendly Democrats, Henshaw was able to garner over two-thirds of the delegates' votes. Upon a subsequent motion, the body of Democrats decided to make his nomination unanimous, for the sake of public appearance. From most accounts, it would seem that Henshaw, despite the embarrassment of the Commonwealth Bank failure, his subsequent five-year retirement

and the slanderous recriminations issued against him in the pages of opposing papers, maintained a great deal of clout in the affairs of the party in Massachusetts. Even in 'Country' faction-dominated Worcester County, he was able to attain a spot on the congressional ticket with what would appear to have been relative ease.⁷¹

The Bay State Democrat did not allow its readers to believe that their long time intra-party rival possessed any real power, however. The merit of Henshaw's campaign was vehemently denied both in their columns and in the correspondence of the 'Country' faction's leaders.⁷² Their resistance, most especially that of George Bancroft, can perhaps be further explained by the location of the district in question. Since running for a congressional post in Boston presented an almost impossible challenge for any Democratic candidate, previous attempts in Suffolk County from Post affiliates had been largely ignored. Thus David Henshaw's and John C. Calhoun's plan for the former to endeavor being elected from a district there had earlier been abandoned out of necessity. On this occasion, however, a consequential change from those previous Post efforts presented itself. Henshaw had decided to pursue office from a region of the state in which the party was firmly in the control of the Bay State faction. Even though insiders knew his interests to be markedly different from those of the 'Country' clique, the same could not be said for the mass of Democratic voters. Due to the fact that most Massachusetts Democrats, recognizing Henshaw's name as a long-time leader of their party, would be willing to offer him their votes, Bancroft and his associates decided to denounce his candidacy publicly. The combination of their substantial influence along with a sentiment that Henshaw's decision to run in Worcester County represented the boldest audacity, led the opposing faction to embark upon a campaign that the Post group would somewhat accurately label as slanderous. Their initial gambit was to claim that the allegedly questionable and dubious circumstances surrounding the entire convention in Worcester raised extreme doubts about the fairness of Henshaw's nomination.

In response to the published criticisms of the Democrat, the Post group and its

⁷¹ Boston *Morning Post*, March 31, 1843.

⁷² Boston *Bay State Democrat*, Mar. 23, 25, 27, 1843; Van Buren, 1 Jul. 1843, to Bancroft, *Bancroft Papers*, MHS.

allies vehemently denied any allegations that this convention constituted a gathering packed with men friendly to the interests of its political leader. A printed report by a delegate to the Worcester meeting said,

“Mr. Henshaw is the regularly nominated candidate of the democracy of the fifth district; and the curious in watching political movements, and tracing out the motives from which they spring, cannot but feel amazement at the narrow and unsubstantial ground upon which the [Bay State] democrat rests its assaults upon our convention and its candidate...It is no injustice to pronounce them frivolous in the extreme. They evidently spring from some personal consideration, some ‘ancient grudge,’ or party bickering, which ought never to come in to disturb the public movements of political parties.”

Previously, the faction led by Bancroft and Morton had felt able to dictate to Democrats of the district on matters of policy and candidates, the report alleged. Only their connections and influence had allowed for this situation to last. Now as the regularly nominated Democratic candidate from the district, it was claimed, Henshaw had upset their plans. Since he was not part of their faction, his legitimacy in the canvass was denied. Those who approved of the actions of the convention saw such claims as an insult to their rights as members of the party. ‘We much mistake the character of the democracy of this district,’ a delegate to the convention remarked, ‘if they do not consider themselves above the necessity of any guardianship, whether it is presented in the shape of a newspaper in Boston, or a senator in Norfolk.’ To this constituent’s mind, ‘the convention that put him in nomination was in no sense a packed convention. All its proceedings were frank and open.’ Henshaw’s opinion of the affair was unknown to both the delegates and his friends, claimed the Post. ‘So far from any collusion with Mr. Henshaw, we do not believe there was a single member of the convention who knew when the nomination was made, whether he would accept it or not.’ Henshaw was selected by men who ‘admired his eminent abilities and chose to avail themselves of them as a rallying point of opposition against their federal opponents.’⁷³

Indeed it is quite probable that the claims of the Post and its supporters stating Henshaw’s manifold talents and years of service in the cause of Democracy had helped

⁷³ Boston *Morning Post*, March 31, 1843.

him immeasurably in gaining the nomination held merit. Despite the acrimony heaped upon him by the Democrat faction, David Henshaw's name and example undoubtedly retained a great deal of respect in the minds of many members of the party in Massachusetts. These constituents, it was claimed, 'recognize Mr. Henshaw as a gentleman who for the last few years has resided upon the family estate, quietly putting forth his energies, as occasion required for the diffusion of democratic truth and the success of the democratic cause--ready at any moment, in the great contest of 1840 to advocate in public assemblies all principles which the democracy carried into that campaign, and afterwards to render his valuable aid whenever it was needed in other and minor conflicts, but in no case obtruding himself upon the party or asking any thing at their hands.'⁷⁴ Remaining largely out of the public eye on all party matters, Henshaw had served an honorable retirement. Behind the scenes, however, his influence had continued. So much was his power still evident that the 'Country' group worried about Henshaw's political course throughout these years. There seems to be a good deal of evidence that for the public David Henshaw's image, tarnished following the removal of his name from the party's public lists with his retirement from the collector position and the concomitant Commonwealth Bank fiasco, had undergone some sort of rehabilitation. Five years away from the spotlight had allowed the merits proclaimed in the pages of the Post largely to overshadow the recriminations trumpeted by the 'Country' clique regarding Henshaw's actions and character. That in great measure explains his success in receiving the nomination of a convention in the heart of the Bay State group's area of control. Regardless of the claims both of his allies and of seemingly neutral delegates who had a role in Henshaw's nomination, however, the Democrat faction continued to deny the convention's legitimacy, believing the actions of that gathering to have been the result of an undemocratic manipulation sponsored by the Post and its friends.

The actions taken by the 'Country' clique in response to Henshaw's candidacy represented the culmination of their attempts to gain and maintain party control over the course of the past six years. In one fell swoop, the faction hoped to remove forever any vestiges of power their rivals had preserved in Massachusetts Democracy. By finally

⁷⁴ Ibid.

outing David Henshaw as a politician whose actions had worked to the everlasting detriment of the Democracy, Bancroft and his associates wished to place beyond any reasonable doubt their given right to rule the party. Their faction found the present time propitious for such a maneuver for two important and directly connected reasons. First, on this occasion Henshaw and his Morning Post clique were attempting to expand their influence beyond the confines of Suffolk County, and into 'Country' dominated territory. Making this alleged grasp at power more troubling was the fact they it had been attempted without their having consulted the Democrat group in any way. As such, Henshaw's campaign for a congressional seat represented a newly aggressive bent among the opposing faction, previously willing to subordinate their wishes to those of the party's leaders over the past few years out of hopes for Democratic harmony. This newfound willingness to go outside the structures of state Democratic power, as embodied principally by party organizer Bancroft, was troubling to the Bay State men. Secondly, it was widely believed that such unwonted boldness was a direct indication that the clique was willing to begin a movement to challenge the main circles of authority within the Democracy once again. By breaking in full from the 'Country' interests that formulated the predominant Massachusetts party opinion, the Post group presaged its long-speculated movement toward an open union with the Tyler camp. Marcus Morton and George Bancroft repeatedly worried that such a contingency would spell the doom of their faction's ability to continue in a leadership role in the Democratic Party as a result of the increased ability of Henshaw's group to dispense patronage and the resultant local party influence that such an alliance would bring about. Despite the constant reassurance by Martin Van Buren to the contrary, their concerns were increased by the actions of David Henshaw and his closest associates.

The Democrat group's manifest belief in its ability to take advantage of the apparently impending defection of their most intense rivals depended upon their adopting a proactive course of action against the Post clique. The Bay State Democrat would not stand idly by while Henshaw attempted to grab a congressional seat as a Democratic candidate. In order to reduce his claims of deserving the post, the paper entered upon a massive editorial campaign against the former boss of the state's Democracy. It was

their duty as the true voice of local party affairs in the state, they attested, to point out the flaws in Henshaw's candidacy, and most importantly, his character. Since 'much of the disaster and ill success which [had] attended upon the democratic party in former years, [was] directly attributable to the course of Mr. Henshaw and his friends,' his nomination was one that was likely to damage the party as a whole. From the date that Henshaw had been removed from power forward, it was claimed, the party 'began to gain in numerical strength and public confidence, and since that time, it [had] increased rapidly.' If he were to be allowed once again into the forefront of Democratic affairs, where such a congressional seat would inevitably place him, the lessons of the past would have been largely ignored and the Massachusetts Democracy enchained with the shackles of the Post clique's corrupt influence. Given his lack of popularity among Democrats in Massachusetts, the party was better served by nominating a man less tainted by past failures, the paper stated, in an opinion that was moderate when compared to most of its pronouncements. Such cautious language was far exceeded by the sentiments widespread among the 'Country' clique's leadership that Henshaw was no longer a member of the party at all, whether popular or otherwise.⁷⁵

One real concern of the Democrat group was that Henshaw's candidacy hindered the chances of Democratic success and thereby served as a blight upon a party that otherwise would have a great chance of winning. But even more disconcerting were the implications that a potential victory by the Post clique would have for the party. While the loss of any congressional election had never been a desirable outcome to the leaders of Massachusetts Democracy, at this time the 'Country' group tacitly accepted the previously unspoken desire for a Whig triumph. Because Henshaw's victory would signal success for the Post faction's most prominent leader, a man whose very being seemed to contradict all that Democracy stood for in the opinions of the Democrat group, his candidacy had to be vehemently opposed. If the Post faction were able to regain some of their lost power through means congressional or otherwise, the true interests of Democracy would undoubtedly be sacrificed to their selfish machinations and corrupted ideals. In that case, the lack of success that had dogged the Democrats of Massachusetts

⁷⁵ Boston, *Bay State Democrat*, March 23, 1843.

throughout Henshaw's tenure as Boston Port Collector and actual boss of the party were sure to be revisited. Even if these renewed failures were only one small aspect of the utter ineptitude that had previously inhibited party operations, it constituted a major step back for a political organization that had made great strides and was becoming ever more competitive with the heretofore dominant Whig Party. It was not accidental in the minds of the Bay State leaders that Henshaw's retirement to Leicester had coincided with major increases in the number of Democratic voters throughout the state. Along the same lines, both of Marcus Morton's gubernatorial triumphs had come about at times when Henshaw was not publicly involved in directing the course of the party.⁷⁶

Beyond the current electoral strength of the Democracy, Bancroft and his associates had concerns of a more pressing nature. They were genuinely worried that the newfound influence the Post group had on the dispensation of major federal patronage by President Tyler could ultimately spell doom for their abilities to control the mass of the state's Democrats. In the end, his return to the leadership circle of the party would allow for Henshaw to re-introduce his misguided notions, spitting once again in the face of all true Democrats. Once he was allowed re-entry to the circles of political control, Henshaw would in all likelihood be given a platform from which he could pronounce his ideals, thereby corrupting the party as a whole. He was no true Democrat, it was claimed. Allowing him to represent the party in Washington would permit his malignant doctrines more influence than they deserved. Hence, the interests of Massachusetts Democrats would not be preserved or promoted. It was further alleged that Henshaw's presence in the nation's capital would allow him more direct access to Tyler, Calhoun and the patronage which he sought. For these among other more basic reasons, the Bay State Democrat asserted that Mr. Henshaw was not 'a safe or proper man to represent [the people of Massachusetts] in Congress, or in any other way to be entrusted with their public affairs.' The Democrat further stated of their ultimate rival, 'His notions of democracy, so far as our observation has extended, are not such as would promote the good of the people, or ensure the success of the cause.' Henshaw's ascendance to a congressional seat was seen as one of the worst possible occurrences that

⁷⁶ Ibid, Mar. 25, 1843.

could afflict the party.⁷⁷

As a prelude of the charges to come over the next several months, the Democrat's initial pronouncements against Henshaw brought to the forefront questionable behavior that had previously been only occasionally alluded to. His past ties to banking and corporations, hindrances that stood athwart any potential union of Democratic factions in Massachusetts, were now dredged up as proof of his inability to voice the party's ideals. Henshaw's 'former connection with the Commonwealth Bank,' it was averred, 'involving General Jackson's Government in that most disgraceful connection with the exploded pet banks, [was] not to be forgotten.' Tainting the legacy of Jackson through his direct involvement with the Henshaw clique, the ex-collector was alleged to be one of the few members of the party who could besmirch in any way that beloved political idol. The paper pulled its punches somewhat in acknowledging the manifold talents of Henshaw as a political man, most prominent in his ability to keep at the forefront of a party of which he was a nominal member. Their conclusion in the immediate aftermath of his nomination for the congressional post, was that Henshaw would be an undesirable representative of the party in the nation's capital. As a complete misrepresentation of the very core of Democratic principles, Henshaw should not be allowed to pursue his own wrong-headed and dangerous ideals in Washington or in any other circles where the principles of the party of Jackson were to be endorsed.⁷⁸

At the opposite end of the Massachusetts Democratic Party, Henshaw's nomination was promoted by the Post faction for a variety of reasons. Primarily, it was likely that having been allowed to serve a relatively quiet period in retirement, removed at least publicly from the political fray in which he had been enmeshed for the initial decade of Democratic existence in Massachusetts, Henshaw could now be viewed differently by the voters. Having retired concomitantly with the embarrassment of the Commonwealth Bank's failure, the former collector's image was certainly in need of some sort of rehabilitation. It was hoped by his political allies that by increasing his

⁷⁷ Ibid, Mar. 23, 27, 1843.

⁷⁸ Ibid, Mar. 23, 1843.

affiliation with the ideals of radical democracy, a process that had begun in recent years, Henshaw's former perceived flaws could be largely forgotten. Additionally, as the man most responsible for the initial organization of the party in Boston, Henshaw by right should be allowed to seek public office, the paper attested. While serving as Port Collector of Boston, he had possessed great patronage power but never had been allowed to utilize his great political skills beyond the city's limits. To benefit the party, Henshaw's allies alleged, his manifold talents must be utilized in Washington. Only in that way would the former leader of the state's party be able truly to assist the tenets of local Democracy.⁷⁹

The promotion of Henshaw's merits throughout the state was denounced by the Bay State Democrat upon familiar lines. Resuming charges leveled in the past by opponents of the clique, the Democrat alleged that the Post utilized its satellite newspapers elsewhere in Massachusetts to spout its own ideas. Such charges were based on an assertion that the Post marshaled its financial clout to establish similar organs in other cities. In turn, the clique's leaders then directed these papers to expound the ideological principles of their hub source. As such, the popularity of Post leaders like Henshaw was exaggerated and unfairly presented to the public.⁸⁰ This approach, it was charged, constituted just one more way in which the clique sought to manipulate public opinion, promoting their own ideals while largely ignoring what was best for the Massachusetts Democracy. As the primary beneficiary of these maneuvers, Henshaw's detrimental relation to the party was once again proven, the Bay State group claimed.

The most important element of Henshaw's re-entry into the political affairs of Massachusetts at this particular time seems to have been what it portended for coming endeavors. The Post group, its allies in Washington, and rival Democrats within the state knew the true importance of his nomination.⁸¹ Due to its understanding of the import of recent developments, the Democrat expended much energy in defining Henshaw's actions. Having now distanced himself from the Commonwealth affair, the

⁷⁹ *Boston Morning Post*, Mar. 30, 31, 1843.

⁸⁰ *Boston Bay State Democrat*, Mar. 25, 1843.

⁸¹ *Worcester Palladium*, Sept. 27, 1843.

Democrat believed, Henshaw saw it as high time to put his name before the public and resume his political career. 'He wished an endorsement from the democracy of his District, to bring him into public notice,' charged the Bay State. Such an attempt was bound to fail, however, due to Henshaw's lack of popularity. 'He has no strength with the people, and never had any,' it was claimed.⁸² That had been the true reason why his friends had never before attempted to nominate the former collector for office. Because of the desperation felt by the clique, the time had come for one last attempt to gain influence over party affairs.

Left unstated in this type of statement, was the Democrat group's very real concern that this nomination constituted a prelude to the entry of the clique onto a higher level of national importance. Satellite papers would be able to explain the union of David Henshaw with Tyler and Calhoun to the state's Democrats in a manner more favorable to the clique than any objective observer would present it. As such, the great deal of editorial clout possessed by the Post clique, most especially as a result of the paper's being operated by Henshaw and his close friend and political accomplice Charles G. Greene, could possibly be enough to help the group qualify their desertion of party interests in favor of selfish gains. Henshaw's ability to ensure the support of papers in other sections of the state would only be enhanced by the patronage gains attendant upon any attainment of office in Washington. The Democrat hoped that by pointing to the manifold flaws possessed by David Henshaw these difficulties could be largely overcome.⁸³

In order to expand upon its recently publicized hostility toward David Henshaw's involvement in the highest levels of the Massachusetts Democracy, the Bay State Democrat undertook to compose a continuing series of articles criticizing among other things his political ideals, past actions to the detriment of the party, and entirely anti-Democratic nature. Called the 'Chronicles of David,' these twenty pieces provided an in-depth, if highly partial representation of David Henshaw's political career. Based

⁸² Boston *Bay State Democrat*, Mar. 27, 1843.

⁸³ Boston *Bay State Democrat*, Apr. 1, 1843.

mainly upon the arguments within the Massachusetts Democracy that had largely been kept hidden from public view this series of editorial pieces offered a cutting glimpse into the abrasive relationship between the two branches of the party in state. They also were the first time that a group that differed from the Post clique had presented its coherent political ideology in such an intemperate manner. While first the Statesman and then the Morning Post had possessed direct power to represent the party in Massachusetts for over a decade prior to the institution of the Bay State Democrat, the latter paper had never had such a luxury. In previous years, despite the power of their faction in controlling the organizational apparatus of all local affairs, the Democrat had never been free to confront the Post publicly except in a few small cases extremely fleeting in nature. Now, with the mask thrown off and the vast differences and hatreds between the groups exposed, these 'Chronicles of David' represented an opportunity for the 'Country' group to offer their specific ideals by contrasting them with the leading member of the opposite intra-party faction. In so doing, they hoped to promote their own interests while maligning those of the Post faction, painting their rivals as enemies of the best interests of Democracy on a number of different levels.

The primary claims of the Bay State Democrat in publishing the 'Chronicles of David,' otherwise known as 'Twenty Years Services of David Henshaw,' were outlined in the first article in the series. First and foremost, the series was being undertaken in order to refute the Morning Post's claims that its leader had served the party more ably than any other man could have done. In illustrating the manner in which Henshaw and his closest associates had limited the appeals of the party over the years, the Bay State Democrat hoped to show how his eviction from any position of control could not help but to benefit the party. Contrasting the ten years of Henshaw's control, during which the party had been extremely limited and relatively weak, to the past six years under 'Country' influence, the paper blamed the former party leader directly for the lack of success that had previously defined party operations. Since his retirement, the Democracy had ascended to a status of equality with the Whigs in the state. It was the long lamented inability, and in fact wavering determination of Henshaw, to expand the party's influence that went to prove the lack of involvement he should be allowed in its

organization going forward. Henshaw's participation in several financial and corporate concerns along with his overall political belief system seemed to contrast with the course Democrats were expected to follow as well.⁸⁴

In alluding to the divisions between Henshaw and the Democrat faction over matters of deepest political and ideological import, the 'Chronicles' questioned the loyalty of the former to the cause. It seemed highly suspicious to the editors of the Bay State that, along with his Morning Post clique, Henshaw's views on issues of utmost significance to the politics of the period had undergone such a distinctive change several years earlier. Concomitant with their faction's gradual loss of control over the interests of the party in Massachusetts, it was noted, the Post group had decided to change their public language. Formerly supporting banking, first on a massive, centralized scale and then as large state-run establishments, the clique had more recently denounced financial institutions altogether. Similarly, well-known for expressing consistent interest in corporate wealth, Henshaw had begun to hedge his language of late. In an 1837 speech entitled, 'Remarks upon the rights and powers of corporations, and of the rights, powers and duties of the legislature toward Them' Henshaw had expounded his revised views. Actually stopping short of approving of corporations in general, as many had and continued to accuse him of doing, he declared that such institutions should be allowed only when serving a public benefit, stating that 'Any privileges granted to men or corporations by the legislature must be for beneficial services rendered.' Beyond that standard, all such privileged grants were unconstitutional. Such a belief permitted much more than radical Democrats were generally willing to grant, while remaining less tolerant toward corporate wealth than Whigs and Conservative Democrats on the whole.⁸⁵ Though this stance was not completely acceptable to the Democrat group, it still represented a more palatable option than that previously endorsed by Henshaw. On most other matters as well, the course adopted by David Henshaw and his closest associates had recently taken a more radical tone, keeping their group closer to the train

⁸⁴ Ibid, Mar. 29, 1843.

⁸⁵ David Henshaw, "Remarks upon the rights and powers of corporations, and of the rights, powers, and duties of the legislature toward them. : Embracing a review of the opinion of the Supreme Court of the United States, in the case of Dartmouth College, in New Hampshire" (Boston 1837).

of belief followed by the majority of the party under the leadership of the 'Country' faction.

During their falling-out period with Henshaw, however, the Democrat faction was finally able to assert its' belief that the latter's modified policies were not indicative of any actual change of heart. Henshaw and his Post clique, it was averred, had not truly become more democratic in sentiment. Their amended viewpoints were part and parcel of a cosmetic change. It was hoped that by portraying themselves as more in line with the popular and commonly held beliefs of the majority of Democrats, the clique would be able at a minimum to move closer to the center of power within the party. Their ultimate wish, of course, was to await the opportunity to regain their former hold on the central mechanisms of party power. The fact that radical ideals, with the Democrat group as their principal spokesman, had managed to win the endorsement of so many had led the Post clique to offer surface-level endorsements, the Bay State faction said. Their true sentiments, it was claimed were much closer to those formerly known to define the collective ideology of the 'City' group.

The true character of this group, it was alleged, could be seen more clearly in comparing them to their closest allies in New England. Looking northward to the situation in the New Hampshire Democratic Party, the paper offered a direct comparison to affairs as they stood in Massachusetts. In the Granite State, the Democracy was openly divided between a conservative wing, led by Isaac Hill, and the dominant group whose views were much more radical and in line with the Democrat's. Hill, a staunch ally of the Post, who openly fought against the Democrat group in the pages of his New Hampshire Patriot, was a noted supporter of banking and corporations while remaining a staunch Democrat. An editor who regularly offered harsh critiques of the actions of the Bay State Democrat, issuing recriminations that the Post was unable to print due to local political considerations, Hill was almost always to be found opposing the radicalizing tendencies within the party. His open defense of principles defined as conservative by the Democrat and others marked the course followed by Post allies in New Hampshire a vastly different than their own.

Because Isaac Hill was willing to wage the battle for influence within the party while publicly upholding his particular political predilections, he was viewed by the Bay State Democrat men as an individual bold enough to carry out a program that his closest Massachusetts associates, Henshaw and Green, could only do privately. In that way the Patriot's editor, for all of his allegedly vile characteristics, was more genuine than either prominent 'City' faction leader. For his openness, however, Hill had received nothing but scorn and a loss of influence within New Hampshire party ranks. On the other hand, Henshaw's dubious actions, presenting himself as a changed man while still secretly harboring his same retrograde ideology, had brought the ex-collector to the doorstep of greater influence. That he always had been and would remain the head of the conservative faction in Massachusetts was stated as fact. In the same way Isaac Hill had served his supporters in New Hampshire. Henshaw, because of his true beliefs in conjunction with his duplicity, merited casting aside by regular Democratic voters. 'The people want true men in office--no conservatives, no Isaac Hills, who are ready to receive the people's favor, and advance their own interests,' the Democrat claimed. By lumping the Post clique with the more defiantly conservative Democrats to the north, men who the 'Country' faction often argued were no different from the Whigs, the Post opponents displayed their willingness publicly to denounce the political and ideological faults of Henshaw once and for all.⁸⁶

At their foundation, these diatribes against David Henshaw were seeking to prove that the differences that had once served as definitive characteristics of two factions within the same party, were by this time actually political ideologies unable to be contained within the Democracy. The past activities, pronouncements and associations of Henshaw and his most important followers proved these men to be false Democrats, in the opinion of the Bay State. Their formerly overt and currently surreptitious connection to the twin evils of banking and corporations could no longer be ignored because of the threats of the Post group continued to pose to the interests of Massachusetts Democracy in general. Highlighting the recent civil war between their

⁸⁶ Boston *Bay State Democrat*, Mar. 25, 1843.

fellow party members in New Hampshire, the Democrat hoped to make clear to all readers that a similar factional strife was taking place in their own state. Although the defining traits of the two major factions had been largely subsumed under the more encompassing blanket of national party doctrine, these divergent systems of belief could no longer be ignored. The current time, with the great issues of the party in Massachusetts and nationally under debate, constituted a moment in which it was advisable and essential to attempt an eviction of the Post clique from their ranks. Secretly fearing the powers that this group would surely gain through their evident courting of Tyler and his interests, and with the open disputes over favored presidential candidates looming, the 'Country' clique chose this time period to air the complaints that they ultimately hoped would drive Henshaw and his close-knit group of followers from the party's inner circles.

The attempt by Henshaw's associates, as the Bay State faction saw it, to foist their favored candidate upon the public, going over the heads of the party's leadership in one of their geographic areas of strongest support, served as a further insult when added to the perceived injuries these antagonists had already dealt to the local Democracy. As such, their true status as the conservative element of the Massachusetts Democracy could justly be exposed to the public. Utilizing the example of the allegedly infamous Isaac Hill, a man who 'after being cherished by the democracy, betrayed it,' the Bay State men hoped to present Henshaw and his group in a similar light. It was claimed that they had possessed every opportunity to help the party expand and add to its principles during their decade of rule. Actions taken during that time period and since, however, had shown the group to be untrue to the actual tenets of democracy. Possessing an inherent interest in conservative measures such as those espoused by Hill and his minions, the Post group would bring strife to their state's party similar to the divisiveness imposed upon the Granite State's Democrats, said the 'Country' organ's editor.⁸⁷

During the course of the month-long 'Chronicles of David' series, Joselyn continually claimed that the tensions now becoming prominent and public between the

⁸⁷ Ibid, Apr. 1, 1843.

divergent factions of the Massachusetts Democracy had been present from the start. In fact the very nature of Post group control made the division of the party into at least two contrary groups inevitable. Having initially gained power over the functions of the state's party organization during the earliest days of Jackson's presidency, the clique had embarked upon a course best described as self-interested. Throughout its entire existence this group of men, Democrats in name only, had sought to maintain their influence however possible.⁸⁸ Their close association with Calhoun was emphasized as the main channel through which most important local positions and offices were gained. Such a claim, though pronounced on several prior occasions, was no doubt intended to highlight similarities between the manner in which the Post group first had gained control of party affairs and the maneuvers currently being undertaken through their affiliation with the same national politician.⁸⁹

It was further predicted that once their various positions had been regained, with David Henshaw once more Head Collector of Boston, A.P. Simpson as District Attorney and Nathaniel Greene in charge of the Post Office, this ruling group would endeavor to consolidate their achievements. By keeping all potential rivals for power outside the inner circles of party operation, they would soon make their control ironclad. Thus, the Democrat faction concluded that the selfish interests embodied in their former Statesman rivals' policy of keeping the party small would be revisited upon the local party. Because of this course of action, it was inevitable that the small ruling clique would establish themselves as an opposing force to all Democrats and all other likely members of the party who were outside their orbit, claimed the paper.

The Bay State rendering of the Boston Morning Post clique's initial operation of Democratic affairs further claimed that after assuming control of the party in Massachusetts, its leadership had barred all those not directly tied to their influence from inner-party circles. This approach had led to the initial purging of the Bulletin faction from the Democracy of Massachusetts. Additionally, upon assuming his Custom

⁸⁸ Ibid, Apr. 8, 1843.

⁸⁹ Ibid, Apr. 11, 1843.

House duties, it was claimed that Henshaw removed all officers not directly connected to his faction as well as those unwilling to serve the wishes of the clique. By such maneuverings the collector and his associates were able first to remove a major source of competition for prominence within the party, while increasing their grasp on the levers of patronage. Since Lyman and the Bulletin group were every bit as much Democratic founding members as the Post clique their removal had been necessitated in order for the 'City' faction to claim uncontested control. Similarly, the presence of men of opposing political viewpoints from himself in the Custom House would potentially represent a direct threat to Henshaw. Thus they were removed against the protests of many, leading to a reprimand from President Jackson and a curtailment of the process of expelling otherwise loyal officers. Such actions, it was alleged, gained the party no honors in the eyes of the majority. The manipulation of control over affairs of the party's politics and purse strings caused Henshaw to squander the great opportunities the Democracy had to make gains among the people. Of course, the Democrat claimed, this reduction in party appeal to the masses was of little concern to the collector. In fact it was viewed favorably, as it assisted his allies in maintaining their hold on the most lucrative offices in Boston, due to their influence with the upper levels of the Jackson administration.⁹⁰

Although the Democrat had initially held back from publicly condemning Henshaw's organizational approach, offering the opinion that as head of the Custom House he had every right to decide whom to retain or hire, the paper was now adamant in stating that such a use of power did nothing to further the interests of the party in Massachusetts. That was the crux of the matter, as far as the paper and the 'Country' clique were concerned. In his ten years as de facto leader of the Democracy in Massachusetts, Henshaw had squandered his leadership and organizational abilities along with concurrent opportunities to advance the interests and appeals of the party. His disinterest in the promotion of republican principles over the financial and political gains of the clique's uppermost members, illustrated the collector's lack of virtue. Although the party did undergo a moderate increase in membership, upping its vote totals in succeeding elections throughout the period, it was still held back by the selfish and

⁹⁰ Ibid, Apr. 13, 18, 1843.

manipulative course followed by Henshaw. The direct control exercised by his closest political associates over the nominating conventions that took place during the initial years of Jackson's administration incurred the animus of the people. The great body of Massachusetts Democrats cared little for the unique 'species of democracy' endemic to the state under Henshaw.⁹¹

The reaction against this type of rule, led largely by 'Country' Party influence, had enabled the party to expand democratic access to nomination conventions, beginning with the increased strength given local conventions by decisions in statewide conventions from the fall of 1833 onward. Much to the disapproval of Henshaw and his associates, the increasing power first given to the congressional district, county and town committees removed control from Custom House and State Central Committee influence. These changes helped to reduce the overall power of the clique. In the aftermath of such amendments to the procedures of the Democratic Party in Massachusetts, the 'Country' faction was able directly to access the majority of popular support that had formed against Henshaw's rule of the party and thereby to help bring about a change in its power structure. The unpopularity of Henshaw and his methods was said to have brought about operational modifications that in turn helped to raise membership levels in the state Democracy and reverse the clique's attempts to keep the party small.⁹²

'The Chronicles of David' further emphasized that besides his overt attempts to limit the scope of the Democracy, Henshaw's most glaring weakness as an actual Democrat was his association with banking.⁹³ The former member of the board of operators of the largest bank in Massachusetts could not be a true member of the party of Jackson, as had been argued on many separate occasions. The passage of five years along with the subsequent removal of Henshaw from state political affairs, should do nothing to erase his obvious connection with that vilified financial institution, claimed Editor Joselyn. Despite statements to the contrary both in the pages of the Post and by Henshaw himself, this one-time heavy involvement with the Commonwealth Bank and

⁹¹ Ibid, Apr. 20, 1843.

⁹² Ibid, Apr. 18, 1843.

⁹³ Ibid, Apr. 27, 1843.

his long history with both financial and corporate institutions could never be removed from the public's mind. Nor did the 'Country' clique believe it should. The actions of Henshaw in relation to the Commonwealth were presented as scandalous and worthy of absolute reproach. Their main import, asserted the Bay State Democrat, was to paint the ex-collector as a man who never was and could never be a true Democrat. Pronouncements in favor of Sub-Treasury schemes and opposing paper money were obviously mere obfuscations to help him re-connect with his old political party. Viewing the tide of radical Democracy to be on the rise, David Henshaw and his associates at the Post simply hoped to recapture some of their former influence by spouting doctrines contrary to what they had always and still believed.⁹⁴

In order further to paint a negative picture of Henshaw and his fellows' dealings in the matter of banking, the old story of the Commonwealth was revisited during this 1843 editorial series. In the process, Henshaw was depicted as an individual who through his connection to such a financial monster, had nearly managed to bring shame upon Van Buren's presidency. His irresponsible actions thus went beyond interests in large-scale finance to the very corruption of the party itself. Henshaw's selfish and acquisitive-minded pursuits had formerly endangered the fate of Democracy. Further association with this man would only bring the party more infamy, the 'Chronicles' author continued to aver.⁹⁵

One of the Bay State's main arguments against David Henshaw was that as a long-time advocate of both a national and large state banks, he was no Democrat. His petition to Congress in 1831, favoring the B.U.S. on issues of constitutionality and legal precedent, were lampooned as better suited to Whig tastes. In fact, it was charged that Henshaw's later objections to the Bank came about only because of his inability to influence Biddle's concern directly. Unlike the claims of other Democrats that such an institution constituted an unfair privilege being offered to a select few at the expense of the many, Henshaw's objections were not made out of opposition to corporate privilege.

⁹⁴ Ibid, Apr. 28, 1843.

⁹⁵ Ibid, Apr. 28, May 2, 8, 1843.

His complaints were directly connected to the collector's lack of a role in its proceedings. David Henshaw's response to the second B.U.S. was to propose as a replacement a fifty million dollar capitalized institution that would have been five times larger than that vetoed by Jackson. With this proposal, Henshaw showed his true colors as a hypocrite and opponent of the true interests of the party. His favoritism toward the pet bank projects which he was said to have recommended in the first place, further displayed selfish personal interests. Directly involved in the affairs of the Commonwealth Bank, he hoped and campaigned for that institution to receive its share of these deposits. Thus, the strength of one of the state's most powerful banks was further enhanced due to Henshaw's actions, once Jackson approved the Commonwealth to receive a share of government resources. Once again in this instance, Henshaw was able to utilize considerable influence to enhance his own reputation and fill personal coffers. As such, it constituted another occasion where the Post clique by nominally working for the promotion of Democratic Party ideals, were actually acting merely out of self-interest. Members who worked to the detriment of the entirety of Massachusetts Democrats, the Bay State claimed on this and several other occasions, constituted an obvious opposition group to the party's majority.⁹⁶

Henshaw's involvement in the Commonwealth Bank, to the minds of these accusers, represented his greatest dishonor. Despite claiming to be true Democrats and the most staunch of Jackson supporters, he and his minions were as likely to be found in cahoots with the institutions most despised by the 'Old Hero' and supported by their Whig opponents. These activities redounded to Henshaw's everlasting shame. Thus, the failure of his own institution constituted a 'signal rebuke to the pride and arrogance of those who had scoffed at the advocates of sound democracy in their opposition to monopolies and unjust privileges, and forwardly practiced upon the plan that democratic banks and corporations must be employed with which to fight the federal banks and corporations.' His actions had brought a great deal of criticism upon the Massachusetts Democratic Party. Its 'would-be leaders were the instigators and managers of the bank, and their doings afforded ample occasion for the finger of federal opposition to point the

⁹⁶ Ibid, Apr. 27, 1843.

rebuke and turn their reproach upon the party.’ The government funds lost in the Bank’s failure, totaling \$337,625 were the least of the concerns of the Van Buren administration. The Bay State Democrat faction’s political leader had seen his administration’s purity besmirched by its involvement with Henshaw and the Morning Post group. The Democracy of Massachusetts, having recovered from the shame imposed by Henshaw’s rule during his years of retirement, would likely face a similar vitiation if the former collector were allowed to resume his favored role in party affairs, it was alleged.⁹⁷

The Democrat went further in taking great pains to present Henshaw’s public views from the earlier time period on the matter of paper currency. In so doing, the editors were attempting once again to illustrate that despite his reputed recent hostility toward this monetary form, Henshaw’s actual sentiments were otherwise. Regarding paper money, the then-collector had stated in an 1830 pamphlet, ‘We totally dissent from Committee views, and maintain that the quantity of paper currency in circulation does not either affect the price of commodities or the value of coin, so long as the bills are redeemed at the pleasure of the holder in specie.’⁹⁸ Paraphrased, his sentiments were that the paper money system did nothing to decrease the true value of currency and thus should not be discontinued. Ignoring the more recent pronouncements of Henshaw and his Post associates against the perceived evils of paper currency, the Democrat went to great lengths to portray the dangers of these earlier beliefs. It said, ‘That Mr. Henshaw’s position in respect to the effects of paper money on the value of property is entirely false, may easily be shown by reason and by experience; nor is there a fact in political economy, that is at this day more clearly understood and better appreciated, than the influence of paper money in raising and lowering the prices of property.’ Issuing a jibe at Henshaw and his known opposition to Van Buren’s future candidacy, the piece went on to call Democratic opposition to paper money, ‘the very basis of the Independent Treasury plan of Mr. Van Buren’s administration, and ... the leading argument by which the justness and propriety of that measure was vindicated against the factious opposition

⁹⁷ Ibid, May 2, 1843.

⁹⁸ David Henshaw, “*Remarks upon the Bank of the United States,; being an examination of the report of the Committee of Ways and Means, made to Congress, April, 1830*” (Boston 1830).

and misrepresentations of federalism.’⁹⁹ Of course this rendering of Henshaw’s approval of non-specie currency and implied disfavor of the Sub-Treasury Bill, overlooked his manifold displays of support for the latter project, most especially as it related to the designs of John Calhoun. Nevertheless, in painting Henshaw’s ideology on currency in the same light as that of their Whig opponents, the Democrat hoped to further the notion that his published language showed him to be an enemy to the party he was endeavoring to represent in Washington.

In continuing their assaults on Henshaw’s actual interest in Democratic Party ideals, the ‘Chronicles of David’ even took issue with his somewhat moderate views on the rights of corporations. As previously stated, Henshaw’s pamphlet issued in 1837 dealing with the merits of granting legislative privilege for pooled financial resources in corporate enterprises had represented a radicalization of sorts in comparison with his previous views on the matter. The Bay State Democrat in its thoroughgoing criticism of his ideological tenets tried to illustrate that even this modified, more democratic view, was far from the ideal demanded of party members. In trying to follow the line set out by the ‘Country’ faction, and adopted by the majority of the Massachusetts Democracy, Henshaw had once again proven himself to be too conservative in actual practice. Since the party had long realized the evils of corporations, institutions whose main goal was to the Democrat’s mind, to facilitate the concentration of wealth and increase capital’s power over labor, all true party members were required to renounce them out of hand. In his pamphlet, however, Henshaw had maintained that if such institutions served the public interest, legislative action to allow them should be upheld. The Bay State claimed that this belief represented little more than Federalist doctrine. In stating that American corporations were to be given only ‘particular powers,’ and must work for the common good, Henshaw and his clique had proven themselves to be closer in political sentiment to Daniel Webster than to Andrew Jackson.¹⁰⁰

Additionally, Henshaw’s dual statements that corporations were beneficial at

⁹⁹ Boston *Bay State Democrat*, Apr. 27, 1843.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid, Apr. 26, 1843.

times, as they allowed those of limited means to pool their wealth with that of others, thereby gaining financial strength that would allow them to compete with the skillful and wealthy; and his claim that under legislative guidance, they were unlikely to become corrupt, were taken to task. In sum the Democrat disagreed with Henshaw's qualified support of limited privileges for corporations. Its editor Joselyn stated of these institutions, 'Now their particular powers, if they are not common to all the citizens, so far are monopolies...In some cases [the Legislatures] authorize the corporation to do that which the state itself has no legal power to do, namely to invade the private rights without a well established and imperious necessity...Particular powers, again, may be looked for in that peculiar trait of our American democratic corporations which exempts these favored individuals from personal liability, when once embodied under the great corporation seal.' In short, according to the interpretation of the Democrat, although David Henshaw doubted the inherent evils of corporations because they were subject to legislative approval, in practice these entities would often act to the public's detriment, as they benefited private citizens at the expense of the majority. Because corporations usually represented powerful interests, with exceptional access to legislative favor, it was unlikely that the legislative regulation in which Henshaw believed would always occur. In turn, the increased power and importance of the corporate interests furthered their special protection, adding to their hold on the community and strengthening their influence on government. At its most basic level, the Democrat's argument said that corporations should not be allowed to exist in any form in democratic societies. That David Henshaw had offered words of approval for them, however qualified, was further evidence that he was no Democrat. His more recent language was not mentioned and mattered little in this depiction. The view presented in his 1837 pamphlet was all that readers needed to see, it was averred. The core of Henshaw's ideology, in sum, was not consonant with the ideals of their party. He was out of step with their principles and in trying to present himself as a viable candidate for Congress, Henshaw was a dangerous man.¹⁰¹

The most aggressive attempt of the Democrat faction to offer a negative portrayal

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

of the former collector was centered upon the controversy surrounding the alleged ‘South Boston Land Fraud.’ In detailing the circumstances that had produced this sordid event, the paper sought to present Henshaw to the public as a criminal. The language and evidence utilized in this case went beyond that formerly issued. Whereas all previous pronouncements endeavored to show David Henshaw to be no friend of the Democracy, those attached to this swindle were more acerbic in nature as the ‘Country’ faction intensified its allegations against him. Whereas in the past they had been content to question his Democratic orthodoxy, now they took issue with his morality as an honorable and law-abiding citizen. It is very likely, indeed probable, that the approaching announcement of his connection with Tyler’s Cabinet, made evident by the widely noted consultation undertaken at the time between Charles G. Greene and John C. Calhoun in Washington, had much to do with the increased vituperations against Henshaw as leader of this opposing faction. By this point the ‘Country’ group was deeply worried about the considerable power and influence that such dealings could bring to the Post group. In order to protect their interests as the leaders of Massachusetts Democracy, their hand was forced. The former gentlemanly conventions of political criticism were cast aside and they embarked upon a much more personal confrontation and attack upon David Henshaw and the leading members of his clique.

This South Boston Land Fraud was essentially a case of real estate speculation that became involved with the Commonwealth Bank failure. Because of his involvement in both concerns, the Bay State Democrat alleged that Henshaw formulated a plan to utilize his interests in the Commonwealth Bank to fund the dangerous speculative schemes of the Warren Association. The presence of federal Custom House money in the Commonwealth, and by association its use for speculative purposes best represented in the South Boston scheme, illustrated the direct connection between public monies and Henshaw’s financial interests. This association added to the vilification of the former collector in the mind of the Democrat.¹⁰²

In the aftermath of the Bank’s failure, Henshaw’s obligation to repay government

¹⁰² Ibid, May 8, 1843.

funds brought the South Boston lands to public attention. At the time he was able to use his influence to have the real estate holdings of the Warren Association accepted to meet the Association's obligations to the Commonwealth's directors thus rescuing himself from further peril. This course, however, was, according to his critics, done at the expense of honesty and fair financial dealing, and thereby actually cheated the administration in Washington. As one of twelve directors of the Commonwealth Bank, along with his brother John and the deceased J.K. Simpson, Henshaw was directly obligated to guarantee the securities the government held to protect its deposits in the institution. As the collector who had moved the port duties to the Bank he was even more responsible, in the public's interpretation than his fellow directors. In the immediate aftermath of the Bank's failure the \$337,788 debt owed the Federal Government was put into the hands of the U.S. Marshal in Boston to pursue suits against the sureties or directors of the bank. The government was entitled to expect full satisfaction on this debt but the result of this matter was contingent largely upon the repayment of funds owed by debtors to the Bank. Foremost among this group was the Warren Association. Thus, David Henshaw was doubly involved in this affair.

Utilizing his unmatched influence, Henshaw was able to work out a deal with the government representatives which would later be labeled criminal in intent. Heading a group of members and directors of the Warren Association, he proposed that the group pay their obligations by substituting certain of their lands for the Commonwealth funds owed. The directors of the Bank would hold these lands as collateral for the government. The South Boston real estate was valued by the Association directors at \$164,533. Controversy soon arose over claims that these lands were actually worth a fraction of this valuation. An 1836 public appraisal had judged the real estate in question to be worth between \$25,000 and \$30,000. By the time of the bank failure, however, the value had multiplied nearly six fold, in the estimation of the Warren group. Through this operation, the Association was allowed to get out of a questionable speculation, while turning a profit of \$140,000 from the Government for these worthless lands. The Democrat alleged that what made this procedure all the more disreputable was the fact that the Warren Association had notes in the amount of upwards of

\$160,000. Since these notes seemed to be far more valuable than this fraudulently valued land in South Boston, the 'Country' faction's leaders asserted that Association members, especially David Henshaw, ought first to have offered their ready money assets before resorting to real estate of dubious value. Additionally, because the South Boston land was still the property of the Association and not the Bank, it was argued this proceeding was highly irregular and illegal. The South Boston property by rights could not be 'seized upon execution against the bank,' the Democrat would claim in making its case against Henshaw five years later. Nevertheless, Henshaw as the mastermind of these procedures was able to use his influence along with what his opponents considered his patent unscrupulousness to help rescue himself and his closest associates from heavy financial debts and obligations.¹⁰³

When issuing its charges against Henshaw, the Bay State Democrat also endeavored directly to incriminate the government officers who had cooperated in an allegedly premeditated and fraudulent transaction. Reminding its readers that the duty of a government collection agent was to ensure full payment of pertinent debts, never abandoning any legal means of payment until the debt was completely retired, the paper questioned the course the agents had followed. Their obligations differed from those of a private individual, who was free to choose the manner of repayment, substituting lands for monies owed at his own discretion. Since the government officers involved in this issue were acting in the interest of the public at large, their agreement was dubious at the very least and quite possibly worthy of public censure. Since public officials were authorized only to take money and not land for their sureties against the Commonwealth Bank, the substitution of the latter as a means of debt payment would technically not have been allowed by the rules guiding their conduct. Further incriminating their actions, the acceptance of an obviously invalid valuation of these lands was highly improper, especially considering the availability of ready money resources. Although these government men were implicitly to blame for the wholly lamentable course of action regarding the land fraud, it was emphasized that Henshaw's manipulative scheming had induced them to act in this manner. Such accusations implied that bribes had been

¹⁰³ Ibid.

exchanged between Henshaw and his affiliates and the officers in question, further damning the character of the man the Democrat was seeking to portray as a villain and traitor to the interests of their political party.¹⁰⁴

The result of this entire affair, then, was that Henshaw had cheated the United States Government, Martin Van Buren's administration, and most importantly the tax-paying public of upwards of \$130,000 dollars. His purpose in transacting this deal was to preserve his personal and private financial interests while saving himself and his associates from debtor status with the Federal Government. He succeeded on both of these fronts, at the expense of the public interest. By putting his interests above those of the government, and by extension the Democratic administration in Washington, Henshaw had largely served to damage what he was entrusted to defend. That his own personal honor was also sacrificed in this exchange hardly seemed to matter to the ex-collector. Equally important to the Democrat, the dealings charged to David Henshaw and his Warren Association affiliates could be seen as criminal. Substituting the South Boston Lands for actual currency to pay a pledged government debt constituted an illegal act by the letter of the law. Because it was the government agents who were directly responsible for accepting Henshaw's proposal, Henshaw had been allowed to escape blame in the preceding years. Since he had helped bring about that decision through what the paper believed to have been either bribery or manipulation, however, the Democrat reasoned that David Henshaw was more worthy of blame than these federal agents. The questionable nature of this deal, in the minds of the Bay State men, made Henshaw legally accountable to pay restitution to the government or else to spend time in a debtor's prison. The manner in which he had succeeded in avoiding these contingencies seemed worthy of outright reproach, if not criminal indictment in the opinion of the Bay State Democrat.¹⁰⁵

Though one would have expected to see rejoinders in Henshaw's defense in the pages of the Post, the clique's organ was actually relatively restrained in countering the

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid, May 10, 1843.

Bay State Democrat's charges. It would take nearly a year for David Henshaw's associates to respond publicly to these vituperations. The most reasonable explanation for this delay in defending the character of David Henshaw is that the 'City' organ in fact expected that little real damage had been caused by the 'Chronicles of David.' Dissuading potential Democratic voters, whether they were the mass of party members or not, was not a matter that worried the clique. They already knew themselves to be outnumbered in the struggle for majority party support by the 'Country' faction. Henshaw's nomination for office, no matter the means by which it had come about, did little to rectify this political reality. Though the Post clique held the levers of power among Boston's Democrats, such control amounted to little in terms of Massachusetts as a whole. The Whig Party dominated the state's preeminent city and clique power did not extend far beyond Boston. Since their rivals among the Democrat faction represented greater numerical power and hence superior influence in the Massachusetts Party and government, as well as a direct connection to Martin Van Buren, the Post already had little reason to think Henshaw's election would change the situation within the Democracy.

Since the re-emergence of the ex-collector onto the political scene as a congressional candidate was meant merely to make his future obtaining of a position in Tyler's cabinet more probable, it can be argued that Henshaw did not even intend to undertake a vigorous canvass at all. With the knowledge that his name was likely to be put forward for a cabinet position through the influence of Calhoun, Henshaw likely instructed his political lieutenants at the Morning Post to keep their pens silent, ignoring the slanders of the Democrat. Since the opinions of Boston Democrats outside his political faction were unlikely to hinder David Henshaw's prospects at the future cabinet nomination, it hardly seemed worthy of his group's time and effort to answer their charges. Hoping that the relative silence of the Post would indicate the outlandishness of his critics' claims, the otherwise easy-to-rile David Henshaw was quite probably directly responsible for the dearth of public debate and counter-charges in this matter. Attempting to present himself as above the fray on the issues at hand, he hoped to reap the benefits at a later date. In the later words of Henshaw's closest friends, remaining

mute on the issue at this time was a result of having utter faith that the well-known stature of Henshaw in Democratic circles would make the surprisingly scurrilous charges from fellow Democrats and former allies seem all the more improbable to the general public. The Post hoped to combat the alleged lack of honor displayed by their rivals at the Democrat by refusing to sink to their level. By following this formula, they intended to increase Henshaw's future appeal for a higher office.¹⁰⁶

After nearly a year's time, the clique finally came to the defense of their local leader. A pamphlet issued by Charles G. Greene and Gordon Beals in March, 1844 vehemently attempted to refute all of the most damaging charges leveled in the Democrat's series on Henshaw. Presenting their de facto leader as a disinterested politician, caring only for what benefited the entire party and as a man above any sort of public fray, the authors claimed to have decided on this course of action to vindicate their slandered friend. In their pamphlet two major charges made by the Bay State Democrat were addressed. The first was the claim that Henshaw had prior knowledge of the Commonwealth's failure, yet did nothing to remove government monies or notify other debtors whose funds would be lost outright. These actions would have constituted an attempt at profiting by the bank's failure. The second issue dealt with the transfer of South Boston lands to pay the debt of the bank to the U.S. government. It was claimed that such a course was undertaken only after all other avenues for repayment had been blocked off and was thus of unquestionable legality. By disproving the Democrat's indictments of Henshaw on these issues, the pamphlet hoped to show its readers that any character assaults related to these matters were wholly unjust and should be readily rejected. Their unstated but ultimate hope was to paint the Bay State Democrat and those who were responsible for guiding its course in the most negative light possible. Accomplishing this goal would allow the Post group to regain some of the influence they had lost over the years, most glaringly with the failure of their leader to follow through on his attempts to attain higher office.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁶ Beals and Green, "A Refutation, By His Friends, of the Calumnies Against David Henshaw, In Relation To the Failure of the Commonwealth Bank, and the Transfer of South Boston Lands to the United States" (Boston 1844), pg. 3-6.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid, pg. 3-7.

Regarding the first of these issues, the pamphlet writers maintained that Henshaw was in no way indebted to the Commonwealth Bank at the time of its failure in January, 1838. Though his brother John maintained a debt of \$80,000, this obligation was met and paid shortly thereafter. Because neither brother had any unpaid debts, charges that they sought the bank's failure were unfounded. In fact, David Henshaw did lose \$14,000 in bank shares, precluding any intimation that he knew of a pending failure and intended to profit thereby. Though Henshaw had withdrawn over \$53,000 on January 11, the day of the failure, it was not money the bank could have appropriated in the first place because of its having been a special deposit. An investigation by the Massachusetts Legislature that same month concluded that the Bank Directors had no prior knowledge of the impending failure and there was 'no intimation in the report the Mr. Henshaw had any better knowledge of the crisis before it happened.' Not only did Henshaw not know of the impending failure but he had assumed that the bank would exert all efforts to remain solvent. Beals and Greene attested that Henshaw had 'urged active exertion to meet the difficulties, and there was no understanding [on January 10] that the Bank was to stop, except in the alternative that it was pressed to pay its bills and balances, and could not obtain assistance.' The authors, though claiming to be no friends of banking in general, went to say that at the time of the collapse no bank manager or director could have issued any statement more confident in nature, than that one, due to the unsoundness of all financial institutions at the time.

Additionally, the fact that Henshaw had called for the payment of all checks against the Custom House on January 10, a process that would have involved the exchange of Commonwealth notes for specie, was not an indication of fraud on his part. Simply put, despite the Bay State Democrat's charges of the suspicious nature of the matter, this action represented David Henshaw's duty as outgoing collector. Custom House Cashier William Wellman had suggested this course of action in order for Henshaw to settle up all financial accounts before stepping down from his post. As a result of these claims, the damaging words previously printed in the Bay State Democrat were not only inaccurate but slanderous. In that these critics had access to the same

information utilized by Beals and Greene, their assaults on David Henshaw were obviously undertaken to damage his character and thus were dishonorable, the authors indignantly stated.¹⁰⁸

Taking up the next important issue, the South Boston Land Fraud, Henshaw's defenders focused primarily on a reasonable financial argument. They asserted that Henshaw, though one of the Warren Association's board of directors, owned only twenty of five hundred shares. Thus his interest in the entire land affair amounted to \$5,000, a considerable amount at the time but still merely four percent of the association's capital. The total obligation he owed to the Commonwealth Bank, as a result of the Warren group's loan, was \$6,400. His relatively small investment in the affair, it was charged, would seem to remove Henshaw from any logical censure. At the very least, Beals and Greene said, this realization would surely help dispel the charges that David Henshaw had cheated the Federal Government. 'The substance of the charge, therefore,' the pamphlet stated, 'is that for this inconsiderable interest, David Henshaw not only committed a gross fraud himself upon the United States, but induced several persons, esteemed of the highest integrity among the lawyers, merchants, judicial officers and citizens of Boston to become his instruments in this fraud.' Such conduct seemed beyond the bounds of rationality to their minds. They argued that David Henshaw, a man who had served both his party and the Custom House faithfully, surely would have remained above damaging his reputation over a matter of so little financial significance to himself. Such a charge, it was averred, constituted a mere fabrication of political opponents, hoping to keep the Post's closest associate from attaining any office that should rightfully have been his, a tactic by which these Democratic rivals hoped to increase their own power.¹⁰⁹

The pamphlet also addressed the matter of the Warren Association's debt payment to the Commonwealth Bank through the turnover of the South Boston lands. Despite the claims of their opponents that such an action constituted a gross fraud against

¹⁰⁸ Ibid, pg. 9-10.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid, pg. 19.

the government, the pamphlet's authors attested that the Association had no other recourse. Since stockholder property was not liable to seizure and Commonwealth notes were already worthless, the only way for the Association to have remitted payment for its debts to the Bank was to turn over the lands owned by the Association. Further blamelessness was asserted by defending the men chosen to appraise these lands. Nathan Gurney, a State Senator, James Merrill, Justice of the Boston Police Court, and Amos Bunney, a State Legislator, were all unimpeachable citizens, the authors stated. Their actions, far from having been corrupted or influenced by Henshaw and his friends, were aboveboard and later approved by the State Legislature. In appraising the South Boston lands at \$166,437, they had absolved the Warren Association directors from any further obligation to the Commonwealth Bank or Federal Government. Charges of Whig opponents that Henshaw had gained upwards of \$6,000 from this transaction, money utilized to pay off the assessors, were simply false, the writers said. The fact that President Van Buren, along with his secretary of the treasury had approved the entire transaction was further evidence that Henshaw's actions in the matter were beyond question, in the opinion of the Post proprietors.¹¹⁰

The 'Country' clique's charges against Henshaw had been issued as a reaction to his attempted return to the public political stage, and were meant to undermine any sort of power he had hoped to establish. The correspondence of both Bancroft and Morton show that the 'Country' faction knew that Henshaw's designs extended beyond canvassing for the Worcester County Congressional seat. Because he aimed at more prominent positions, especially the secretary of the navy post, the urgency his opponents felt about these assaults upon his character was readily apparent. The increasingly virulent language they used against both the past actions and the ideological orientation of Henshaw came about during this period specifically because of the union he had already undertaken with Calhoun in the hopes of enhancing their collective power, as well as the apparent alliance that the former was soon to conclude with the president. Since the Democrat group was in no way willing to act with Tyler, and rightly feared that the Post faction, in order to gain back some of their former influence, would feel no such

¹¹⁰ Ibid, pg. 19-24.

hesitation, the leaders of the Democrat faction chose publicly to excoriate Henshaw and his alleged minions.

Within a month of the harshest of these Democrat pieces, the long awaited union of the Post clique with the Tyler Administration became public knowledge. In addition to the influence of Calhoun upon the president, there are other reasons this political shift came about. Most importantly, Tyler as a man without a party, needed to marshal some sort of support for his administration. Whether or not adding influential political men throughout the country was an attempt to gain election to a second term as president, or merely constituted a wish for a more receptive cabinet and group of associates is a matter of conjecture. What is known is that in the Post clique he found a group of political men longing for a return to power in their state. Their ties to Calhoun obviously helped the president gain some sort of support from the clique. Of course, the newly formed ties between Tyler and the clique were meant, at least on their part, to be temporary. The ultimate wish of the Post group was for their favored candidate and political benefactor to ascend to the nation's top political office. However, Tyler's similar ideals on state rights and free trade cannot be discounted. It is quite probable that the clique's leaders saw the president, a man with sentiments that accorded with some of their longest held notions, as a political comrade in one manner or another. Judging from their words and actions, it is quite apparent that Henshaw and his associates did have a great deal of admiration for the political character of John Tyler.¹¹¹ He was a politician willing to stand up to his own party and do what he thought was right and thus seemed a worthy figure to emulate. The group, due to their own outsider status in Massachusetts political circles, perhaps saw his example as one to follow in asserting themselves as statesmen superior to the bitter partisanship of their rivals.

Within the next several months the ties of the clique to Calhoun and Tyler would pay large dividends. In June, 1843 the public learned of the proposed nomination of David Henshaw for the secretary of the navy post. Insiders also speculated that Nathaniel Greene would resume his position as Postmaster of Boston, while Robert

¹¹¹ Boston *Morning Post*, Sept. 18, Oct. 9, 21, 1841.

Rantoul was likely to become Port Collector of Boston. It was quite obvious to all interested parties that the Post group was attempting to regain a large measure of the power that had been taken away from them by the ascendance of the 'Country' faction, through allying themselves with the embattled president. Since Tyler was acting somewhat out of desperation, their course seemed to be a logical one to follow. As men who shared similar political ideals to the president and more importantly a direct connection to his preferred advisor, Calhoun, this merger does not seem to have been undertaken merely for selfish reasons. While it is true that the Post group gained a great deal, almost regaining their former status as the ruling clique of the state's Democracy in the process, it was all ventured for reasons that they saw to be in the best interests of the party. Never confident with Van Buren men leading the party's affairs, they understood undermining them while promoting their own ideals to be a sure way to benefit all Democrats. Because John Tyler was believed to share many of their own political principles, the promotion of clique leaders to important offices in his administration and the city was seen as a means of assisting his political cause, thereby damaging Van Buren's chances.

More importantly, the desired success of Calhoun in the coming campaign was viewed as being greatly enhanced so that the clique's most prominent members could again run the state's Democracy.¹¹² As they truly believed the Carolinian to be the proper candidate for the presidency, they were prepared to make great efforts in his behalf. The attempts of the 'Country' clique to impose Martin Van Buren, a sure loser in the Post group's minds, once again upon the Democracy of Massachusetts should be resisted, however possible. That is not to say that the lucrative nature of these new posts lacked any causative relation to the clique's having sought them out. As was always the case, however, throughout the period of their involvement in state party affairs, the Morning Post group felt themselves to be the most politically principled of all local Democrats and therefore best qualified to lead the party.

The Post group's pending designs for party domination centered around the

¹¹² Boston *Daily Atlas*, Jun. 24, 1843.

removal of Van Buren from the position of prominence in which Massachusetts Democrats had placed him. But instead of denouncing the former president, the clique merely adopted a lukewarm approach to his candidacy. As time passed, however, it became increasingly more apparent to members of the Bay State Democrat group and state Democrats in general that the Post faction's sole desire regarding the canvass of 1844 was to win favor for Calhoun. At that point, the critics from the Democrat faction increased their criticisms of the Carolinian, whom they believed to be unpopular throughout the state. In the immediate aftermath of the revelations that the Post group was attempting to gain national office under Tyler, however, the Democrat and its allies did not differentiate between the president and Calhoun as targets for their enmity. Both were presented as corrupted politicians. Furthermore, the 'Country' faction had a great deal of confidence that Van Buren's popularity in Massachusetts would render any attempts to displace him futile. Their absolute belief in the weight Van Buren carried in Massachusetts in relation to Calhoun, though perhaps true at the time, would prove to be misplaced in the coming months. In the meantime, the Post group's ability to regain some of their lost power, gave them added emphasis in state affairs. This newfound capacity for self assertion would come into play during the next year's state convention, where Van Buren's candidacy was dealt a severe blow by the supporters of Calhoun, men who had been able to have their voices heard at all at this gathering principally because of the gains made by their in-state leaders.¹¹³

Morton, Bancroft and their allies did not feel the same self-assurance with regard to endorsement of candidates, because of the influence that the proposed nominations could bring to the clique. The political maneuverings for control of the state's Democratic Party by the Post clique worried the Democrat faction in the extreme. In fact, given the wholesale changes in the occupants of patronage positions that President Tyler was undertaking, it is apparent that the leaders of the Democratic Party in Massachusetts had much to fear from the Post clique and its attempted grasp at power. Tyler's administration had created circumstances, the Democrat faction believed, in which skillful and duplicitous politicians would be able to 'cajole the weak and visionary

¹¹³ Darling, pg. 305-308.

person now at the head of the public affairs of the Nation, into their toils.’ These men would allegedly be capable of making the president, ‘do the dirty job to which they are endeavoring to allure him.’¹¹⁴ Because of the ease with which Tyler could be manipulated, along with the power such appointments represented, these proposed moves were undoubtedly matters of grave concern and consternation to the ‘Country’ leaders.

Of course Tyler was not seen as a mere cipher in this proposed transaction. As he had failed to attract the interest of the power brokers among Massachusetts Democrats, his approach to the state’s secondary faction seemed like a logical course of action. ‘The present purpose of the Tyler managers,’ alleged the Democrat, ‘is to buy up with the public patronage such political character as they can get hold of, and Henshaw and Greene are just the men for a bargain of that kind.’¹¹⁵ The paper made additional political capital of the fact that the inability of the President to coax reputable Democrats to his cause necessitated a union with nominal members of that party who were alleged to have some sort of influence. Placing clique members in such important posts as the Collectorship of Boston and postmaster of that city would give the Post group political power and patronage the likes of which it had not seen for nearly a decade. More importantly, if Henshaw’s proposed nomination as secretary of the navy were to be approved by the Senate, the bane of the ‘Country’ faction’s existence in Massachusetts would suddenly hold the highest ranking post of any New Englander in the union. Managing to reach such political heights would not only give Henshaw powers heretofore beyond his ability to attain, but would no doubt help his attempts to control the state’s Democracy. As such, this political development above all others was troubling to rivals of the Post group.

The main thrust of criticism against the efforts of the Post faction, most especially Henshaw and Greene, was to accuse these long-time Democrats of disloyalty to their party in acting with a Whig administration. Because the Democrat hoped to dispel any notions that its rivals’ actions would redound to the party’s benefit in Massachusetts, in

¹¹⁴ Boston *Daily Atlas*, Sept. 12, 1843.

¹¹⁵ Boston *Bay State Democrat*, Jun. 24, 1843.

opening the door for national administrative patronage that had been closed upon the election of Harrison, it sought to paint them as enemies of the cause of Democracy. The paper alleged that these were venal men, who would sell their souls to the most corrupt and unprincipled of politicians. Joining the administration, they were finding their perfect match, men without principles themselves. Of Henshaw and his allies in this scheme, the Democrat said, 'There is not one of them that would not sacrifice the democratic party in a moment for the purpose of carrying out their own selfish views and gaining strength for themselves.' Since it had associated with such questionable figures, Tyler's administration had proven itself once again to be of a type unseen since the days of Federalism. 'There [was] nothing then to be expected from the administration in the way of supporting democratic measures or principles, except so far as a venal and time-serving policy may dictate for the purpose of deceiving and betraying the party,' stated the Bay State editor. The ultimate hope of the Democrat was to prove that these newly minted administration men, along with their leaders in Washington, were not members of the Jacksonian Party. If they ever had held the interests of Democracy in their hearts, a matter wholly debatable to these opponents at this point, the Post clique's leaders had completely ceded any right to claim membership to that political organization upon courting the favor of John Tyler. As such they were utterly unworthy of any Democratic support.¹¹⁶

The most damning and oft-repeated charge the Democrat chose to level against Henshaw and his leading associates in this matter, was that they had no right to call themselves Democrats. In having joined themselves with the Tyler administration these founding members of Jackson's party in Massachusetts had morphed into the worst possible species. They were Whigs. While Henshaw's appointment had earned nothing but criticism from the majority faction of Massachusetts Democracy, the Bay State opined that he would surely be warmly welcomed by the opposition. 'We doubt not the whig press will commend the appointment,' the paper said, overlooking the self-same press's disdain for the apostate Tyler. But it was not merely this latest incident that proved Henshaw to be a Whig in his political ideology. Noting his

¹¹⁶ Ibid, Jul. 6, 1843.

formerly public position on the important issues of the day, the article continued, ‘The leading whigs say of him ‘he is one of us;’ and in truth it is hard to find a warmer friends of corporations and exclusive legislation than he is; his whole interests and associations have been bound up in them.’¹¹⁷ Thus, Henshaw and his closest associates’ open separation from the Bancroft wing of the Democratic Party offered the latter the opportunity to pronounce publicly what many of them had always believed in one form or another. Heretofore maligned as conservative Democrats, the Post group had now shown themselves to be what many radicals had long thought, if not publicly charged. Because of their newfound interest in complete separation from the ‘City’ group, the ‘Country’ faction at this time found itself willing and able to make these claims.

Henshaw’s overt union with a Whig administration was perhaps the most propitious turn of events that could have unfolded, to the minds of the clique’s opponents. In having accepted office with the Tyler administration, this dangerous politician had shown himself to be what his rivals had always thought. Now the whole of the Massachusetts Democratic Party and indeed the Democrats of the nation would know for sure that the former collector was nothing but a Whig in Democratic clothing. His involvement with banks and corporations, and his brief former amalgamation with Federalists during the founding period of the party, were all proof of his malignant interests, Joselyn’s paper charged. Though the latter claim clearly overlooked the vehement hostility with which Henshaw regarded Federalists in general, and his vigorous early efforts to force them from the party, the others were constant criticisms against him. In a way, the Democrat faction welcomed his recent movements. Despite the ‘Country’ clique’s having attained a relative stranglehold upon Democratic power, Henshaw and the Post group had always represented a viable threat. Now with their alleged apostasy, it had become much easier for the ‘Country’ faction to state its claim as the only true representatives of the party’s interests in Massachusetts. At the same time, its involvement in endorsing the candidacy of Martin Van Buren would be enhanced greatly by these developments.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

Downplaying the popularity that Henshaw indeed did possess at one point, while emphasizing his undemocratic nature made evident by these recent attempts to gain public office, the Democrat hoped to be able once and for all to remove his name from the list of potential rivals for control of party operations. The supporters of the ‘Country’ group, already a majority among the state’s Democrats, thought they knew Henshaw’s true character. Additionally, the Post’s feigned neutrality on the presidential question had been rendered untenable by the recent nomination of Henshaw. Because he was now publicly known to share the Tyler-Calhoun interest, the Democrat charged, any claim Henshaw had to represent the people of the state had been abandoned. Since Van Buren was the favorite candidate of the commonwealth’s Democracy, in the mind of the ‘Country’ group, connection to the ex-president’s chief rival had further injured his reputation in the state.¹¹⁸

The Post clique attempted to dispel these claims against their Democratic credentials. Their most prominent means of doing so was continually to support the interests of Marcus Morton as the state’s governor. Additionally, the Morning Post as the most influential Democratic newsheet in Massachusetts, was often the public voice that defended the Democratic administration in the State House against Whig assaults. Its habitual defense of Morton’s actions as governor as well as its very unfavorable depiction of the recent Whig State Convention, where the typical criticisms of his policies were proclaimed, proved that the Post still considered itself wedded to the interests of the Democracy. Although their bitter rivals were in control of the party’s interests for the time being, the paper still publicly supported the party’s general principles. Much of this rhetoric could very well have been part of an attempt to gain wider acceptance within the party in state. Responding to the criticisms against them that depicted the Post faction as working against the interests of Democracy on both the local and national level, the group hoped that a spirited defense of the state’s party leaders, even if outside their own sphere, would paint them favorably in the eyes of the majority of voters. Only by maintaining an ability to present themselves as actively serving Democratic interests could the clique hope successfully to maneuver their way to the desired offices with any

¹¹⁸ Ibid, Aug. 8, 1843.

sort of public backing.¹¹⁹

In spite of these attempts, however, the Democrat would not relent in its depiction of the Post group as a faction beyond the limits of Democracy. That organ's repeated statements to the effect that Isaac Hill's influence with Calhoun and Tyler had helped bring about Henshaw's nomination, further served to damage any claims that the clique's most prominent members deserved to lead the party. Since the Democrat had long been referring to the example of New Hampshire and the cession of Hill's conservative faction from the majority radical elements, its editors felt able to offer comparisons to similar conduct said to be occurring in Massachusetts. Having accused Hill and his faction of establishing themselves in direct opposition to the advocates of Democracy, thereby making them Whig allies if not members of the Whig Party proper, the Bay State was easily able to project this same version of events onto the party in its home state. With the Post clique standing in for the New Hampshire Patriot faction, the comparison was easily made. In order to give extra emphasis to their allegations against the Post group, the machinations of Isaac Hill in Washington were given more weight than the more obviously important influence that Calhoun had established with the Tyler administration. In order to dispel the claims of the Post, along with other Calhoun papers throughout the nation, that Henshaw's nomination had been approved by 'the most prominent and uniform Republicans of New England,' the Democrat emphasized Hill's presence among these regional politicians. If this man, often discredited in their columns, could be proven to be the New England politician most in favor of the nomination, its merit within their region would be made wholly questionable, reasoned the paper. More importantly, if Hill could be painted as a main force behind Tyler's action, then the process would be further undermined.¹²⁰ Given the close ties between Hill and the Post clique, it was alleged, the former's prominence in this matter proved him the sponsor of Henshaw's designs upon the secretary of the navy position.

Despite the assertion by the Post that Henshaw was merely responding to the

¹¹⁹ Boston *Daily Atlas*, Jun. 24, 1843.

¹²⁰ Boston *Bay State Democrat*, Jul. 15, 1843.

demands of his country, the 'Country' clique's leadership thought that if Isaac Hill's role in assuring this nomination could be proven, the selfish designs of their rival faction would then be a matter for the public record. The travels of Charles G. Greene to Washington the previous spring were also adduced as evidence that the clique with its out-of-state associates had been acting out a long formulated plan of the former collector. Such involvement illustrated, in the opinion of the Democrat that, 'from the beginning to the end, that Henshaw and his friends were actively at work to produce such an impression upon Mr. Tyler and his advisers, that he might be appointed to a seat in the Cabinet.' Having long sought the secretary of the navy post, dating back to Jackson's first term in office, Henshaw had been induced by the circumstances in Washington to try his hand one more time. Such an acquisitive nature further proved Henshaw to be unconcerned about the best interests of the party, despite the claims of the Post that his presence in the cabinet would enhance the image of New England Democracy. It was to the Democrat's mind, a mere attempt to regain some measure of control among the party in Massachusetts at the expense of majority opinion. As such, this plan had to be exposed for what it was: the surely futile machinations of a handful of New England quasi-Democrats to corrupt the party and make it over in their own image.¹²¹

The nomination of Robert Rantoul for the collectorship further incensed the Democrat faction. Previously, Benjamin Hallett had been rumored as the favored candidate to succeed Lemuel Williams in that post. Such a replacement would have undoubtedly been protested by the 'Country' group due to Hallett's now permanent attachment to the Post clique, as one of the co-owners of their organ. The favor of the Tyler men having passed on to Rantoul, however, was one further indignity to the Bay State faction. Despite having formerly held brief membership among the Post faction, Rantoul for most of his public career had been known to espouse an ideology and political record more in line with the ideals of radical democracy. However, within the past several months, his public positions had been transformed to the point where, even before the announcement of his nomination for the collectorship, it was well-established that Rantoul was now a convert to the clique's way of thought. At the Democratic

¹²¹ Ibid, Jul. 24, 1843.

Legislative Convention held the previous March, Rantoul had to the surprise of many, opposed the passage of resolutions preferring Van Buren as the candidate for the party's presidential nomination. His subsequent defection to the ranks of Tyler affiliates raised a host of questions among Democrats opposing the Post faction. Rantoul, it seemed to them, solely pursuing personal gain, had united his political interests with those of the faction whose main goal was to alienate the affection toward Van Buren among most of the state's Democrats. Because of his own selfish motives, Rantoul had taken his political skills, which the Democrat admitted were of no small value, into the ranks of the allegedly disloyal state party members.

The collective efforts of Tyler, Calhoun, and the Post group to undermine the candidacy of Van Buren, were most prominently displayed with regard to this nomination. 'The disgusting scent of an administration trying to break down a favorite democratic candidate for the President, and build up a party of dispensing patronage,' it was warned, 'will be freely censured by the independent democracy of the country.' It mattered little who wielded the levers of authority in such a movement. Whether they were heretofore respected Democrats like Rantoul, or long discredited men such as Greene or Henshaw, the Democrat averred that the truth would be apparent. In attempting to place the name of a man previously recognized as outside the clique's influence before the people as head collector, the Post group once again was trying to dupe the public into believing their following to be more widespread than it actually was. Thus, the matter of the collectorship once again proved, their rivals thought, the unsavory characteristics that defined the associates of David Henshaw in Massachusetts.¹²²

No definition of Nathaniel Greene's political orientation was necessary upon his appointment as Postmaster of Boston in October of that same year. Since the older brother of the Post's editor was known to have been an original member of the Massachusetts Democracy, his appointment by Tyler further represented the president's attempts to align himself with the state's 'Independent Democracy.' This proposed nomination led to the Bay State Democrat's further questioning of the 'City' faction's

¹²² Ibid, Aug. 20, 1843.

political credentials. Greene could not represent the ruling faction of the party in that city, the Democrat claimed, since he and his associates were not real Democrats. Instead, the paper asserted, they were simply political men willing to sell their interests to the highest bidder. Greene's past illustrated this trait. He had already spent considerable time displaying his 'utter disregard for the democratic principle of rotation in office,' due to his twelve-year term as postmaster. Yet, by the political calculus of the day, he now somehow deserved to regain this post, the paper sarcastically remarked. Because they had ceased all criticism of Tyler, the Post clique had largely come to merit the characterization of Whig politicians that these offices necessarily brought along with them, mused the Democrat. Unlike Rantoul, Greene did not have to change his politics at all to accept this position. Along with his brother and Henshaw, he had always served the interests of both their own closed circle of local politicians and the Calhoun faction, now temporarily replaced by allegiance to the weakened president. His Tyler interests, like those of David Henshaw, were merely a temporary ruse to help bring about the replacement of the current Chief Executive with the man they had favored all along for that position. As such, Nathaniel Greene's appointment served as yet another blow leveled at the true Democrats of the state who, to a man, as the Bay State believed, endorsed the candidacy of Martin Van Buren.¹²³

The multiple attempts to gain office on the part of the Post clique's most prominent members were increasingly tied to the interests of Calhoun's presidential candidacy in 1844. Rightly fearing that these patronage appointments were inextricably linked to Henshaw's and his group's effort to utilize their newfound positions to enhance Calhoun's influence in Massachusetts, the Democrat was quick to publicize the schemes of their intra-party rivals. At the same time, the 'Country' clique employed the tactic of offering manifold criticisms of the South Carolinian's campaign. Stressing his divergence from the policies of Van Buren's supporters on the matter of scheduling the national convention and the manner in which delegates were to be chosen, the Bay State Democrat would come to label Calhoun's ploys as self-interested and working against the interests of the party's majority. In this way, his own course of action was made to

¹²³ Ibid, Oct. 4, 1843.

parallel that followed by his closest supporters in Massachusetts. Carrying the comparison one step further, the Democrat alone in Massachusetts would question Calhoun's intent to abide by the outcome of the Democratic National Convention. Alleging that the Carolinian had threatened to abandon the party if his name were not put on the ballot as its regular candidate for the November election, the 'Country' faction sought to portray the soon-to-be secretary of state as pursuing a course similar to that of the Post group in Massachusetts. As his closest New England allies had done before him, Calhoun would sell out the interests of the general party in order to promote his own designs on office and power, claimed the paper. In that way, the conflation of the 'City' faction of the state Democratic Party and its political idol in Washington was effected, joining the movements of these politicians in a single traitorous category.

At the same time, the 'Country' faction held up the image of Martin Van Buren as the man who best defended the true interests of the party and was thus the most popular candidate in Massachusetts. Morton, Bancroft and their associates believed the supporters of Calhoun were simply attempting to thwart the public will by their latest maneuvers. The Democrat labeled the Post's rebellion against the practice of legislators' instructing state convention delegates to support a favored candidate, a further sign of how a firm connection to John C. Calhoun made them nothing more than political apostates. The purpose behind the 'City' men's hostility to, as the Democrat put it, upholding the interests of the majority of the party, was stated by the paper:

'It comes mostly from the Henshaw-Tyler men, who are seeking to carry out the will of their leader and patron saint in undermining the prospects of Martin Van Buren in Massachusetts; it comes from the office-seekers, who are anxious to distinguish themselves in some way acceptable to the dispenser of the corrupting Tyler patronage, that they may have a better claim for an office under the present bastard regime... The movement is designed to repress public opinion, to prevent the voice of the people from being heard, to fill the State Convention with delegates whose sentiments are unknown to their constituents, and who for specious reasons, will shun 'all declarations from the public eye,' that the word may go forth hereafter proclaiming a Tyler, a Calhoun, or anything but a Van Buren State.'¹²⁴

The patron saint referred to in this piece was of course Calhoun, the man recognized to have been largely responsible for attracting the attention of the administration to the Post

¹²⁴ Ibid, Sep. 2, 1843.

clique in the first place. In helping his Massachusetts minions to undermine the will of the state's majority, the Democrat asserted, the South Carolina senator was simply furthering both his and their own ideologies. The Post group had long been accused of holding the desire to keep the Democracy in order more effectively to rule the state. Similarly, Calhoun had long advocated the interests of a limited area of the country above national interests. In this instance, both were working in concert to uphold their restrictive points of view, in the minds of the 'Country' clique.

As this case illustrates, the battle for control of the Massachusetts Democratic Party was in the course of being transferred to the presidential nominating contest. Not surprisingly, given the vast amount of political and patronage clout it had attained over the past several months, the Post clique and its Calhoun interest was able to hold its own against its Van Buren rivals. Although they were unable to gain any commitment to John C. Calhoun from the state's Democrats, the group's influence was enough to send Massachusetts' nominating delegates to Baltimore in the spring of 1844 without any obligation to support the 'Little Magician.' Such a circumstance would not have been predicted at the beginning of 1843. This scenario drew the unmitigated ire of the 'Country' faction's leadership. Both Morton and Bancroft lamented their inability to ensure the Massachusetts delegation for their political favorite, though they continued to have confidence that the New Yorker would still manage to achieve the Democratic candidacy.¹²⁵ Only the actions of the Post leadership, with the assistance of Calhoun in Washington, had managed to bring the lack of instruction to fruition. Van Buren's continued confidence that the Post clique had been discredited among the bulk of state Democrats, thus seems to have been misplaced. The influence Henshaw and his closest associates had been able to attain with their various nominations to high office had greatly enhanced Calhoun's campaign in Massachusetts.

Calhoun's potential strength as a Democratic candidate in Massachusetts predated the various appointments of his closest Post associates to offices both in the state and in Washington. Indeed, as a result of the enthusiasm of clique members for him, his image

¹²⁵ Morton, 17 Sep. 1843, 25 Feb. 1844, May 1844, to Bancroft, *Bancroft Papers*, MHS.

had always carried a great deal of weight among the Democracy of Boston. Collector Lemuel Williams informed Calhoun in the fall of 1842, that the latter had great appeal in the city. Williams was exceedingly confident that the organizational skills of the most influential advocates of the Carolinian's cause would help rally the rest of the state for him. Although he admitted that Van Buren had the support of most interior Democrats, he believed this disadvantage to be merely temporary. The New Yorker's supporters were not as loyal as those of Calhoun. Because few men saw Van Buren as an effective politician or were willing to commit themselves to the 'Magician' out of a sense of ideological solidarity, the Carolinian had a very real chance to unseat him in the Bay State. Only because Van Buren had been the sole candidate promoted throughout much of the region, as a result of the strength his supporters held in western Massachusetts, had Calhoun been largely ignored in districts distant from Boston. Williams implied that if Calhoun's friends could gain positions of influence, either in Massachusetts or elsewhere, his candidacy would be greatly enhanced. Unfortunately for Calhoun's supporters, the ability of Governor Morton to influence the majority of the state's Democrats would work directly against the Carolinian's chances in the state. Morton threw all of his influence not only behind the candidacy of Van Buren but also behind issuing explicit instructions to delegates to cast the entirety of Massachusetts' votes for the nomination of the ex-president. Thus, despite the control the clique held in Boston, Calhoun's efforts to win a majority of Democrats in the state would be thwarted largely by the actions of the 'Country' group.¹²⁶

While Morton and his wing of the Democracy were ultimately able to utilize their superior influence to stave off the Calhoun men in Massachusetts, the relative power that the Carolinian's interests held in the state was made evident on two separate occasions. In each instance Calhoun's supporters, led by the Post clique, utilized their abilities to keep important conventions held in disparate parts of Massachusetts from publicly endorsing Van Buren's presidential aspirations. Both times the designs of the ruling 'Country' faction were manifestly defeated, raising questions about the alleged weakness

¹²⁶ Lemuel Williams, 18 Sep. 1842, to Calhoun, *The Papers of Calhoun*, vol. XVI, pg. 462-463; Williams, 6 Sep. 1843, to Calhoun, *The Papers of Calhoun*, vol. XVII, pg. 416-420.

of Calhoun throughout much of the state. The first instance of circumventing Van Buren's aspirations was somewhat predictable. At a Democratic Convention held in the Boston Representative Hall on March 3, consisting of the Democratic Legislators in addition to local party members, motions publicly to endorse Van Buren's candidacy were defeated. Observers at the time said that the Calhoun branch of the party succeeded in laying these resolutions on the table, 'very much to the discomfiture of the adherents of the Little magician.' In defeating the interests of the state's Democratic representatives, the Post faction's influence on party activities occurring in the state capital was made readily apparent. More importantly, this instance showed that state legislators, all of them representing regions beyond the limits of Suffolk County because of Whig strength in the capital area, were unable to overwhelm the groundswell of support for Calhoun in Boston. While it is probably true that much of this support came from the Post's leadership, it is still unlikely that clique members were the only followers of the Carolinian in the city. If his supporters were able to out-ballot the most powerful Democratic politicians in the state, it therefore was a distinct possibility that Calhoun could actually marshal a genuine effort to carry the state's delegates to the national convention. Though the state was thought to be firmly in Van Buren's column by the majority of observers prior to this conclave, in its aftermath many political insiders began to wonder if the Carolinian would be able to exert his influence with the Tyler administration, and capitalize on the newfound power he had helped his closest associates in the state to attain, to enhance his political appeal.¹²⁷

In September of that same year, the Van Buren interests suffered another major defeat in Massachusetts. At the Democratic State Convention in Worcester, the Post faction was able to keep the gathering from passing a resolution proclaiming the former president as the party's favored candidate. The troubles began for the Van Buren men when George Bancroft was muscled out of his attempt to represent Boston's ninth ward, an area under Morning Post clique influence. The twelve votes the ex-collector was able to garner at a nominating meeting were not enough to allow his attendance at the Worcester Convention as a voting delegate. The majority of delegates elected to the

¹²⁷ Boston *Daily Atlas*, Mar. 4, 1843; Worcester *Palladium*, Mar. 8, 1843.

convention from Boston, a full sixty of seventy-two men, were Calhoun supporters. A similar proportion of Calhoun supporters was also elected to represent Essex County, the district that held populous Salem. There, ten of twelve elected men were pledged to Calhoun. As a result, the faction supporting the senator's campaign was able to exert a great deal of influence on the convention's proceedings, in turn substantially thwarting the ambitions of the Van Buren men who represented the 'Country'-dominated districts at Worcester.¹²⁸

Despite the efforts of the Van Buren interests in the days leading up to the state convention, Calhoun's supporters were able to marshal a good deal of strength. As Bancroft wrote to Martin Van Buren, 'The Tyler-Calhoun people were on hand in all their strength at Worcester.' Following the successful nomination of Morton for governor, made by acclamation at the behest of Charles G. Greene, the matter of choosing national convention delegates came up. At that point, Benjamin F. Hallett took the floor for the Post faction. Proclaiming himself to be a Van Buren man, despite what the majority of those in attendance knew of his connection to Calhoun, Hallett attempted to sway the voters. Though he failed in his ploy and in Bancroft's estimation a full eleven of the twelve delegates chosen were actually Van Buren men, a subsequent resolution to declare unanimous support for the New Yorker was defeated. Thereafter, the general course favored by John C. Calhoun, calling for delegates to vote individually and not as unified state blocs, was approved as a convention resolution.¹²⁹ Although the 'Country' group reveled in the nomination of Morton as candidate for governor and in its alleged success in having its favored men nominated for the Baltimore Convention, the faction's inability to have Van Buren publicly endorsed rankled its leadership. Believing that the wiliness of Henshaw and his associates had thwarted the will of the party's majority favoring its candidate, the Bay State Democrat would publicly assault the machinations of the ranking members of the Post faction in the weeks to come.¹³⁰

Interestingly enough, a nearly exact replica of the situation that had occurred at

¹²⁸ Lemuel Williams, 6 Sep. 1843, to Calhoun, *The Papers of Calhoun*, Vol. XVII, pg. 416-420.

¹²⁹ Bancroft, 14 Sep. 1843, to Van Buren, *Bancroft Papers*, MHS.

¹³⁰ Boston *Bay State Democrat*, Sep. 2, 3, 9, 21, Oct. 26, 1843.

the Massachusetts State Democratic Convention took place in the comparable meeting in New Hampshire. Regarding this matter, the rival Post and Democrat were free to express their views. The latter claimed that the president of that convention, Levi Woodbury, packed all of the committees with Calhoun men, though they were vastly outnumbered both in the convention and in the party as a whole. The Democrat concluded that such conduct was undemocratic and despicable, and alleged that the senator's intent was solely to gain the second spot on Calhoun's presidential ticket. In order to obtain support among the mass of anti-bank party members, the paper claimed that Woodbury had abandoned all of his former Federalist and corporate-interest leanings. By nominating 'Country' faction ally and Van Buren man Henry Hubbard for a Senate spot, however, the Democrat averred that the convention had manifested its actual party sentiments, in the process giving its retort to the Woodbury-Isaac Hill interests.¹³¹ Such a depiction of events was a none too covert comparison with what the 'Country' group perceived to have been the situation in Massachusetts. With Levi Woodbury playing the role of David Henshaw and Charles G. Greene, albeit in quest of a higher position, and Henry Hubbard's success paralleling that of Morton, this recounting of affairs as they stood in New Hampshire could have been almost uttered verbatim by the Democrat in regard to its own state. Though it was no longer hesitant about offering criticisms of Henshaw or the Post clique, none of the jibes directed at in-state party rivals were as unvarnished as those pertaining to the situation in New Hampshire. It would be reasonable to speculate that this account, though doubtless deemed an accurate account of the New Hampshire Convention, was likewise meant to tell the tale of 'City' faction duplicity within the Democracy of Massachusetts.

Countering the Democrat's rendition of Granite State events, the Morning Post clique sought to defend the conduct of its ally. Claiming that Woodbury had done nothing to promote his own political objectives and indeed had even refused to have a petition introduced to recommend his own candidacy for the vice-presidency, the senator was made to appear as a disinterested Democrat. He would not publicly commit to the interests of any potential Democratic candidate and simply vowed himself to be a

¹³¹ Ibid, Jun. 12, 1843.

member of the party, believing in principles and not men and intending to support the nominee of the coming Baltimore Convention. Thus, in much the same way as Henshaw had vehemently protested the depiction of himself as a selfish political man, seeking merely to profit by involvement with the Tyler administration while publicly denying any connection to Calhoun, the Post insisted on the impartiality of Woodbury and his devotion to party unity and harmony. Though both men were known to be heavily involved in Calhoun's campaign, a public declaration of that fact would not have served their political purposes well in their respective states. The actions of the New Hampshire convention were declared to have represented the will of the people, much as those in Massachusetts in the following months were described by the Post group.¹³²

Despite the well-known preference of Henshaw and his organ for Calhoun, the Post had tried to remain publicly neutral on the matter of the future Democratic presidential candidate. In this manner also the clique in Boston was similar to its New Hampshire ally, Woodbury. Even when Charles G. Greene himself was selected as an additional state delegate to the Baltimore Convention in December, 1843, the Post's editor remained publicly uncommitted to any potential candidate. Pledging himself to the support of the politician who stood the best chance of success in a national election, be it Cass, Calhoun, Van Buren or someone else, Greene asserted his neutrality. This was the position he had publicly followed throughout the debates over the preferred nominee.¹³³

Nonetheless, Greene's support for Calhoun was unmistakable. With knowledge of his true sentiments, several of Calhoun's closest associates had approached Greene in January, 1843. At that time they asked him to offer his considerable skills as a political editor in composing a pamphlet on Calhoun's political career and in supporting his presidential candidacy. This piece of campaign literature was intended to extol the Carolinian's virtues as a statesman. It was to be entitled 'An Appeal To the Democracy,' and would be nationally distributed. Similarly, Greene was also suggested

¹³² Boston *Morning Post*, Jun. 14, 1843.

¹³³ Charles G. Greene, 2 Dec. 1841, to Colonel Hover, printed in the Boston *Morning Post*, Dec. 4, 1843.

by Lemuel Williams to become the first editor of the Washington Spectator, a Calhoun organ in the nation's capital. While neither of these offers came to fruition, the proposal of Greene's name as an acceptable candidate for such important editorial posts indicates his prominence in the national movement in favor of the Carolinian senator.¹³⁴ At the same time, Greene's Morning Post continued to present itself as willing to accept whoever was named candidate by the national convention in Baltimore, though the clique's preference for Calhoun was widely publicized by its rivals. Following the official connection of the most prominent members of the clique to the Tyler administration, it was claimed by the Atlas that Boston's Democratic leadership would be wholly displeased by Van Buren's attaining the nomination. The mask was now off, as the Whig organ would say. It was now up to Henshaw and his associates to utilize the patronage that had been gained to press their favored candidate, no matter whether the paper chose to announce such a preference.¹³⁵

The Post group's particular predilection for Calhoun was further illustrated by their stance on two important issues surrounding the debate over the procedures to nominate a Democratic candidate. Throughout the year leading up to the 1844 convention, the supporters of various candidates argued strenuously over the exact date of the convention and over how delegates should be chosen from each state. Calhoun's supporters adopted and continually promoted a collective opinion on these issues that marked them as distinct from the backers of all other Democratic political men. The Post publicly favored the prescribed Calhounite approach on each of these debated issues. The Calhounites wanted the national Democratic Nominating Convention to be held in May of 1844, a full eight months after the date desired by the Van Buren men. Their reasons for a delayed convention were quite simple. As the favorite candidate for the nomination, Van Buren had assembled the largest following. The experience of his political associates in organizing a national campaign had permitted them to create a functioning association much sooner than any of the other Democratic contenders. Most insiders believed that from the earliest period, the former president had been the

¹³⁴ Isaac O. Barnes, 27 Jan 1843, to Calhoun, *Papers of Calhoun*, vol. XVI, pg. 633; Lemuel Williams, 15 Sep 1843, to Calhoun, *Papers of Calhoun*, vol. XVII, pg. 448-449.

¹³⁵ Boston *Daily Atlas*, Jul. 20, 1843.

favorite of the majority of likely delegates. Because of this conjecture, accepted by even Van Buren's opponents, his most strident backers, including the Bay State Democrat faction, pushed for an early nominating convention. Fearing that a longer period of time would allow another candidate to emerge from an otherwise diverse field of politicians these Van Buren men sought to maintain their control on the Democratic organization by ensuring their favorite's place on the ballot as soon as possible.¹³⁶

Conversely, waiting until the following May would allow other candidates to develop a more effective strategy for confronting Van Buren. The longer the selection was delayed it was believed by Calhoun's followers, the greater the chance for the political viewpoints of their man to be publicized. Once the Carolinian had been given an equal chance to organize to the same degree as Van Buren and with publicity given to his sounder political ideology, these Calhounites believed, the merit of their idol would become obvious for all to see. By rushing the nominating process, they averred, Van Buren and his campaign managers would be cheating the people of the opportunity to make a more informed decision. It is also quite probable that these followers truly believed that the longer Calhoun had to cement his strong association with President Tyler, the more likely he was to gain the support of those who approved of the course of the Chief Executive. Thus it was hoped that Calhoun would be able to capture the votes of men from outside the official Democracy, while at the same time holding onto his support among party regulars, if only given enough time to develop a proper campaign strategy.

As a result of these rival approaches to the date of a nominating convention, the Boston Morning Post and Bay State Democrat repeatedly sparred over the issue in their pages. The supporters of Calhoun in Boston continuously pushed for a later convention date than did their counterparts who backed Van Buren. Responding to the calls of the Post and numerous southern papers for a May, 1844 convention, the Bay State Democrat noted its opposition. Rejecting the notion that the number of potential candidates in the field called for a longer period of time to sort out the most worthy to represent the party,

¹³⁶Wilson, *Papers of Calhoun*, vol. XVIII, pg. ix-x.

the paper offered a contrary opinion, stating that instead of allowing a longer intra-party campaign, it would be best to allow the candidate to be nominated as quickly as possible. In that way, the organization of the entire Democracy would have time to develop a national platform, promoting its favored politician and steeling the party against the Whig assaults that were sure to come. The best candidate would of course be a man able to stand a long and withering campaign, and thus nominating him over a year prior to the actual election would not work in the party's disfavor, as critics of the early selection contended.

Since Calhoun was viewed as a weak candidate nationally by the Democrat, an early nomination would remove him from the running. As a politician unable to stand up to the assaults of the Whigs, he was not worthy of the party's favor, the paper claimed. As a result of the Carolinian's political fecklessness, assisting his efforts by shortening the campaign period would hardly matter. If he were not strong enough to win the canvass on his own merits, as the Democrat contended, Calhoun would not have any chance of the nomination in any case. The paper further claimed that the Post's arguments in favor of a later nominating convention were made out of the clique's selfish interest in keeping the favor of Calhoun and in the desperate hope that upon his unlikely election to the presidency, the faction would reap the benefits. Standing behind Van Buren and his earliest possible selection as the Democratic candidate would work in the interest of the party as a whole, the Democrat argued.¹³⁷

The Post on the other hand, stuck to its argument for a later convention by declaring that since there were a number of able candidates the party needed the longest possible campaign period to allow for the most credible Democrat's nomination. In the paper's opinion, 'courtesy as well as justice [required] such delay as will enable the friends of prominent candidates to present their respective cases to the consideration of the people in as ample manner as they may desire.' It was only in this way that 'mutuality of feeling [could] be expected to pervade the party, which will be regarded as the harbinger of success in the election.' By waiting until May, all of the candidates

¹³⁷ Boston Bay State Democrat, Feb. 14, 1843.

would be allowed to marshal their strength and better present their cases. Under such a scenario, the proper man would be recognized by the public at large and selected to represent the Democracy in the next election. The Post also alleged that allowing the maximum amount of time for candidates to establish themselves, thereby enabling the public to formulate reasoned opinions about the best man, would help establish a sense of unity of purpose among party regulars. Since any effective structure needed care and proper building time to become a cohesive organization, avoiding a hurried nomination seemed the proper course to follow if the Democracy hoped for a successful electoral campaign in 1844. Rushing the process would merely allow for the man who was most recognizable to the public at large at the outset to succeed. Of course, as a former president and long-time head of the Democracy, that man was Van Buren.¹³⁸

The efforts of the Bancroft and Morton wing of the party to force Van Buren upon the people at the earliest possible date, whether through an 1843 convention or the failed resolutions in the Massachusetts Democratic legislative meeting in March, seemed utterly ill considered to the Calhoun men. Reacting against any rushed decision upon the most eligible candidate, this group sought to portray itself as the more moderate and rational political element. In reality, however, by allowing for a weeding out of candidates, the Post and its allies intended to gain time to eviscerate the candidacy of Van Buren, thereby promoting that of their favored man.¹³⁹

The second major issue related to the Democratic National Convention that divided the supporters of Calhoun and Van Buren in Boston, was connected to the manner in which representatives were to be selected. The Calhoun men, following their leader's argument, believed that the delegates from each congressional district should be pledged to the man their constituents approved. Such an approach would attach less importance to the majority sentiment among all of the state's residents. In this way, all of a state's delegate votes would not be given to any one man, unless all districts happened to have agreed on that candidate. The district method, as it was known, was

¹³⁸ Boston *Morning Post*, April. 20, 1843.

¹³⁹ Ibid, Apr. 27, 1843; Worcester *Palladium*, Feb. 8, Mar. 8, 1843.

promoted to give voice to the diverse interests found within large geographic areas. Because many states had differing attitudes and concerns among their various regions, and were therefore bound to feel drawn to men with principles that spoke to their beliefs, such heterogeneity should be represented in the nominating process, Calhoun and his supporters argued. This mode of operation corresponded well with the Carolinian's stated belief in concurrent majorities. This constitutional dictum allowed for majorities within defined, separate and distinctive areas of the same larger entity to effectively make their diverse voices heard. In this way all men would have a more direct effect on policy and the decisions that were most important to their lives. By allowing delegates to be chosen from smaller districts and to vote individually and not in totality with their state, it was argued that the diverse interests of all citizens would be represented at the national convention.¹⁴⁰

For proof of the sagacity of such a method for Calhoun, one need look no further than Massachusetts. Though it was commonly claimed that Van Buren's interests would win the majority of the state even by some of Calhoun's most ardent supporters, it was also well known that Suffolk and Essex counties were strongholds of sentiment for the Carolinian. If the district system were allowed full sway, the dense populations that marked these counties would allow for Calhoun to have a representation at the delegate convention hailing from the Bay State, thereby promoting his interests that could not be expected under the previously accepted system of state delegates voting in unanimity for one candidate who was most popular. Realizing that situations similar to that in Massachusetts existed in other areas, particularly in New Hampshire and Maine in New England, where Van Buren could carry the majority but Calhoun held strong support in urban and mercantile regions, his campaign managers adamantly pursued the district nominating system. With more widespread and statewide support in the South, it was assumed that the significant delegates brought in piecemeal from New England and other northern and western states would help Calhoun attain the nomination. Van Buren's supporters argued against such a system, calling it undemocratic. To their mind the

¹⁴⁰ Lee H. Cheek, *Calhoun and Popular Rule: The Political Theory of the Disquisition and Discourse* (Columbia, MO 2001).

most popular man in each state should claim all of its delegates, as had previously been the custom. Because of Van Buren's larger recognition and what was assumed to be greater popularity, it was attested that he had the political clout across the entire state to carry the day easily against any man, most especially Calhoun.¹⁴¹

The preferred methods of delegate selection and voting mechanisms endorsed by competing factions of Massachusetts Democratic Party were displayed both at the State Convention in Worcester and with the 'Country' clique's attempt to utilize its influence with state legislators to gain the support of every delegate for Van Buren. In March of 1843, the 'Country' faction, utilizing its near unanimity of Democratic representation in the Massachusetts Legislature, had pushed for a resolution proclaiming Van Buren the preferred candidate of the Bay State. At this Boston meeting the Calhoun influence, led forcefully by the Post clique and its closest allies, was able to wield its local strength and prevent such a measure from passing. Because of their superiority within Boston, the Post group was able at least temporarily to prevent their rivals from obtaining a meaningful pledge by the most important Democratic politicians in the state to support the candidacy of Van Buren. At a minimum, keeping constituents in Boston from committing to the New Yorker allowed for hopes that at least a portion of the state's delegates would be allowed to support Calhoun. With the prospect of a handful of Massachusetts delegate votes, the potential for Calhoun's ultimate success in the national convention would be increased.¹⁴² The Democrat complained loudly against the clique's opposition to the instruction of the delegates to attend the Worcester convention. The Post's endorsement of a policy of allowing county representatives to head to the state conclave uncommitted to vote for the man endorsed by the party's majority was harshly criticized by the Bay State Democrat as a mere political ploy. The 'Country' organ alleged that these prospective delegates would, as a result of the 'City' clique's suggested mode of operation, be able to 'shun all declarations from the public eye,' or else mirror the actions of Benjamin Hallett and misrepresent their favored candidate as a means of clandestinely carrying the day for the Calhoun interests. Any method that circumvented

¹⁴¹ L. Williams, 6 Sep. 1843, to Calhoun, *Papers of Calhoun*, vol. XVII, pg. 416-420.

¹⁴² Boston *Daily Atlas*, Jul. 12, 17, 1843.

the will of the majority, the paper claimed, hindered the rightful candidacy of Van Buren. It concluded that in supporting such measures, the Post group hoped to utilize their patronage influence and connections to limit popular will.¹⁴³

Similarly, the Post clique's support for the Calhoun District System largely guided their efforts at the Massachusetts Democratic Convention in September, 1843. By utilizing their influence to block any resolutions pledging the state's delegates to Van Buren, they were able to arrange for the twelve men selected to be allowed to go to Baltimore and vote their consciences. Unfortunately for the clique, the selection of the dozen was not made on a county by county basis but with the approval of the entire convention. As a result, Suffolk and Essex Counties were not allowed to have any direct representatives to vote their interests. The later nomination of Charles G. Greene as an additional delegate from Boston, though vehemently protested by the 'Country' group, offered one significant concession to the 'City' faction. Nonetheless, despite this setback added to its inability to push through the resolution endorsing Martin Van Buren as the preferred candidate at the Worcester Convention, the 'Country' group did gain a major victory by assuring that men who favored the New Yorker would represent the Bay State in Baltimore. Given the identity of the men actually appointed as delegates, the denial of state convention-mandated support for Van Buren was simply a temporary victory for Henshaw and his associates. Bancroft believed that eleven of the thirteen delegates would vote for the New Yorker at Baltimore. The two potential outstanding votes were represented by Benjamin F. Hallett and Charles G. Greene. Despite the latter's claim to favor whoever was the most promising candidate and the former's profession to be for the Little Magician, these two clique members were the only exceptions preventing a probable unanimous vote among the state's delegation for Van Buren.¹⁴⁴

Although the Post clique had seen both of its major policies regarding the Baltimore Convention succeed on a national level, with the so-called Syracuse

¹⁴³ *Boston Bay State Democrat*, Sep. 2, 1843.

¹⁴⁴ *Concord Hill's New Hampshire Patriot*, Dec. 7, 1844; *Boston Bay State Democrat*, Dec. 9, 1843.

Convention Policy allowing for the district system among delegates having been widely accepted by Democratic state organizations across the union, and the starting date of the Baltimore conclave having been established at the Calhoun-approved time of May, 1844, these victories were irrelevant. By the time the convention arrived any delegate support for Calhoun had become a moot point. The soon-to-be secretary of state removed his name from presidential consideration in December, 1843. Despite the efforts of his allies in Massachusetts and elsewhere, Calhoun had been unable to muster the support necessary to continue any viable run for office. No longer concerned with his presidential potential, the Carolinian subsequently charted his own distinct political course. True to form, David Henshaw and his faction would follow the dictates of its national leader. Following his nomination to the most important Cabinet post under President Tyler, Calhoun vigorously assisted in advancing the prospects of the annexation of Texas. The Post clique offered its whole-hearted support to the administration on that matter. As it had always affirmed in following the lead of their political idol, the 'City' group was adamantly in favor of adding Texas as a state. The debate over this issue would once again dredge up old resentments between itself and the Democrat faction, regarding the question of slavery.¹⁴⁵ Because of their connection with Calhoun and their own notions on expansion, the Post clique continued to be private opponents of Van Buren's candidacy. Though he maintained the party line that he would approve of whomever the Baltimore Convention chose, Henshaw was working with Calhoun and others of his allies to undermine Van Buren's attempts to attain the nomination. Since he joined with the despised Henry Clay to oppose annexation, the New Yorker was seen as a flawed and weakened candidate.¹⁴⁶ In the years following the election of James K. Polk, the public debate over western expansion and the re-introduction of charges of abolitionism against Marcus Morton would drive further the wedges between the wings of Massachusetts Democracy.

As was true with Calhoun, the union of the Post clique with the Tyler

¹⁴⁵ Boston *Daily Atlas*, Sep. 28, 1843.

¹⁴⁶ David Henshaw, 10 Jun 1844, to Calhoun, *Papers of Calhoun*, vol. XIX, pg. 307. In this letter Henshaw promoted George W. West, editor of the Augusta (ME) *Age* as an anti-Van Buren man to assist with editing the *Washington Spectator*, Calhoun's campaign organ.

administration greatly increased the influence of this wing of the Democracy in Massachusetts. In the initial period of this political affiliation with the president and his closest advisors, brought about largely through the beneficence of John C. Calhoun, the Post faction had flourished. As the clique had wished, Robert Rantoul was officially nominated as Port Collector of Boston in August, 1843, and Nathaniel Greene resumed his old post as Postmaster of Boston around the same time. Other Post associates also benefitted from the Calhoun-Tyler connection. 'Peanut' Leland, a former senator from Bristol, was appointed to the Fall River Collectorship; George Savary, another senator from Essex, became Postmaster at Bradford; and Seth Thomas, a long-time clique member, was appointed Keeper of Naval Stores in the Charlestown Navy Yard. All of these men maintained their positions through the end of Tyler's presidency. Likewise, the nomination of Henshaw as secretary of the navy, making him the most powerful Democrat from New England in Washington, added greatly to the Post faction's local power.

Though by most accounts it represented the minority interest of the Massachusetts Democracy and had been out of control of party affairs for the past six years, the clique was able to re-establish a great deal of influence in state politics. As we have seen, these supporters of Calhoun had been somewhat successful in maintaining the Carolinian's chances to garner the support of Massachusetts Democratic delegates to the coming convention. Utilizing their patronage and control over important offices, the clique had also been able to score moderate political gain.¹⁴⁷ They had managed to keep the majority Van Buren interests, best represented by the 'Country' faction, at bay for the time being. Though the latter group managed to get most of their favorites elected as delegates to the Baltimore Democratic Convention, they were still officially not pledged to any candidate. It was hoped that this lack of a resolution in Van Buren's favor would lead Massachusetts' delegates to switch their loyalties to Calhoun if his course appeared the most propitious nationally. Of course, such a decision was never required because of matters beyond their control.

¹⁴⁷ Boston *Daily Atlas*, Sep. 2, 1843. The *Atlas* alleged that Rantoul had withheld Custom House offices from potential opponents unless they committed to Calhoun at the state convention.

Equally important, the attainment of many of the state's highest offices, as well as Henshaw's newfound national prominence, allowed the clique to regain some measure of clout in the direction of local party affairs. Though they did not break the reign that Morton and Bancroft had held over the party for the past several years, it was no longer true that the 'Country' group could dictate the policies and procedures of the Democracy without input from their Boston rivals. The leaders of the Bay State Democrat truly were worried that their grasp upon Massachusetts Democracy was eroding, and with good reason. His newfound status with the Tyler administration in Washington meant that Henshaw had muscled his way into the picture in Massachusetts political affairs. Further, his involvement in sabotaging the designs of Bancroft and his close associates to guide the annual Democratic Convention, precluding the nomination of Van Buren, represented a direct threat to the Democrat group. In a short time, the absolute control they had possessed over state party affairs had been greatly impinged upon by the 'City' interlopers. Already able to attain enough power to hinder their statewide designs for the first time in six years, further successes for the clique would not have been unexpected. Although it would be fallacious to say that the maneuvers of the clique had guaranteed them a position at the front of the party, their intra-party rivals could envision a none-too-distant date when the realities of Post rule would once again be upon them. This worry further informed their efforts for the election first of Van Buren and later of James K. Polk. Both were men who it was known would favor the interests of the 'Country' group, removing the temporary influence granted to Henshaw, Greene, Rantoul and their associates.

Fortunately for the Democrat group, the Post clique was dealt a crippling blow when Henshaw's nomination for secretary of the navy was rejected by the National Legislature. One of the main reasons for his denial was the negative depiction of Henshaw's connection to the failed Commonwealth Bank made in the pages of the Bay State Democrat. When seconded with their account of his involvement in the purportedly fraudulent exchange of Warren Association debt for inferior lands in South Boston, many who otherwise would have offered approval of Tyler's first choice to head

the Naval Department, were unable to vote for Henshaw. That is the version of events offered by his supporters and in all likelihood this rendition is true. It also could not have helped Henshaw that he was a known supporter of Calhoun, rankling many of the pro-Van Buren men in the legislature. With the prodding of the Magician's noted rivals in Massachusetts, coming out solidly against a fellow party member of their own state, Henshaw's union with a nominally Whig administration seemed doomed from the start. Since he could count on little support from any Whigs in Washington because of his prominent position at the head of the Jackson Party of Massachusetts, it is reasonable to conclude that Henshaw had little chance to succeed in his bid to become a Cabinet member.

The Post clique, most notably in the previously mentioned pamphlet by Beals and Greene defending the character of their leader, blamed the 'Country' faction of disloyalty in having denied a position of power and influence to a man who was ostensibly a political ally. In their version of events the attempts to slander the character of Henshaw, largely successful, were merely a mechanism through which the Democrat group could retain its powerful influence over local political affairs while keeping the party small.¹⁴⁸ The Democrat's claims that its friends had opposed Henshaw's candidacy due to his disloyal union with Tyler, in contrast with their own steadfast support for Van Buren, brought about charges of outright hypocrisy from the Post. Their rivals, it was said, had maligned the character of the Cabinet nominee merely in order to maintain their own control over local party affairs. These designs went beyond their support for Martin Van Buren. It was only out of an interest in dominating Massachusetts Democracy that the Bay State Democrat had treated David Henshaw so harshly, claimed the Post. The paper further stated that their intra-party rivals, despite a manifest admiration for Martin Van Buren, cared far more for their own importance and would willingly abandon their favorite for anyone else who guaranteed perpetuation of their local control.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁸ Beals and Greene, "A Refutation, By His Friends, of the Calumnies Against David Henshaw, In Relation To the Failure of the Commonwealth Bank, and the Transfer of South Boston Lands to the United States" (Boston 1844).

¹⁴⁹ Boston *Morning Post*, Mar. 28, 29, 1844.

Because the Bay State group had been able to block Henshaw's nomination while successfully promoting themselves as the Democratic champions of Massachusetts, much of the Post's prediction would prove true. Even though Van Buren was unable to gain the nomination of the Democratic Convention in Baltimore, largely because of a lack of support in the South, James K. Polk became the first dark-horse nominee in presidential history. After completing a victorious campaign against Henry Clay, winning by a razor-thin margin, the president-elect turned to the still dominant 'Country' faction to fill his appointments in Massachusetts. One might easily have assumed, however, that the Post clique could have won the support of the new president. Unfortunately for Henshaw's group, they were injured by two important circumstances. First and most significantly, their connection to Calhoun and therefore slower acceptance of Polk as the standard-bearer of the party was a blow to the group. Though Calhoun had dropped his candidacy for the Democratic nomination late in 1843, the Post clique along with several of his other national allies, hoped Calhoun's formal alliance with Tyler would lead to a third-party presidential campaign. This prospect did not emerge and during Tyler's unsuccessful attempt to run an independent campaign, without Calhoun's assistance, the clique showed no interest in backing the president's candidacy.

Additionally, though they publicly claimed that they would support whomever the Democracy nominated at Baltimore, vehemently denying rumors that Calhoun would ignore the party's official choice and stand for the presidency on his own, many Democrats led by the Bay State group, would not accept these claims uncritically. Thus even months later with Polk as president, much doubt remained about the loyalties of a group regarded by the more orthodox Democracy as tangentially Whig-affiliated. Similarly, as the 'Country' faction had most recently served the previous Democratic administration loyally, their place at the head of the local party was well-established. Reinforced by the recent acrimony surrounding the debate over Henshaw's confirmation and the inevitable wounds that the Post clique had suffered from reminders of its leader's public connection to large-scale banking, corporate, and Whig interests, the Democrat faction was able easily to gain the favor of the president-elect. Despite the obvious

grounds upon which the Post group ought to have been able to forge a connection with the new administration, given their similar sentiments on Texas annexation, the Democrat faction was in fact able to gain the favor of ‘Little Hickory.’

While on the surface it would appear that the clique’s attempt to grasp control of the Massachusetts Democracy through the union with Tyler had been a total failure, the group had gained much through this effort. Their level of influence was increased further when Calhoun was unanimously confirmed as secretary of state in March, 1844, the clique’s interests would always be well represented. As the most powerful member of the Cabinet, Calhoun was rumored to have attempted to place Robert Rantoul in the secretary of the treasury vacancy in the early months following his own appointment. With Henshaw denied higher office, the Carolinian was perhaps rewarding the loyalty of Henshaw’s closest associate by proxy with this offer. Because Rantoul was a less conservative Democrat, Calhoun likely hoped that his candidacy would be more acceptable to the Bay State faction. Such was not the case, however. The ‘Country’ Party, detesting the recent defection of their one-time associate, appealed directly to Calhoun, intimating they would never allow the Massachusetts politician’s uncontested ascent to Tyler’s Cabinet. Unnerved by the controversy surrounding Henshaw’s nomination, Calhoun desisted from his plan and the post went to another candidate.¹⁵⁰

On other occasions, Massachusetts Democrats unaffiliated with the Morning Post clique appealed to Calhoun to utilize his prominence as secretary of state to enhance or protect the claims of themselves or favorites. Such an instance occurred when Professor Moses Stuart of Andover Theological Seminary beseeched Calhoun to interdict the attempts of a newly-minted Tyler man to replace the current postmaster of his town. Believing that Calhoun could directly influence the course of such a small-scale matter, Stuart chose to appeal to one of the nation’s most prominent politicians. It is highly likely that this seemingly unusual action was brought about because of what the theological professor had seen occurring in nearby Boston. Calhoun’s influence had helped to revive the claims of the ‘City’ faction to a position of leadership within the

¹⁵⁰ William Hogan, 14 Jun. 1844, to Calhoun, *Papers of Calhoun*, vol. XIX, pg. 54-55.

Massachusetts Democracy. Thus the Carolinian, further strengthened by his newly attained position of power, could be expected to do the same for other Massachusetts politicians, albeit on a much reduced stage. As a result, the appeal of Calhoun was felt by many in Massachusetts. While Bay State Democrat men were fearful of his influence's impinging on their own control of the party, Post men saw this involvement as a means to enhance their own position, and neutral Democrats at least at times, seemed to view association with Calhoun as a means to protect their already established interests.¹⁵¹

Despite Calhoun's continued influence, however, once Polk's administration took hold in Washington in March of 1845, clique members were removed from the majority of their local posts. Most significantly, Rantoul was replaced by Marcus Morton as Collector of Boston and Nathaniel Greene no longer was the city's postmaster. Henshaw, of course, had returned to Massachusetts under a temporary cloud of disgrace, his long-time aspiration for a Cabinet post foiled in the cruelest manner possible. Nonetheless, the Post faction had succeeded in one important respect. Their temporary re-assertion of influence on the local political scene had again made the clique a significant force in state Democratic affairs. Though it was true that Morton and Bancroft maintained much of their hold on the party's mechanism, the status of their 'City' rivals had risen once again. Able maneuvering had allowed the clique to reemerge from a political exile of sorts to assert themselves on the political scene. For the time-being, while the Democracy was ostensibly united, the 'Country' group would no longer be able to dictate party policy by themselves without the input of their Post faction rivals. In a manner of speaking, the clique had proven to their intra-party foes the price of taking the Post interests too lightly. Bancroft and Morton were at least for the present time, more willing to consult with Henshaw and his associates on important matters of policy. The future would prove that the public respect attained by the clique by their temporary union with Tyler's administration could allow them to become spokesmen for the Democracy in one increasingly important area of party conflict, the strife to come over the matters of Texas annexation, westward expansion and the question

¹⁵¹ Moses Stuart, 20 May 1844, to Calhoun, *Papers of Calhoun*, vol. XVII, pg. 571-572.

of slavery in the territories.

Chapter 8:

Loyal To the End: The Statesman Group Remains Committed to The Democratic Party and Calhoun's Ideology While Northern Politics Are Transformed.

For much of 1842 and 1843, both factions of the Democratic Party of Massachusetts had struggled over the issue of which major candidate to support in the upcoming national presidential election. By the end of the latter year, the Post faction had been able to conjoin their well-known favoritism for the John C. Calhoun with a newfound support for Tyler's administration, thereby gaining a measure of power previously unavailable to them. Reacting against the purported heresies of their 'City' opponents, the Bay State Democrat faction continued with their constant support of Martin Van Buren for the presidency. The respective campaigns for their favored national candidates took up much of the time and attention of the two Democratic news organs in Boston during this period. In hopes of promoting their separate causes, each faction impugned the merits of the other, sometimes through the prism of the presidential contest. Their differences, while much deeper than the disagreement over the party's preferable leader, were best symbolized by this issue. The failures of both Calhoun and Van Buren to gain the party's nomination at Baltimore in May, 1844, would end these squabbles that had come to dominate the discourse of Massachusetts Democracy. Following the party's national convention, both groups would quickly register their unconditional support for James K. Polk in the contest. Despite a temporary accord between these factions, however, the 'Country' group's previous years of control over Massachusetts Democracy along with their opposition's brief union with the Whig Administration, presented its leaders as more natural candidates to inherit the important posts in the city and state the following March. Due to this political reality, the Post clique's hopes to regain position and status in the state's Democratic Party, set in motion during the two previous years, were temporarily

delayed.

Over the next several years, however, the increased prominence given the issues of territorial expansion and slavery would help bring about more turmoil in the party. Because of its leadership's oft-publicized and undeniable beliefs about these decisive political matters, the Post group was able to grasp more successfully for control of the state's Democratic Party. The traditional battleground debates that had adequately separated the two major parties into national entities would become muted in the years when the annexation of Texas and its consequences were the most prominent points of contention. With questions over slavery brought into prominence in national political circles, the position of each faction of Massachusetts Democracy would once again be reiterated, and in turn re-evaluated. Marcus Morton's known antipathy toward the institution was revisited as an issue of importance during his campaign to gain approval as the new Boston Customs Collector. With that key post once again in the disposition of the national Democracy, a struggle would ensue over the propriety of Polk's nominee, in turn helping to shape the course of local party operations. Capitalizing on the newfound prominence of Abolitionism and slavery extension, Henshaw, Greene and the Post group would seize upon Morton's actions and language on past occasions in an attempt to scare Southern Democrats away from voting in favor of his appointment. Though ultimately unsuccessful in producing their coveted denial of his placement at the head of party patronage, the clique's actions on this occasion did much to raise doubt about the former governor's viability as the head of Massachusetts Democracy, both among members from his state and nationally.

Though Morton was once again able to assert himself as the chief force in local political affairs in Boston, his highly disputed affinities with Abolitionists in Massachusetts and alleged antipathy toward territorial expansion during the period of looming war with Mexico would drive away many of his former supporters. Under the guidance of Henshaw and the openly pro-southern wing of Massachusetts Democracy, many of the state's leading party members stood opposed to Morton's leadership. Following the example of several important Boston and Salem merchants, who had long

since endorsed the anti-tariff, state rights-oriented tenets espoused prominently in Washington by Calhoun and in Boston by Henshaw and the Post leadership, many would switch loyalties from the 'Country' faction to the Boston clique. Due to the skillful maneuverings of this latter faction, able to play upon the patriotism and latent racism that defined many of the party's followers in the state, Henshaw and his associates were once again able to offer a significant challenge to Morton's more moderate course of political activity. Guided by the policies of Calhoun, first as secretary of state and later as the leading voice in the Senate favoring annexation and settlement of Texas, the Post would actively promote rapid expansion westward. In so doing, they paid little attention to the presence of slavery among many of the actual or potential settlers of the region. When acknowledging the institution's possible inclusion in any new states in the southwestern part of the continent, the paper adopted a variety of qualifiers meant to downplay the import of such an expansion of slave territory. Utilizing such techniques, the clique experienced a significant level of success in presenting themselves as the true Democratic political leaders of Massachusetts.

Assisting the Post clique in their ability to claim a position at the head of the local party was the course followed by Morton. Though initially vehemently denying endorsement of Abolitionist ideals along with any opposition to rapid expansion in the matter of Texas, the ex-governor would come to change his public stance. During the period immediately following his appointment to the collectorship and the initial recriminations leveled by the Post group, calling him an Abolitionist, Morton staunchly denied that an admitted hatred for the institution in any way impugned his level of Democratic commitment. He insisted that he was far from accepting the attitudes of vilified Abolitionists. By the months preceding the election of 1848, however, Morton had significantly changed his position. With Martin Van Buren's political exodus from the Democratic Party that he had been so prominently instrumental in founding and directing over the past fifteen years, and his union with the newly formed Free Soil Party, Morton had lost his mentor. Since Van Buren's and Morton's beliefs on the matters of expansion and the merit of the peculiar institution so closely mirrored each other, it is not surprising that the latter would follow the New Yorker to this fledgling party. In the process, Morton

announced once and for all his inability to co-exist within the local Democracy with men like Calhoun who constantly sought to protect his region's system of bondage. Similarly, Morton no longer chose to espouse officially the same party doctrines as the Calhoun men in Massachusetts. Though he had publicly broken with Henshaw some time previously, until his defection from the Democracy the two wings of the party in Massachusetts had continued their mutual existence as strange political bedfellows. With the disputes leading to the next election, however, this union reached an irrevocable end.

During the same period, the Post group, always at the forefront of calls for territorial expansion and denunciations of abolitionist ideals, would persist in favoring the annexing of Texas and in rejecting any pronouncements that seemed to threaten the institution of slavery where it already existed. With the defection of Morton and his like-minded followers from the party, the Post group faced a new political reality. Used to inhabiting opposite sides of the local Democracy from Morton and George Bancroft, the clique would suddenly find it no longer necessary to deal with the former and uneasily united with the latter. Because Bancroft would not abandon membership in his beloved party, despite beliefs similar to Morton's on the slavery issue, he became a direct associate of Henshaw, Greene and the other members of the party who rejected the lead of the governor. With his substantial assistance, the Post group would be left in charge of a fractured and reduced Democratic Party. At the same time, the heretofore close and fruitful relationship between Bancroft and Morton frayed and neared the verge of dissolution. The two former political cohorts would find themselves somewhat estranged during the course of Morton's separation from the party. An uneasy relationship developed between them. Partly owing to the severance of this one-time powerful team of leaders, the Democracy's influence in Massachusetts would be much diminished. Due in large part to the issues regarding expansion and slavery that helped constitute the reconfigured party's platform, Henshaw and his allies would once again be able to claim ascendancy within the party they had been instrumental in creating. Unfortunately for them the end of the decade saw the complete dissolution of the old Democratic coalition, and an end of the party as the viable force it once was.

The introduction of slavery as a political issue unquestionably destroyed the original Democratic Party in Massachusetts. With the defection of Morton, the union of Bancroft and the Post clique, and the emergence of the Free Soil Party, many of the old qualities that had defined the continued battles between Whigs and Democrats were removed. In their place, the divisive issues regarding the future role that the South's peculiar institution should play in local and national affairs were substituted. The additional presence of a substantial and growing Abolitionist minority in Massachusetts helped further inflame the already heated conflict emerging between former allies or political acquaintances. The intransigence of the leadership of the Post clique about abandoning their pronounced ideals and continuing to follow the doctrines made famous by John C. Calhoun, would put them in direct opposition to the remnants of the 'Country' wing. At the same time, the increase of sectionalist sentiments surrounding expansion, best seen in the debate over the Wilmot Proviso, did a great deal to inspire former northern Democrats first to offer pointed criticism of the party platforms, and then to abandon the party in favor of a regional anti-slavery alliance. Because the beliefs of the Post leadership about the issues of slavery and the prominence of territorial expansion differed so greatly from those of Morton, Van Buren and Free Soil men, their final separation was inevitable. Thus, the divisions over ideology that had been latent within the Massachusetts Democracy through its entire existence were propelled to the foreground. The increased importance of these newly debated issues helped to bring about the local party's final rending. In its downfall, the continued connection of the 'City' group to Calhoun and his ideals and the majority of the 'Country' group to important points of opposition would play the most prominent role.

With the Congressional rejections of David Henshaw and Robert Rantoul for their appointed posts in the spring of 1844, coupled with the earlier announcement that John C. Calhoun had withdraw from presidential consideration, it appeared that the 'Country' faction had gained a good deal of momentum in its hopes to increase its control over the Massachusetts Democracy. However, its Machiavellian approach toward local politics seems to have engendered much antipathy among both rivals and allies. It is also quite possible that the strength recently gained by the Post clique, most evident in the temporary

reemergence of its leadership to positions of prominence, allowed for the once marginalized group to promote its own ideas in a more effective manner. For whatever reason, in the aftermath of these seemingly beneficial developments, the Democrat group seems to have had more trouble producing mass sentiment in favor of Martin Van Buren for the presidency. When it failed to attract a respectable showing to a Van Buren rally at Faneuil Hall on March 14, 1844, the fallacies of the 'Country' faction's approach in Boston were brought to the fore. Acting at the behest of Governor Morton, George Bancroft had taken it upon himself to call a gathering of Democrats to show their support for Van Buren. While the original injunction by Morton had cautioned Bancroft against calling such a meeting if there was any threat of the opposition's being heard, Bancroft was blind to the resentment toward the Democrat faction elicited by their recent stance against Henshaw and his associates.¹ Although the city had always been noted for its favor toward Calhoun, it was still largely expected that with the secretary of state's removal from the race, Van Buren's local supporters would be able to draw some semblance of public support for their candidate. Nonetheless, this meeting was sparsely attended. To the mind of the Post, this disappointing outcome occurred for obvious reasons. The leaders of the movement to traduce both Henshaw and Rantoul, while seeing the fruition of their designs in Washington, had allowed their reputations to become sullied locally.

Especially damaged by these actions was Isaac H. Wright, proprietor of the Bay State Democrat and public leader of the movement to defame Henshaw, best illustrated in the 'Chronicles of David' series. Despite what local Democrats might have thought personally of Henshaw and Rantoul, many of these men were apparently put off by the words of vilification that had helped raise enough doubt for the Senate to deny their appointments. Wright and his paper's actions along these lines were adduced as the sole reason for the discrediting of Massachusetts Democracy on a national level. If the state's minority party could not even unite on the bestowal of positions of prominence upon its leading men, it was asked, how could the party ever hope to succeed? The connection of Van Buren's most prominent supporters and his organ in the state to these disloyal actions,

¹ Marcus Morton, 25 Feb. 1844, to George Bancroft, *Bancroft Papers*, MHS.

led a significant number of Democrats to shy away from his campaign. Because this very important May meeting was chaired by Wright and his closest associates, many who otherwise surely would have offered some measure of support for Van Buren chose to remain absent. In fact, over half of the Boston Democrats who had signed the call for this gathering decided not to attend following the announcement of Wright's leadership. Similarly many of the more prominent persons, upon arriving at the meeting and inquiring about its president, were said to have summarily left.

Another Democratic meeting called by the Post clique for the following night was meant to illustrate the divisions within the party in Boston. This gathering, attended by such stalwart city men as Charles Henshaw, B.F. Hallett, D.D. Brodhead, Robert Rantoul, and Seth Thomas seems to have drawn a larger and more ardent crowd.² At this second meeting toasts were made to both Van Buren and Calhoun as worthy Democrats. Only the latter name was said to have met with nearly unanimous approval. The divergent reaction toward these meetings along with the relative coolness leveled at Van Buren by those attending the second would seem to indicate an obvious negative reaction to the course followed by the Democrat. If such is the case, the cause of Van Buren in Massachusetts had certainly been damaged by the faction's actions.³

The extreme course followed by the Democrat and its faction's most prominent men, quite possibly had provoked a significant backlash. Indeed, a prominent Van Buren man from out of state was said to have verbally assaulted Wright regarding the course his paper had lately chosen to follow. In slandering the names of otherwise loyal Democrats who had attempted to assist the party in uniting with a nominally Whig administration, the Bay State had engendered much rebuke from its cohorts and allies. As a result of their unqualified support for Van Buren along with their related conviction that the actions of the Calhoun wing of the party should be publicly vilified, the men hoping to cause the success of the former president had quite possibly gained a good deal of resentment toward

² Boston *Bay State Democrat*, Mar. 8, 1844; Boston *Morning Post*, Mar. 29, 1844.

his candidacy, even if only temporary. Responding to charges in the Worcester Palladium that resistance to Henshaw was rooted in his well-known preference for Calhoun over Van Buren, the Democrat tried initially to remove this stance from the record.⁴ Worried about appearing adamantly opposed to any man who did not favor Van Buren's candidacy, the paper publicly backed off its earlier allegation that the Post clique and Calhoun were working in tandem to undermine the cause of the state's true Democrats.

The Democrat's criticism of Henshaw's endorsement of one Democratic presidential candidate over any other was widely recognized as contradictory for a paper that every day extolled the virtues of Martin Van Buren. Nevertheless, the paper re-emphasized claims that Henshaw and company had sold out to the Tyler interests as a means of proving the ardency of the 'Country' faction's democratic leanings.⁵ The unpopularity of its smear tactics toward Henshaw was displayed by the nearly unanimous regional support the nominee for secretary of the navy received both during debate over his appointment as well as in the immediate aftermath of his rejection. Using newspaper sources as a guide, it would seem that the majority of Democrats throughout the state supported the candidacy of one of their own for this important Cabinet post. In Massachusetts, every press with the exception of Wright's Democrat had spoken in favor of Henshaw's nomination. Similarly, the Post had reproduced over fifty testimonials proclaiming Henshaw as the best man for the position from sources outside of the state. Most of these reprints were from organs that could not be labeled as Post satellite sources. Further raising public doubts about the 'Country' faction's ability to lead the state's Democracy was the fact that Andrew Jackson had publicly proclaimed Henshaw as the most desirable candidate for the secretary of the navy appointment.

A similar situation existed as to Rantoul's failed prospects. While his appointment to the Collector position failed to gain the same measure of publicity as Henshaw's and

³ Boston *Bay State Democrat*, Mar. 19, 1844, Boston *Morning Post*, Mar. 29, 1844.

⁴ Worcester *Palladium*, Feb. 7, 1844.

⁵ Boston *Bay State Democrat*, Mar. 16, 1844.

thus so great a diversity of newspapers did not offer comment on the matter, other means of support were apparent. Perhaps most damning to the course followed by the Democrat faction were the expressions of support offered by legislative Democrats both in Massachusetts and Washington. Despite being comprised solely of 'Country' faction representatives, the Massachusetts Democratic Caucus offered significant support to Rantoul's nomination. Likely due to his heretofore tangential connection to the Post clique, Rantoul won the approval of more than three-quarters of these Democratic State Representatives. Their endorsement was noted in a request sent to Congress to expedite his confirmation as Port Collector in February, 1844. Thus in proclaiming the rejection of Rantoul's appointment, the Democrat seemed to be ignoring the hopes of its most prominent political allies. The paper, in 'rejoicing at the rejection of Mr. Rantoul, rejoiced at the defeat of the expressed will of a vast majority of the democratic members of the legislature; all of whom were from the country.' When coupled with the great deal of support that Rantoul had gained among Democrats in Congress as the favored man for the position, the Democrat's position among local party members appeared highly questionable. In giving their unconditional approval to the course of action followed by the oft-maligned 'Henshaw alliance,' the most prominent Democratic politicians, both local and national, had soundly rebuked the policies of the 'Country clique.' The fact that the Bay State Democrat had specifically assailed Rantoul's conduct at the previous fall's State Democratic Convention, at which time he had offered resistance to the resolutions of public support for Van Buren, quite probably added further fuel to the resentment of the paper harbored by many party members.⁶ Because of the obvious connection of the Democrat group to Van Buren, their actions in these cases raised dual doubts about the political ideals of the former and the popularity of the latter's candidacy in Massachusetts.⁷

It would seem that the reaction of the Bay State Democrat against the designs of the Post clique raised legitimate doubts concerning the party loyalty of the 'Country' faction's leadership. Supporters of Henshaw and Rantoul pointed to the similarities between critiques toward these men found in both the Democrat and several Whig papers in

⁶ Boston *Bay State Democrat*, Mar. 18, 1844.

Massachusetts. In so doing, they had a valid point. Much of the self-same rhetoric and charges against the allegedly scheming Post clique members were found in these formerly inimical journals.⁸ Speaking in Worcester on July 4, 1844, Henshaw charged the alliance of Van Buren and Clay men in Massachusetts of having offered a joint assault on his character and political abilities.⁹ Though this allegation was leveled at Congressmen in Washington, the roots of the issue lay in the actions of Van Buren men in Massachusetts. These were the originators of the malicious slanders against Henshaw that saw their fruition in his rejection for the secretary of the navy post. The Worcester Palladium questioned which group was more to blame for these significant setbacks for Massachusetts Democracy. In their joint calumniations of Henshaw, 'it had been doubtful which opposition to him was the most malevolent and vindictive.' His rejection by the Senate was labeled 'a result of the foul coalition.'¹⁰ Such allegations could not help but raise further questions about the loyalties of the Democrat and hence the 'Country' faction to the Democratic cause. Since many of the faction's charges against Henshaw and Rantoul had been centered upon the apostasies inherent in joining forces with a Whig Administration, the purported alliance between the Democrat and its Whig cohorts in Boston would obviously serve to bring much discredit on the Democrat group's public character.

Largely as a result of the changing nature of Democratic public opinion in Massachusetts, Van Buren was urged to terminate publicly any association with the Democrat in the months preceding the Baltimore Convention. The questions that were raised regarding the loyalties of its editor and other prominent men were foremost among the warnings offered by the presidential hopeful's political handlers. The public pronouncements of the paper defaming other Democrats for either offering support to other

⁷ Boston *Morning Post*, Mar. 29, Apr. 2, 1844.

⁸ This fact is made apparent when viewing the pages of the *Bay State Democrat* and *Boston Atlas* from June, 1843 through February, 1844.

⁹ These charges are given added weight since Van Buren and Clay had met at the latter's Ashland home to coordinate their responses to potential Texas annexation prior to the publication of letters opposing a treaty with Texas.

¹⁰ Worcester *Palladium*, Feb. 8, 1844.

candidates or seeking political placement outside the 'Country' faction's orbit were damaging Van Buren's cause in Massachusetts, noted one purportedly neutral observer. The faction most prominently in support of Van Buren was said to be a vindictive and narrow-minded clique. They had allowed their prejudices against others and desire to gain office upon his future success to detract from what should have been a principled campaign firmly founded upon the tenets of democracy. Ironically enough, the very vehement support offered Van Buren by his most noted backers in Massachusetts was believed to have engendered disunity with others who had originally shared sentiments in favor of the New Yorker. With the outright loss of respect among many party members directly resulting from this sort of behavior, the Bay State faction was beginning to forfeit much of the unquestioned influence it had held in recent years.¹¹

Heeding these warnings against his campaign organ in Massachusetts from ardent supporters beyond 'Country' clique circles, Van Buren requested a disengagement of sorts from the Bay State Democrat. Writing to Bancroft in the period following the failed April 1844 Faneuil Hall meeting, the former president made a specific and pointed request. Bancroft was firmly asked to inform Isaac Smith, the Democrat's assistant editor, that his newspaper was in no way speaking for Van Buren or his closest associates. Referring to the lack of direct control his campaign had over the affairs of the Democrat, made especially evident by his closest political allies' inability to censor the sometimes questionable methods and assertions of that paper, the New Yorker made it explicit that he wished for the Bay State no longer to be strictly called a Van Buren organ. Since in his own words, he had as much to do with the articles published in the Democrat as he did in the Morning Post or Whig Gazette, Van Buren made it known that he would no longer condone being maligned due to the damaging language found in the former paper. Such a stance denoted a changed sentiment on behalf of the 'Country' faction's political idol. His assertiveness on the issue makes it quite evident that the actions of this wing of Massachusetts Democracy regarding the nominations of Henshaw, Rantoul, and Greene, had been overly caustic. Though Van Buren was known to disapprove of the Boston

¹¹ Joseph Smith, 30 Mar. 1844, to Martin Van Buren, *Bancroft Letters*, MHS.

Morning Post faction, both during and after his term as president, the divisive nature of the Democrat's charges were readily apparent to him. His informants in Massachusetts apparently had made clear the damage these published attacks against their Massachusetts Democratic cohorts had done to the reputation of the 'Country' clique. In this instance the toll that the behavior of the Democrat faction had taken on its efforts at perpetual leadership within Massachusetts was presaged.¹²

Shortly following the rejection of Van Buren by the Baltimore Convention, the Bay State Democrat ceased to exist. While the paper had long been in difficult financial straits, the dual blows of losing its political champion along with much of the respect Massachusetts Democrats had formerly held for the paper, were at least partly to blame for its rapid demise. The ever present strength of the Post, reinforced at least temporarily by the patronage brought along with the possession of high-ranking local offices by several of its most prominent men, had served as a constant draining influence on the abilities of the Democrat to expand its subscriber lists. While the latter paper made much of the resistance of its editor and ownership to selling its assets off to the clamoring Tyler men the previous summer, the stubborn tendencies of the paper had not helped it to succeed financially. Ironically the very same claims that the 'Country' group had repeatedly issued against their rivals at the Post during the latter faction's period of leadership came back to hinder much of their own popularity. Concerned largely with keeping dissenting voices within the Democracy from positions of influence, the Democrat's leadership had worked tirelessly to prove the disloyalties of their 'City' rivals. While they had succeeded in blocking these men from attaining coveted offices, the Democrat faction was unable to grow significantly during the process. Coupled with the much better editorial organization of the Post and its satellite papers, the Bay State Democrat had long since become a losing proposition.

Although the leaders of the 'Country' group would be able to maintain their hold on the levers of party control for the time being, the seeds of dissent had already been sowed. In great measure because of the perceived disloyalty of this Democratic Party wing, many

¹² Martin Van Buren, 16 Apr. 1844, to Bancroft, *Bancroft Papers*, MHS.

in Massachusetts became highly critical of their political course. With the further division over platform issues in the near future, the abilities of a great many rank and file party members to disassociate themselves from their former leaders would be made easier because of the negativity engendered by the Democrat faction's past actions toward Post clique leadership. Once the Bay State Democrat became defunct, the Morning Post was able to proclaim this alleged disloyalty of their intra-party opponents without challenge. Because of its now unopposed public platform and the emphasis on the damage its rivals' actions had done to the cause of Democracy in general, the clique was able to sway many party members. Hence, many political men and leaders, both potential and actual, who formerly would have been inclined to associate with the 'Country' group, were made to reconsider their loyalties. With the divergence of the 'Country' faction's views from those of the national Democratic majority that would occur over the debate on Texas annexation, and the closer connection of the ideals of the Post to the party line, these initial reconsiderations were augmented. It would seem that the very methods through which the Bay State men had chosen to maintain their power served to damage such a grasp during the years of Democratic Party disintegration in Massachusetts.

In the period immediately following Wright and company's misconceived attempts to increase support for Van Buren in the spring of 1844, their local failures became a moot point. Unexpectedly, James K. Polk won nomination as the Democratic candidate for president at the Baltimore Convention in May. While the Post clique may have been involved in conspiring with ardent national Calhoun men either to place Calhoun into nomination in Baltimore or to convince the Carolinian to run on a separate ticket, such desperate efforts bore no fruit. Aside from the radical notions of Orestes A. Brownson, the major members of the Post group could no longer hold onto their hopes for the success of their political icon, after his having publicly disclaimed any desire for the presidency. At the same time, led by Henshaw, the clique made a furious attempt at defaming the candidacy of Van Buren in Massachusetts. Assisted and fueled by the hostile actions of the Bay State Democrat group in excluding them from the upper ranks of the state party, the

'City' faction shifted its efforts from support of Calhoun to opposition to Van Buren.¹³ Most of this activity of course was executed under the public radar. For the most part the Morning Post claimed to support whichever Democrat the May convention declared worthy of leading the party in the fall election. Beneath the surface, however, the feelings of the clique's leadership were hardly kept secret. Regardless of the sentiments of the Post, much of Van Buren's failure was directly related to his inability to win support among most southern Democrats. His noted restraint on the territorial issue served to dampen sentiment for the Magician in most slaveholding states. Such a circumstance was deeply disappointing to the 'Country' faction, while somewhat reassuring to their rivals at the Post.

In the days preceding the Baltimore Convention, Marcus Morton fretted that the very same issues that were weakening Van Buren in Massachusetts could potentially be brought to bear to defeat his presidential hopes. Furthering his worries, the two at-large members of the state's delegation to the convention, Robert Rantoul and Charles G. Greene, were both firmly in the Post clique's pocket. Referring to the unfortunate presence of 'office-seekers' who had benefited from Tyler's patronage among those responsible for selecting the party nominees and platform, Morton expressed deep concern about the manner in which Massachusetts would present itself at the convention. Since the nominating process had been allowed to slip from the strict control of the Democrat faction, even the actions of a formerly secure state like Massachusetts could not be predicted. Additionally, the introduction of a legitimate plan for Texas annexation on the eve of the conclave at Baltimore sent shockwaves through Van Buren's local supporters. The former President was known to look unfavorably upon immediate annexation. Tyler's proposal for the incorporation of this large and potentially wealthy republic would thus lead to problems for Van Buren. This issue allowed for more ardent expansionists to have their views heard, perhaps promoting the cause of another Democratic rival. Because of the Post clique's leadership's noted enthusiasm for adding Texas territorial domain to the union, the presence of this issue was sure to sway the already questionable votes of Rantoul

¹³ David Henshaw, 10 Jun. 1844, to John C. Calhoun, in Clyde N. Wilson, *The Papers of John C. Calhoun* (Columbia, SC 1979), vol. XIX, pg. 307.

and Crocker away from Van Buren. At the convention, Bancroft had written Van Buren thus, "I found Rantoul at my side. He was full of the Southern feeling; he was sure they would not go for V.B...they would adopt any Northern man that was a [supporter of annexation], be it Cass! Or Stuart!! Or Heaven save the mark, Levi Woodbury!"¹⁴ Because of the doubts engendered both by Democrats from Massachusetts and by those from the South, Morton wondered whether his favorite candidate stood any chance of success. Given the uncertainty regarding the formerly assured support of the Bay State, the leaders of the 'Country' clique had reason to despair. His and Bancroft's collective concerns would prove to be well-founded for many of the reasons they had predicted.

At the same time, the Boston Morning Post drew back somewhat from its earlier stance of support for immediate annexation of Texas. Knowing that Van Buren, still a very possible presidential contender, had endorsed a reluctant and deliberate policy regarding the addition of that territory, the paper apparently was attempting to walk a similarly less vehement line. Due consideration was given to the candidate's concern over the difficulties that would arise with Mexico upon the addition of Texas to the union. The Post offered a somewhat qualified approval of the wait and see approach announced by Van Buren.¹⁵ This temporary and moderate course did not mean the clique's leaders ever doubted future annexation. Wishing at that time, however, to raise no further opposition among party members in Massachusetts opposed to such an action immediately, the paper became a bit more temperate than usual on the matter. On May 3, the paper stated that the possibility:

"that Texas will ultimately form a part of this Union, is too clearly indicated by the signs of the times, to be winked out of sight. A large portion of our own citizens, comprising nearly the whole south, and a large majority of the west, and the people of Texas, it cannot be denied, are favorable to it. If it cannot be done immediately without tarnishing our national character by a violation of treaty stipulations with a friendly power-without plunging the country into a war-it requires but little foresight to see that a time will soon come when these objections will not stand in the way of it. The subject

¹⁴ Bancroft, 23 May 1844, to Van Buren, *Morton Letterbooks*, MHS.

¹⁵ Boston *Morning Post*, May 1, 1844.

will then come up anew. Meantime opportunity will be given for public opinion to form itself. Perhaps many of the prejudices that now stand in the way will vanish; it may be found that the annexation will not, after all, be so favorable to the 'peculiar institutions' of the south as many apprehend. Perhaps even New-England may look with a less jealous eye upon the addition of a country capable of so vast a consumption of her products."

For the time being, however, the issue was to be left for future consideration.¹⁶ By adopting such a course of action, the Post and Bay State faction could be made to see eye to eye on this issue.

Despite these modified sentiments among the Post clique and similar minded Northern Democrats at the Baltimore Convention, the issue of annexation played a large role in the nominating process. Unable to gain the favor of enough southern delegates, Martin Van Buren went down to defeat. Out of the chaos of numerous ballots, at a gathering where two-thirds support was necessitated to gain the Democratic nomination, James K. Polk emerged triumphant. Polk, though former Speaker of the House and Governor of Tennessee, was a relative unknown when compared to the other more prominent names under consideration. No matter what the actual thoughts of their members, both Post and Democrat factions rallied to the party ticket. Both wings of Massachusetts Democracy would offer unstinting support for the candidate from Tennessee. While each of these factions was equally ardent in its support for 'Little Hickory,' the candidate's noted favor for immediate annexation would have seemed indicate a closer affinity with the Post clique, if only on this matter. Indeed most of the Bay State Democrat's campaign rhetoric would focus on the demerits of Henry Clay, the Whig presidential candidate, ignoring the policy of annexation that was affirmed in their party's platform. On the other hand, the temporarily moderate stance the Post had taken toward immediate annexation when the party's presidential candidate was uncertain quickly reverted to their prior fervor upon Polk's ascendance.

¹⁶ Ibid, May 3, 1844.

In following these divergent courses to effect the same electoral result, both factions of the Democracy in Massachusetts were merely playing out to their traditional tendencies. The leaders of the 'Country' group, most especially Marcus Morton, had long been wary of espousing policies that might have the effect of perpetuating the existence of slavery. To such men Texas was a matter they would rather not discuss. Although George Bancroft was more tolerant of an eventual annexation of Texas, he also shared many of Morton's concerns on the matter and counseled moderation. The Post clique, on the other hand, had no such reservations regarding either the issue of slavery or the addition of more southern territory. Their public pronouncements proclaimed annexation as beneficial to the nation, an issue that should be far beyond the bounds of petty sectionalism. The clique would never let any considerations of hostility to slavery dictate their policies or change their collective ideology. To them Texas would bring unparalleled gains to the entire nation. In promoting its addition, the Post group was following a time honored political course. Their critics had called, and would continue to call their political belief system pro-southern. For their part, the leaders of the clique argued that their actions and recommendations were patriotic and above any sectional interests. Acting on this conviction, they were able to offer whole-hearted support to the annexation plan first proposed by John Tyler and promoted by James K. Polk during the 1844 campaign.

The assumed affiliation between President Tyler and the leaders of the Post clique, along with the latter's overt connection with Secretary of State Calhoun, made their outright support for annexation a near surety. They responded to the charges leveled against Calhoun for selling out the interests of the Democracy both in assuming a high-ranking post under Tyler and in pushing Texas to the fore during the nomination campaign. In this argument, the clique's fundamental source of conflict was with Van Buren men who felt that the Magician had been cheated of his contest for the presidency. Since the Texas issue had been at least partly responsible for the demise of their favorite's hopes, they denounced both Tyler and Calhoun for introducing the issue of immediate annexation as a means either to promote the Administration's own success or to deny the presidential nomination to the strongest northern man. At the very least Calhoun's compliance with Tyler's demands on the matter showed the Carolinian to have abandoned

the Democratic Party, by acting contrary to its interests. Such statements by the 'Country' group were motivated by selfishness, according to the Post clique's leadership. Since Van Buren had lost out to a worthier candidate, his minions hoped to force the followers of Calhoun from the Democratic columns by making such allegations. If their leader of choice could not continue to serve as the champion of the national party, the Van Burenites thought it best to see all other potential candidates go down in defeat. By alienating Calhoun and his followers, however, the strength of the Democracy would in fact be damaged in much the same way as the party in Massachusetts was said to have been weakened by the public defamations directed against Henshaw, Rantoul and Nathaniel Greene. The Post offered a final injunction to those utilizing their dissatisfaction over the Texas issue to limit Democratic leadership. 'And this bold game of reading men out of the party because they do not think as certain political tricksters would have them think, we repeat, must be stopped. We know of no more reason why Mr. Calhoun and his friends should be read out of the party, than why Mr. Cass and his friends should be.' Restricting the party by impacting political tests, ignoring the wishes of significant factions or even the majority as the Van Burenites seemed to be doing, was tantamount to keeping the Democracy small. Such actions would not be tolerated in Massachusetts, nor would they be accepted nationally. On Texas the Democracy had spoken at Baltimore and the Post would not allow party members to defy its wishes, either publicly or privately.¹⁷

Shortly following the official nomination of an aggressive territorial expansionist as Democratic candidate for the presidency, the Post clique felt free once again to publicize its enthusiasm for the addition of Texas to the union. In late May, mere days after the adjournment of the Baltimore Convention, David Henshaw rushed to publish a lengthy letter on the subject of annexation. He selected Calhoun's campaign paper, the Washington Spectator, to print his sentiments. This selection was no coincidence. Much of what Henshaw asserted was nearly a verbatim echo of the sentiments of Calhoun on the matter. Following statements that the annexation of such a vast swath of territory was unquestionably constitutional and that expanding the territorial scope of the United States

¹⁷ Ibid, May 13, 1844.

would strengthen the country's institutions, Henshaw arrived at the heart of the matter as he and his political leader saw it. The clamoring from mostly northern politicians against the potential addition of Texas was merely a ruse set in motion by Abolitionists and their associates in Congress seeking to protect their majority status over the southern states. These worries about the expansion of slavery were trumped up charges meant to sway public opinion in non-slaveholding regions. Like the Federalist Party before them, current opponents of territorial expansion were protecting their own limited and selfish interests by portraying themselves as philanthropists concerned for human rights. Henshaw claimed of these political opponents, 'Under the specious plea of love for the slave, and hatred to slavery, they war upon the character, interests and institutions of the south, their real design being a separation of the states.' The Post clique leader went on to insist that he was 'no advocate of slavery, whether it be the Negro slavery of the south, the grinding political servitude which England exacts of Ireland, or of that pitiful kind which Rhode Island and charter government imposed upon the mass of her people in years past. But for the purpose of its suppression, I would not invade the rights of any of the states to regulate, within the limits of the federal constitution, its own civil policy.' By interfering with the rights of individuals from other states and territories, those who scorned the policy of Tyler and his secretary of state, showed themselves to have little interest in the country's general well-being. In expressing concern for the plight of the slave, most of these men were playing a game of political pretense that would ultimately serve to limit the rights of their fellow citizens.¹⁸

The letter went on to defend the character of slaveholders and the slave regions in general. In so doing, Henshaw sought to refute the frequently repeated claims of many of his fellow Northerners who demeaned the South as a benighted region due to the presence of the institution. Critics would likely say he was also illustrating his often alleged southern partiality that had perhaps guided the ex-collector toward his steadfast support of Calhoun and the Carolinian's political ideology in the first place.

¹⁸ Washington *Spectator*, May 24, 1844.

‘In regard to the character of the people in the slaveholding states and in Texas, which has been held up in the most odious colors by these enemies of the Union, I have some knowledge, having been more or less in every slave state in the Union. I have contrasted and compared, as opportunities have often occurred, the characters of our citizens in the two great divisions of our republic—the slave and the free states. Truth requires me to say, that the assumed superiority of this class of the north of the citizens of the south is entirely gratuitous. It is not every difference in manners and customs that constitutes a difference in morals; and, with quite a diversity on these points, I have found as much moral purity, as much disinterested benevolence, as much kindly and generous feeling, as much unaffected, humble, unvaunting piety in the slave as in the free States; and I will not except Texas from this remark. I am aware that Texas is held up, by the artful and unscrupulous, to the minds of the timid and credulous, as a land of rogues. The whole United States bears a like character, and with just the same truth, in the minds of the ignorant and prejudiced of Europe. But honesty, piety and morality, are held in as high repute in Texas, as they are in the United States; and mere pretension, cant, hypocrisy, and treason, as much despised and execrated there as here.’¹⁹

Here Henshaw was merely restating the claims he had been spouting for the entirety of his involvement in political life. His sentiments favorable to the South, it must be realized, were not part of a ploy to garner favor with Calhoun or his wing of the Democratic Party. Henshaw and his associates among the Post clique for all intents and purposes truly believed that policies beneficial to the South were necessary for the welfare of the entirety of the country. As the South was an integral part of the United States, and not simply a minority area wholly different from the more industrial and liberal-minded northeast, the promotion of its interests was requisite for any proper American policy. Annexation of Texas thus was, simply put, necessary for national growth and prosperity.

He averred that the addition of Texas would benefit northern manufacturers in several ways. These included the Lone Star Republic's potential as a large market for cheap textile goods as well as its ability to serve as a buffer zone against the smuggling of British goods into the southern and western states. Such considerations would seem calculated to raise interest in the policies endorsed by the secretary of state among Henshaw's fellow New Englanders. On the whole however, Henshaw claimed that the desire of the southern states to annex Texas, based as it was on just principles, made it

¹⁹ Ibid.

obligatory for both northern and southern legislators to pass Tyler's proposed joint resolution. While he was repeating much of the same language utilized by Calhoun in presenting the matter, Henshaw's approach very much was structured to gain support among like-minded colleagues in the northeast. The fact that Henshaw knew that such ideals as he propounded would strike a chord among his associates shows the degree to which members of the Post clique shared the political ideology of Calhoun on this important matter.

Following Henshaw's announcement of his views on Texas, other leaders of the Post faction would continually refer to the opinion of Calhoun on the matter in statements favoring annexation during the presidential campaign. Though they muted any approbation for the expansion of slavery, they utilized the secretary of state's predictions regarding British interests in the area as well as the consequences of delaying annexation in making their case. In a speech given by Benjamin Hallet in August, 1844, the co-editor of the Post offered views that in the main accorded with the often criticized logic of Calhoun as well as many of his northern associates. In this oration he noted that unless annexation took place in the near future, Britain would benefit from its already developing relation with Texas. 'England, grasping England, would have a controlling influence over her, destroying forever one of our best markets-and that slavery, as a consequence, without annexation, would increase.' If annexation did not take place, slavery would continue to flourish in the upper South and southern Atlantic states, as a potential release valve for the region's slaves would be removed. Since a consequence of annexation would be Texas' continued reliance on slaves from the southern United States, this trade in bondsmen would persist if union were brought about. Without annexation, however, England would profit from its burgeoning influence by importing slaves into Texas from Cuba at half their normal price. Thereby an existent and lucrative trade for the United States would be reduced. At the same time slavery would be allowed to flourish in the upper southern portion of the nation. Such an outcome would be adverse to the well-being of Americans, North and South. Finally, once a direct connection had been established between Texas and Great Britain, the latter would offer cheap manufactured goods to the former, which could then be smuggled across the porous border and into the United States. In this

manner, the manufacturers of the country, heretofore protected by import duties, would be damaged beyond measure. For all of these reasons, along with the ever-present calls for patriotism, annexation was offered as the only true policy. This manner of presentation was one that would seem to have been chosen as the most palatable for northerners, and thus was promoted by Hallett and his *Post* associates as a reasoned approach. Of course the clique's interests in annexation were much deeper than this argument indicated. Their concerns over slavery's extension or lack thereof were limited at best. Publicly admitting this sentiment, however, would not have been politically advisable in Massachusetts or much of the North with an important presidential election pending.²⁰

In the days leading up to the presidential election, the *Post* continued to espouse the virtues of annexation in a manner wholly absent from the editorials in the *Bay State Democrat*. While the latter paper advocated a more gradual process, that would have settled the outstanding problems with Mexico prior to integrating the area into the country, their Boston counterpart offered no such moderation. To the *Post's* mind, adding Texas to the union at the earliest possible date was a necessity beyond dispute for anyone. In favoring Polk for the presidency, such a belief should go unquestioned. Even the slightest lack of enthusiasm, the paper noted, was tantamount to restricting national interests simply because a proposed political course appeared on the surface to favor the South. Such a flawed belief was unprofitable, unpatriotic, and unconstitutional to the core, reasoned the paper. The South as a region had done nothing to inhibit the interests of New England's manufacturers or mercantile trade, both of which would actually be enhanced by Texas' entry to the union. Noting the impartial approach of the southern region toward national interests, the *Post* asked what right northern men had to block annexation, merely because most settlers to Texas had been and would continue to be potential slaveholders. 'The south does not interrupt the way of life for [an anti-annexation speaker's] auditors, nor do they interfere with their business, so why would New Englanders want to disrupt slaveholders,' asked the *Post's* editor.²¹ In fact, southerners had by and large constituted

²⁰ Boston *Morning Post*, Aug. 27, 1844.

²¹ *Ibid*, Nov. 18, 1844.

the majority of citizens who had suffered from tariff laws that served the interests of the North. If the tariff on manufactured imports existed to benefit one segment of the population, still serving the national interests overall, the same could be said for annexation. Of course to the minds of the Post clique, adding Texas to the union would bring about much more national benefit than protective tariff laws that the clique had been railing against from its earliest days. Thus, the debate over the Texas issue allowed the clique to call upon their oft-repeated claims that their ideological commitments, said by many to serve only the interests of the South, were truly nationalist in sentiment.²²

The Post would continue to place itself at the forefront of Northern organs noting the importance that annexation held for the nation. While the enthusiasm about adding Texas to the union continued to emanate largely from the South, the Post and its associates publicized why the matter was of vital importance to its readers. The most important aspect of their rationale was the interest in keeping southerners satisfied with the course of political affairs. Beyond mere sectional appeasement in the days leading up to the election, however, the clique's leadership believed Tyler's policy to be of benefit to all. The South, due to its more obvious territorial interest, had merely realized the extent of this boon before others. Once citizens of Massachusetts and other parts of the nation became privy to the actual facts of the matter, the clique believed its case would be accepted rapidly. For northern politicians and editors to ignore the prospect of annexation was mere humbuggery, quipped the Morning Post. Such an attitude of conscious inattention served no good end. The rush of support for the measure in the South, the unanimity that had come about regarding the matter throughout the region, and the political pledges made for Texas by the region's most prominent politicians all indicated that the majority of southern citizens would not allow the apathy of the North, fostered through the overt efforts of that region's political leadership, to hinder their designs. The paper noted that, 'The great current of public opinion is flowing on, and as it flows, men who attempt to breast it will

²² During the debates that preceded the Compromise of 1850, a half-decade later, Calhoun made the same attempt to tie the inequality of tariff laws to proposed inequality of access to the territories for slave states.

prove as weak as straws would be to stop Niagara.’²³ For opponents of the clique not to speak out directly or to remain silent on the prospects of Texas, hoping to diminish the importance of the issue, was a dangerous tack to follow. Especially blameworthy in this matter were fellow Democrats who chose to sweep the matter under the rug, failing to offer support for the policy of annexation first proposed by Tyler and now approved by Polk. Such a stance as that being followed by the Bay State group did nothing to serve the overall interests of Democracy in the fall campaign and did much to harm the potential unity of sentiment between the North and South. As such the Post hinted that the most proper course for all Democrats to follow would be one of accord on the matter. Falling in behind Polk would solve any divisions on this issue.

Even this early, however, it was becoming apparent that the divisions over annexation would be problematic for the effectiveness of Massachusetts Democratic Party. Unsurprisingly, the majority 'Country' faction maintained its general silence on the matter. Such an approach was taken out of respect for the sentiments of Polk as the national candidate. Although both the columns of the waning Bay State Democrat and the public pronouncements of its closest adherents remained quiet on the matter, the reticence of the 'Country' group seemed to indicate their unspoken disagreement with Polk. Whig rivals of the group made much capital of this silence. Since the Post was the only organ publicizing its opinion on annexation, and one that directly opposed Whig arguments to boot, the Boston Atlas rushed eagerly to note the obvious divisions within the Democracy. Although the most vocal wing of the party proclaimed the Democratic endorsement of the addition of Texas, the Atlas was quick to emphasize the feeling previously displayed by their opposing party's majority faction regarding Tyler and Polk's current policies. Referring to the 1843 Massachusetts legislative session, Whig opponents were able to point out manifest flaws in the claim that pro-annexation sentiment characterized Massachusetts Democrats. Actions taken during that legislative session were of particular importance due to the fact that it marked the only year to that point when Democrats controlled both the governorship and the state legislature. At that time a joint committee of

²³ Boston *Morning Post*, Jun. 21, 1844.

both legislative houses, led by Democrats George Hood and Sam C. Allen passed a series of resolutions calling the merit of a future Texas annexation into question. The assertion of these resolutions, approved by a wide margin by the state legislature, was that annexation was seen as dangerous by the people of Massachusetts. If such a policy were ever pursued, the committee declared that dissolution of the union was a potential result. Due to this alleged public perception, the committee proposed that the legislators would do all in their power to prevent this political contingency from coming about. Morton was required to publish and transmit these resolutions to Washington so that all Congressional Massachusetts representatives were aware of the sentiments of their colleagues at the State House.

This legislative action made clear the degree to which the 'Country' group opposed the annexation of Texas in two major ways. First, since annexation was yet to be raised as an issue of political prominence in mid-1843, the strength of legislative and executive sentiment against such a measure would appear inexplicable unless the party's ruling apparatus possessed strong concerns over the prospects of such a potential course of national politics. Secondly, and more damning to the "Country' politicians, is the aforementioned fact that the vast majority of the party's members in the State House belonged to their wing of the Democracy. Since the Post group had been unable to gain control beyond the borders of Suffolk and Essex counties, two areas perpetually dominated by Whig politicians in state legislative elections, virtually all Democrats in the State House were affiliated with the Bay State faction. Thus, as the Post itself would vehemently charge in later years, the opposition leveled against annexation within the state's Democracy in 1843 and thereafter came from its intra-party rivals. Morton's role in these resolutions was also reinforced by the enthusiastic approval he gave to the resolutions' instruction to publicize the Legislature's enactments. Given the favor for Van Buren continually expressed by Morton and the majority of the 'Country' faction's membership, their sentiments toward annexation are not terribly surprising. Such public opposition to a matter still significantly in the future, during a time of unwonted state Democratic power, however, leads one to believe these resolutions were directly related to the 'Country' faction's desire to make its anti-annexation sentiment a matter of public record. The

motives for this wish are obvious. In passing these legislative resolutions, the controlling interests of the Democratic Party in Massachusetts were codifying the state's support for a position that was in their group's particular interest. Such a commitment would seem to strengthen the cause of the Democrat group while weakening that of the Post. With the results of the Baltimore Convention, and the increased appeal of annexation as part of the party's presidential platform, all these resolutions had accomplished was to publicize the very real divisions over the issue that existed in the state's Democracy. While these differences were pushed aside during the campaign in the interest of local party unity, the 1843 resolutions make clear the distance between Post and Democrat groups on annexation.²⁴ Their very existence served as a reminder of the actual beliefs of the Democrat faction toward annexation, despite the ostensible unity within the party in the months leading up to Polk's electoral victory.

In spite of what would appear to have been a great deal of accord between the Post clique and 'Little Hickory' over the issue of territorial expansion, the 'Country' faction manifestly gained from his successful campaign. During the electoral campaign, annexation had not been the single platform issue. Since the 'Country' group had long been known as the driving force behind the party in Massachusetts, they had distinct advantages that the Post clique did not share. Polk's strident demands for the re-institution of an Independent Treasury system as a cornerstone of his campaign endeared the die-hard supporters of Van Buren to him. Similarly as an ardent Jacksonian who had always been forthright in his opposition to Nullification, his political connections and history were much more in line with Morton and Bancroft than with Henshaw, Greene and company. Because of these affinities of sentiment on the major issues excluding Texas, the president-elect's appointment policies served greatly to undermine the political gains that had been made by the clique during the period of Calhoun's heightened influence with Tyler. As the New Hampshire Patriot said of the appointment proceedings in Massachusetts, Polk's administration responded favorably to former Van Buren men, insisting 'that every friend of the eminent South Carolinian shall be turned out of office to

²⁴ Boston *Daily Atlas*, Jan. 17, 29, Mar. 27, 1845.

give them place.'²⁵ In their stead, Henshaw and his followers were replaced by and large with their 'Country' party rivals.

The appointment process in the aftermath of Polk's success represented a wholesale placement of 'Country' group members and allies in the most important posts in Massachusetts. Where Robert Rantoul had failed, Marcus Morton would succeed in gaining nomination to the Collectorship of Boston. His ultimate confirmation to the office, however, would come after a prolonged battle with the Post establishment. Having attained the most important appointive post in Massachusetts, Morton endeavored to remove from more minor offices many members of the Post clique who had gained influence under Tyler. Additionally, Polk selected George Bancroft to become his secretary of the navy. Again, due to the more substantial influence of his political associates in Massachusetts as well as his national reputation as a man of letters, Bancroft succeeded where Henshaw had failed and was confirmed to the Cabinet later in 1845.

Although Polk's initial actions were largely intended to favor the 'Country' group at the expense of their intra-party rivals, the former group was unable to gain the President's entire support. The influence of Henshaw and his associates was simply too wide-spread to be completely bottled up, no matter their minority status. The Post group's connection to several of Polk's Cabinet members as well as Calhoun's continued strength in Democratic circles allowed the clique to gain some degree of favor in the appointment process. Though vastly outnumbered by their 'Country' opponents, the followers of the clique did have some success in infiltrating areas of party control. Their continued, if somewhat reduced influence, allowed the clique to contest for the important post of United States Attorney. To the disgust of Morton, de facto leader of the party in Massachusetts, the most prominent early contender for the job was none other than Benjamin Hallett. Much of the initial period prior to his own appointment and confirmation to the collectorship was spent in combating the quasi-public candidacy of the co-editor of the Post. Morton's vehement stance against granting the position to any member of the clique

²⁵ Concord *Hill's New Hampshire Patriot*, Jun. 12, 1845.

engendered the disfavor of Bancroft in the weeks before Polk's inauguration. Realizing the potential damage that Morton's efforts to keep the ruling interests of the state Democracy in the hands of the members of the smallest possible political circle could bring about, Bancroft reacted against the governor's restrictive pursuits. During the process, initial fissures between the two great friends and political allies would be revealed.

The disagreement between Bancroft and Morton over the District Attorney appointment was rooted in the alliance that the former had entered into with Hallett. Bancroft, due to his influence with the incoming administration as well as his status as the most formidable power broker in the state, seemed a logical channel through whom to seek the nomination. Because these two men had been political allies and associates since their days as radical Democrats, the more recent distance that had developed between them was more easily overcome than would have been the case with genuine members of the Post clique. Realizing these circumstances, Hallett wrote to Bancroft in February, 1845. Claiming never to have asked for any post prior to that period, he expressed an interest in serving the general cause of Democracy. On the 17th Hallett informed Bancroft that 'if the Attorneyship can come honorably, I should like it.' Although it was rumored that Bancroft had already thrown his considerable influence behind John Bolles for the post, Hallett asked him to reconsider.²⁶ Somewhat surprisingly, Bancroft complied with Hallett's wishes. Within days he petitioned Morton to support the rival clique member's candidacy. The ex-governor reacted with disfavor. Reminding his friend that they had always agreed on the character of Hallett since his union with the Post faction, Morton questioned the judgment behind Bancroft's apparent change of heart. 'My indispensable requisites for office are capacity, integrity and good character. Now I know that Mr. H., does not possess either of these. Not a judge or a decent lawyer in the State will say that he thinks he has legal knowledge enough to transact the business of the office properly. Thus I don't believe one of those who recommend him, would trust him with a case of their own.' Since it was well known that Hallett was liable to abandon his friends in hopes of promoting his own cause, he was not the proper man to assume such an important legal post, the

²⁶ B.F. Hallett, 17 Feb. 1845, to Bancroft, *Bancroft Papers*, MHS.

ex-governor alleged.²⁷ Overlooking the former similarities in political ideology and sentiment between Hallett and themselves, Morton refused to acknowledge the merit that his close friend saw in the latter individual.

For his part Bancroft felt that following Polk's electoral victory, concessions would have to be made to the opposite wing of the Massachusetts Democratic Party. With this realization he heeded the advice of fellow 'Country' party members. The initial mess of appointments granted to Van Buren supporters to the near exclusion of Calhoun men was troubling to several followers of political events in Massachusetts. The Post clique had worked just as hard for Polk's electoral success during the preceding election. For these men to be proscribed from political positions was an eventuality sure to disturb not just the failed office seekers but many other Democrats as well.²⁸ Given this political reality, embracing Hallett in favor of other less palatable options seemed an intelligent policy. As the central figure of the party, Morton held the bulk of responsibility for healing the obvious breach that had opened up between 'Country' and 'City' factions. Bancroft considered honoring Hallett, an ideologically like-minded politician, as the best means to do so.

With the recent discontinuance of the Bay State Democrat, the Morning Post now had a monopoly of the party press in Boston. Due to this development, the public influence of the clique was sure to be enhanced. As a result amity between both wings of the party was more necessary than in recent years. Bancroft claimed, 'since every attempt that has been made to establish a different press in Boston from the Post, has proved utterly futile; and the unsuccessful efforts have only left it in a stronger position before the country than ever,' concessions should be made to their intra-party rivals. Since Hallett had been a constant supporter of Morton's repeated candidacies for the governorship as well as a former ally of the Democrat faction, Bancroft hoped his long-time friend would come around to offering a measure of support in Hallett's quest for the District Attorney post.

²⁷ Morton, 28 Feb. 1845, to Bancroft, *Bancroft Papers*, MHS.

²⁸ Hobart, 14 Apr. 1845, to Bancroft, *Bancroft Papers*, MHS.

Following such a formula was the only way to avoid the direct split between the factions that was already emerging. Attempting to weaken the clique further, while a sustainable policy in the past, was now undesirable due to its control over public communication, as well as the backlash that the actions of the 'Country' group against Henshaw's and Rantoul's respective quests for office had recently engendered.²⁹

During this period of maneuver over political appointments, Bancroft served as the point of connection between the two wings of the party. Largely abandoning his former position as a leader of the 'Country' group, he became a moderator in the debate over influence within the Massachusetts Democracy. Realizing that the actions of Henshaw and his associates in recent years had gained for the clique a restoration of some measure of its former power within local Democratic circles, Bancroft sought to convince Morton to follow a moderate course as both collector and party power broker in state. At the same time, Bancroft fielded the respective complaints of Charles G. Greene and Hallett regarding the latter's candidacy. Relaying to Morton their views that the Post clique was being unfairly barred from all potential offices, Bancroft on most occasions took the side of the excluded group.

Bancroft's change in support from Bolles to Hallett for the attorneyship engendered heated protests from the former. Bolles wrote to Bancroft pointing out the ever-changing course of Hallett as evidence of his unfitness for the post. Noting his rival's similarity in sentiment to Henshaw, Bolles stated of Hallett, 'His junction with our party has been our greatest political misfortune in Massachusetts...there is such an atmosphere of untruth and dishonesty about him-he is so notoriously what the Post long ago christened him, 'the soldier of fortune' that his labors in any cause are fatal.'³⁰ If Hallett needed to be appointed to any post, it should be one of minor significance and only for the benefit of the entire party, Bolles claimed. Together with other enemies of the clique, Bolles and Morton claimed that the Post group had no right to clamor for positions as a matter of loyalty to the

²⁹ Bancroft, 28 Feb. 1845, to Morton, *Bancroft Papers*, MHS.

³⁰ Bolles, 22 Mar. 1845, to Bancroft, *Bancroft Papers*, MHS.

party. They had not earned the proper merit to deserve such distinction. Uttering a common refrain, Charles Clark wrote to Bancroft of the Post's editor's claims, "The Boston Morning Post is [well] conducted. Mr. Greene is well entitled to respect. But he ought not to ask, he cannot expect that the opinions of every man in this State are to be sacrificed to his personal prejudices or his family interests."³¹

Despite such charges, George Bancroft continued his endorsement of Benjamin F. Hallett. It would appear that at this time Bancroft decided to abandon his one-sided connection to the 'Country' faction. Such a separation, brought about by his changed sentiments, greatly perturbed Marcus Morton. Heeding the warnings of several associates, representing the complaints of the largely proscribed Calhoun men, Bancroft sought for a more even distribution of the Polk administration's patronage. Support for Morton's and Bancroft's past endeavors had come from both wings of the party. Given the fact that the Post faction continued to be among the Democracy's leaders, Bancroft was urged to accept the faction as a necessary part of the party's success. Only by disassociating himself from the restrictive Democrat faction, Andrew Hobart pointed out to him, would Bancroft be able to survive within a Democratic Party that was expressing renewed interest in the fate of Henshaw and his followers.

The recent appointment of Isaac Wright, the same man who as editor of the Bay State Democrat had been largely responsible for the smear campaign against Henshaw and Rantoul, as Master of the Charleston Naval Yard had served to alienate many party members in Boston. Hobart noted, "The numerous class in this State who did not think it expedient to re-nominate Mr. Van Buren and all the warm and devoted friends of Mr. Henshaw, and there are many-fee aggrieved and deeply aggrieved, at the appointment of Mr. Wright and they feel too that the Van Buren section of our party are the peculiar favorites at Washington, and it is upon you that they throw most of the responsibility." It was not Hallett or Greene or Henshaw who would bear the brunt of vilification for this and like appointments. Bancroft, as one of the leaders of the party and a Cabinet member, would be sure to feel the animosity of excluded Democrats. If the situation was not

³¹ C. Clark, 25 Mar. 1845, to Bancroft, *Bancroft Papers*, MHS.

rectified, the Polk Administration was sure to fail in Massachusetts.³² Indeed, the inability of the Democratic Party to gain a single seat in the State Senate during the previous fall's election was largely blamed on the restrictive policies followed by its 'Country' faction leadership. So 'conveniently small have they made the democratic party in that state,' complained Hill's New Hampshire Patriot, 'that not one of the forty Senators, in half as many districts, at the last election was of the [party].' The Morning Post's strongest out-of-state ally went on to warn, 'President Polk, if he listens to his present New England advisers in making removals and appointments, will, ere long, find how much proscription at the North will strengthen the democratic party.'³³ Largely heeding warnings of this sort, Bancroft was forced to temporize on the issue of local appointments.

The pursuit of party harmony eventually resulted in the appointment of Robert Rantoul as District Attorney. Rantoul had been angling for the collectorship. He had tried to utilize his connections to Isaac Hill and to Tyler's initial collector Lemuel Williams, while directly canvassing in the nation's capital for the job during the first two months of 1845.³⁴ Being at a significant disadvantage to the more prominent and highly respected Morton, however, Rantoul readily accepted his new occupation. Partially due to the negative public reaction to the Democrat's earlier demeaning portrayal of him, the 'Country' faction did not heavily dispute Rantoul's candidacy on this occasion. It would seem that he was a less objectionable candidate than Hallett. At any rate, Morton did not hold the same animus toward Rantoul as he did toward Hallett. Rantoul's assumption of the duties of District Attorney illustrated the degree of influence the Post group still held in Massachusetts. That the ex-governor had been unwilling or unable to realize this fact had become a major sticking point between himself and Bancroft, who had since departed for Washington to assume his Cabinet post.

Once in office, Rantoul sought to consolidate his gains. Utilizing the emerging influence of David Henshaw, the clique embarked upon a campaign that served to indicate

³² Andrew Hobart, 26 Apr. 1845, to Bancroft, *Bancroft Papers*, MHS.

³³ Concord *Hill's New Hampshire Patriot*, Jun. 12, 1845; *Portsmouth Gazette*, Jun. 17, 1845.

³⁴ Frederick Robinson, 14 Mar. 1845, to Bancroft, *Bancroft Papers*, MHS.

that they were not ready to give up their chances to lead the party in Massachusetts. Henshaw had not been inactive in the aftermath of his rejection for the secretary of the navy position. In fact, since Polk's election he had been in Washington attempting to manipulate political opinion in favor of Post clique members for relatively minor posts in Massachusetts. Henshaw was marginally successful in getting several of his followers appointed to Custom House jobs over the objections of Morton, a circumstance that surely infuriated the Head Collector.³⁵ In the larger scheme of political operations, though somewhat checked in their ambition for power over the previous two years, both their resentment at the potential presence of Morton in the collector position and the development of newly important issues particularly as to territorial expansion would impel the faction to make a renewed attempt at control of the Democracy. In so doing, they hoped to block the confirmation of Morton to the collectorship in much the same way as his faction had stopped the attempts of Henshaw and Rantoul to become important parts of John Tyler's administration. The intransigence of the former governor about granting any form of shared power between the two wings of the party, in conjunction with the long recognized difference between the factions over the issues of territorial expansion and slavery, would help bring about the next phase in the public struggle within the Massachusetts Democratic Party. This battle would hinge upon Morton's well-known but mostly muted sentiments toward abolition as well as his policies which served to restrict the Democratic leadership in Massachusetts.

The Post clique never intended to let Marcus Morton's confirmation as Collector of the Port of Boston go through easily. From the beginning several of their most prominent figures resisted his appointment. Reciprocating the actions that had occurred against its own members Henshaw and Rantoul over government positions during the previous year, associates of the Post group endeavored to defeat Morton's candidacy. Their ultimate hope was to replace the former governor with one of their own. Rantoul was the preferred

³⁵ Arthur B. Darling, *Political Changes in Massachusetts, 1824-1828, A Study of Liberal Movements in Politics* (New Haven 1925), pg. 322.

substitute in these designs. By the summer of 1845, both Hallett and Rantoul were in Washington attempting to defeat Morton's confirmation in hearings before the Senate. There they consulted, either directly or through their important connections, with Senators from southern states. Hallett was also rumored to have been hectoring Secretary of the Treasury Robert Walker with regard to Morton's qualifications. As an ardent expansionist, a pro-slavery Mississippian, and a close associate of President Polk, Walker would seem to have been a favorable ally in the endeavor to defeat Morton. During their various discussions with Legislators and Executive branch members, much of the focus of these two clique leaders was related to Morton's views on slavery and territorial expansion. By highlighting the antipathy that Morton held toward the institution, brought to the fore during his campaigns for Governor in previous years, they hoped that significant doubts could be raised regarding his character and political leanings. If these influential southerners could be made to understand the deep rooted feelings Morton held against the institution, if he could be portrayed as a man with Abolitionist sentiments, there was a good chance that his designs on the collector position would be foiled. In their efforts, the connection the Post group had so long maintained with Calhoun and his allies likely worked to their advantage in gaining important southern support. Rantoul, Hallett and their associates in Boston undoubtedly hoped that, deprived of the patronage and influence that came with the possession of the collectorship, the claims of the 'Country' faction to leadership of the party would be greatly reduced.³⁶

Morton's perceived association with Abolitionists and anti-slavery notions, much publicized by the Post clique during the visits their representatives made to Washington, were, they said, damaging the general chances of the Democratic Party in the coming election. Because Morton was known to harbor sentiments comparable to those of abolition men in Massachusetts, the clique alleged his continued presence at the head of the party could only serve to undermine the Democracy's chances of gubernatorial success. In August, 1845, Hallett informed the secretary of the navy that Morton became more odious to the party by the day. His known leanings toward the most disreputable doctrines

³⁶ Morton, 1 Jul. 1845, to Bancroft, *Bancroft Papers*, MHS.

espoused by Abolitionists, made the collector's presence within the ranks of the Democracy a circumstance sure to bring the party into disrepute. Only if his name could somehow be separated from the party could the Democrats hope to have any chance in that fall's election. Enjoining Bancroft to denounce his friend and long-time political associate publicly, Hallett hoped thus to break the alliance that had served the 'Country' group so well.³⁷ Though such an open severance of the factions did not occur at this time, the sentiments of both Post clique adherents and otherwise neutral party members would help influence Bancroft away from his former unquestioned loyalties to Morton.

The collective belief of the Post clique that Marcus Morton had Abolitionist tendencies that were dangerous to the Democratic Party in Massachusetts was real if sometimes exaggerated. While the presentations of Hallett and Rantoul to various senators and Secretary of the Treasury Walker were most likely inflated views of the actual similarities between Morton and more truly radical anti-slavery men, for the most part the Post leaders and their closest associates in Boston felt his sentiments dangerous to the electoral success of the party. Past actions taken by the ex-governor while in office as well as statements during electoral campaigns and on other occasions informed their judgment. Defending their own position as ardent annexation men and sympathizers with southern interests, the Post clique nevertheless waited until a year after the presidential election to point to Morton's harmful practices in favor of Abolition and against expansion while governor. The instructions given to Massachusetts' Congressional Representatives in 1843 to denounce any future plans for annexation were blamed solely on the sentiments of Morton. As Chief Executive of the state and the man most responsible for shaping Democratic opinion, Morton bore liability for Abolitionist tendencies among the party's Legislators. Once annexation became part of Polk's electoral platform, the previous actions of Morton as governor had necessitated a situation in which 'the democracy of Massachusetts fought with a millstone around their necks, which had been placed there by Mr. Morton and his friends, with the express purpose of forever preventing annexation.'

³⁷ B.F. Hallett, 3 Aug. 1845, to Bancroft, *Bancroft Papers*, MHS.

While the Post and its associates had never agreed with Morton and his 'Country' group about their expressions against the expediency of annexation and about their general hostility to actions that would benefit the entire nation, and particularly the South, as the clique saw it, they were forced into a particularly uncomfortable position on this occasion. This situation was brought about by the very genuine sentiment that Marcus Morton held favorable to Abolitionist ideals.³⁸ Similarly, at the Worcester Convention in the fall of 1844, Morton had expressly rejected resolutions penned by Benjamin Hallett that denounced the introduction of language supportive of Abolitionist doctrines into the party platform. On this occasion, Morton's considerable strength and respect within the party had permitted the resolutions to be tabled. Such an action defied the sentiment of the majority of Democrats, it was alleged.³⁹ On another occasion, Morton had written a letter to southern Senator Morton Eddy in which he questioned the merits of slavery as an institution. This letter was referred to repeatedly by Henshaw clique members, attempting to prove the collector's malign influence on the party.⁴⁰

Because of Morton's position of leadership within the Massachusetts Democracy, his expressed views on the institution of slavery and his muted sentiments toward Texas annexation had helped to paint the party in a negative light to outside observers, claimed the Post. Since Morton had succeeded in gaining the most powerful position available to the state's Democrats and had placed many of his like-minded associates in positions of influence, the clique alleged that the 'Democracy has been tainted with Abolitionism.'⁴¹ In keeping the party small to the exclusion of Post men more favorable to annexation and southern interests, Morton had succeeded in bringing to the fore ideals that were not actually felt by the majority of true Democrats. Morton's dangerous doctrines and pursuits had defamed the party, in the eyes of his opponents. To the Post clique's leadership, such an unfortunate outcome was solely attributable to Morton's deplorable designs and commitments. His own beliefs and interests, especially notable in the selections made to

³⁸ Boston *Morning Post*, Nov. 3, 1845.

³⁹ Hallett, 23 Sep. 1845, to Bancroft, *Bancroft Papers*, MHS.

⁴⁰ Morton, 13 Jan. 1846, to Bancroft, *Morton Letterbooks*, MHS.

⁴¹ Concord *Hill's New Hampshire Patriot*, May 29, 1845.

fill Custom House and other important offices, had exerted a baleful influence on the once right-minded party. With the Post clique largely relegated to the background, its most prominent members and their associates felt justified in blaming the introduction and promotion of Abolitionist ideals upon the group in charge. To their minds it was not the Democracy that was tainted with anti-slavery sentiments. It was the leadership clique, most particularly represented by Head Collector Marcus Morton, who had brought their political organization to shame in the eyes of outside observers.

Equally troubling to the Post clique was the course Morton had taken once in office regarding appointments. For the most part the new collector pursued a policy of removing those officers affiliated with the Post. Most especially, men who had favored Calhoun in the past election or had shown particular animosity toward the candidacy of Martin Van Buren were evicted from office. Individuals believed to have been sincerely in favor of the New Yorker usually replaced them. An associate of Morton publicly stated that all men affiliated with the Post clique or the Calhoun wing of the state's Democracy were to be excluded from office. Since that faction was said to have too long possessed inordinate control and influence in Custom House circles, particularly during their decade-long rule, their men were to be kept out of any open position. Recent attempts by Henshaw and Rantoul to regain patronage and political positions had further infuriated Morton. Such actions were depicted as those of a desperate group trying to undermine the will of the party's majority. For all of these reasons, Morton as collector would not tolerate any measure of clique infiltration into the circles of government. Aaron Hobart, a friend of Bancroft, explained his brother's failure to attain office as a product of his having letters of introduction from Greene, Hallett and William Thaxton, another 'City' clique associate. Given the instructions of the Head Collector, offering such recommendations turned out to be a course ordaining failure.⁴²

Morton's appointment policy seems to have been directly related to the power his faction had become accustomed to hold in the state's Democratic Party. Reinforced by the

⁴² Aaron Hobart, 6 Aug. 1845, to Bancroft, *Bancroft Papers*, MHS.

favor offered toward the group by the newly inaugurated Democratic Administration, the ruling group of the state's party no doubt felt justified in continuing to operate with little advice from those outside the power structure. At the State Democratic Convention in Worcester during September, 1845, Morton's overbearing attitude once again served to irk his party rivals. Finally removed from the obligation to run as the party's annual sacrificial lamb, Morton sought to exert his influence in selecting a successor. Robert Gates, his favored candidate, was unable to gain the majority of delegate votes. Instead of allowing the initially most popular man, William Crocker, to gain the nomination, Morton was able to influence enough delegates to switch their support. In the end Edward Davis was accepted as a compromise candidate. On this occasion, however, it appears that as a result of Morton's machinations, the most potentially successful man was not selected. Of course as collector, Morton was able to use considerable influence. This course of action was no different from the one followed many times by David Henshaw and the Post clique on past occasions. While in former days these activities had gradually served to induce rising sentiment against the domineering spirit of the Custom House clique, Morton's actions at the Convention and elsewhere were having the same effect a decade later. At the Worcester Convention a series of resolutions meant to offer support for Morton's course as Head Collector were tabled, showing rising sentiment against his domineering attitude in internal Democratic politics.⁴³

Henshaw's public resistance to Morton during the fall of 1845 can be viewed in one of two ways. The more cynically minded interpretation would focus on the opportunistic nature of Henshaw's action at such a junction. Sensing that Morton was losing a great deal of support because of his restrictive policies and alleged favor toward Abolitionists, Henshaw as a political schemer viewed this moment as his chance to strike a blow against one of his main tormenters of previous years. In so doing, Henshaw gained revenge for much of the embarrassment that had come along with his own rejected confirmation as secretary of the navy. The ultimate hope would be that the Post clique, through engineering a similar rejection of Morton, would once again be able to control the state's

⁴³ B.F. Hallett, 23 Sep. 1845., to Bancroft, *Bancroft Papers*, MHS.

Democratic Party, shaping that organization in its own image. The second interpretation does not deny that Henshaw hoped to reposition his clique at the top of Massachusetts political affairs. It is less cynical in nature, however. It is very possible, and indeed likely, that Henshaw along with his cohorts truly viewed Marcus Morton's leadership as a plague upon the Democracy. In the past he had been an admirable candidate for governor. While Morton had always been a member of an opposing wing of the party, his actions had never been proscriptive in nature. Hence the clique had been among his most rabid supporters. Once Morton assumed the city's most important patronage office, however, his exclusion of all men associated with the Post group from any positions no doubt disturbed Henshaw immensely. At the same time, the annexation of Texas and the re-introduction of a host of issues related to territorial expansion, slavery and Abolitionism, rekindled the doubts that Henshaw had harbored toward Morton for some time.

Always knowing that their respective sentiments on these political matters were not in agreement, the two great political leaders of the party in Massachusetts had nevertheless shelved these differences for the good of the Democracy. Now, however, Morton's views along with his attempt to exert a stranglehold on all party affairs made him a dangerous man. His beliefs and activities had already tainted the Democracy with the filth of Abolitionism and anti-southern sentiment. These were principles that were truly appalling to Henshaw, and always had been. As a result of his true political sentiments, mostly separate from his desire for political advancement, Henshaw endeavored to work against Morton's confirmation as Collector of the Port of Boston. In so doing he exerted all his influence to confront Morton. While charges of Abolitionism and anti-southern sentiments were among Henshaw and the Post clique's claims against Morton, it can be accurately asserted that these were not merely public ploys, but important attributes of their actual reasons for questioning his character and ideology.

Even prior to his attempts to undermine Marcus Morton's candidacy for the Collectorship, David Henshaw had remained an active participant in political affairs. Working tirelessly since the days immediately following Polk's electoral success, the ex-collector had attempted to enhance his clique's prospects for gaining offices in

Massachusetts. While his associates, men like Hallett and Rantoul in Washington and Charles G. Greene in the columns of the Morning Post, developed considerable agitation against Morton, Henshaw was continually directing operations behind the scenes. His presence in Washington, separate from Hallett's and Greene's attempts to influence southern Senators, was surely aimed at gaining prospective offices somewhat secondary in nature for his supporters. Henshaw remained aloof from the struggle for the Collectorship and the position of Attorney during this initial period, but that is certainly not to say he did not push for the appointment of his political associates to more minor offices in the Custom House and elsewhere. His very involvement in the struggle for these lesser appointments seems to have been a motivating factor behind Morton's proscriptive policies. Especially galling to Morton were the appointments of several Post men to Custom House positions, over his own objections. In some of these cases the influence of Henshaw among important Congressmen in Washington, the new collector regarded as egregiously blameworthy.

To Morton's way of thinking the activities of Henshaw, though perceived by many as minor actions unworthy of concern represented a nefarious course. Since the Post clique had been utterly defeated in its attempts to gain office at the hands of President Tyler and had proven to be a minority interest in the state's Democracy, its members' lack of representation among patronage winners in the new administration was to be expected.⁴⁴ The relative success that Henshaw's activity had obtained both in Washington and in the western part of the state in having his minions placed into relatively minor positions was evidence of a flawed system. Morton said of the factious spirit that such appointments engendered, "It derives encouragement from the manner in which certain important offices are filled. It seems to me that the friends of the late President claim a number of offices altogether disproportional to their numerical strength or respectability. I have reason to believe that their course of action in this State rendered them much more objectionable to the mass of the democratic party than in other places." Henshaw's maneuverings, at least in Morton's interpretation, had done much to engender the divisions

and recriminations within the party that the clique attributed to the Collector's own policies. There could be no doubt, Morton implied, that the same men who had attempted to ally with Tyler during the previous two years, would do anything to undermine the well-being of the Democratic Party on this occasion.⁴⁵

Morton displayed an increasingly disgruntled attitude toward the ability of the Post clique to undermine his control in managing appointments as well as their rising influence in western Massachusetts. In fact, writing to Bancroft on two different occasions, the collector threatened to step down from his post if his wishes were not followed in the future. Noting the great deal of influence that the Post group seemed to possess in Washington and their resultant ability to thwart his own designs on several occasions, Morton expressed frustration and concern about his capacity to control affairs in the Custom House. Stepping down from the Head Collector position was not an event he welcomed. Nevertheless Morton wrote, "A change now would be inconvenient to me; but regardless of personal consequences, I cannot reconcile it to my feelings and notions of propriety and duty to hold office under an administration whose confidence I do not possess. If therefore, the President has withdrawn that confidence which he evinced by my appointment, and by his assurance given me when I accepted office, I shall feel bound...to quit..." Assuming that the repeated incidents of Post-affiliated men assuming office despite his own objections implied a loss of confidence among administration officials, Morton openly wondered if retirement would be the best policy.⁴⁶ Similarly, the apparent weakening of his faction's control in western Massachusetts caused a great deal of worry to Morton. The involvement of the Post clique in political affairs in that distant part of the state had created conditions that would serve to undermine the administration party in Massachusetts. The Head Collector wrote, "I regret the strife for office and the frequency of divisions in our ranks and especially the readiness of the disappointed parties to sympathize with the enemy, and furnish grounds of attack upon the administration. These

⁴⁴ Morton, 2 Jun. 1845, to Benjamin Tappan; Morton, 22 Jun. 1845, to Charles G. Green, *Morton Letterbooks*, MHS; Darling, pg. 321.

⁴⁵ Morton, 14 Jun. 1845, to Cave Johnson, *Morton Letterbooks*, MHS.

⁴⁶ Morton, 25 Jun. 1845, to Bancroft, *Morton Letterbooks*, MHS.

struggles, I fear, have been more frequent and assumed a more inveterate character in this State than elsewhere. I fear they have been ministered to by the countenance which aspiring unscrupulous intriguers have received from high sources.” Though he did not state it, Morton no doubt blamed much of this intrigue on Henshaw, as a result of Henshaw’s various connections both in Washington and in state political circles.⁴⁷

Morton’s concerns about Henshaw and his methods of promoting the Morning Post clique led to further controversy between himself and his rival constituency. In the spring of 1845 Morton spoke of Henshaw’s rumored purchase of three newspaper concerns. In gaining control of the Concord Freeman, Nantucket Islander and Ohio Statesman, Morton worried the clique would increase its ability to disseminate its false ideals, thereby undermining the ability of true Democrats to reach the public. Henshaw’s alleged method of placing his minions as editors of disparate papers, in order to second the pronouncements of the Post organ in Boston had been a tried and true policy of the clique. In this instance Morton assumed that a similar course was to be followed. The repetition of such a policy Morton said reiterated the character defects of David Henshaw. When Morton’s letter was published in the Steubenville (Ohio) American Union, his rival demanded an explanation.⁴⁸ Since he had yet to announce any interest in either the Nantucket or the Ohio paper, Henshaw accused Morton of slanderous accusations, especially in Morton’s claim of the creation of satellite organs.

In this instance Morton backtracked and insisted that there had been some confusion over the matter. Though Morton had told Benjamin Tappan that Henshaw was involved in the Concord Freeman, Henshaw’s relation to the other papers was a bit more confusing. It seems that the initial letter had mentioned a “Mr. H” as the potential purchaser of the papers. Since Henshaw’s name had already been stated in this document as an individual interested in the Freeman concern, the single letter H seemed to indicate him once again as a potential purchaser of the other two papers under discussion. Morton, however, in responding to Henshaw’s demands, insisted his earlier letter had meant

⁴⁷ Morton, 25 Jun. 1845, to W. Middell, *Morton Letterbooks*, MHS

Benjamin Hazewell, a long-time Massachusetts editor and more recently a close associate to Henshaw.⁴⁹ Further correspondence between Morton and Tappan leads to the conclusion that some of the misunderstanding over this incident was a result of the publication of Morton's original letter. Tappan's editor had taken the liberty of filling in Henshaw's name for the single initial when that, Morton asserted, was never his intent. Since he had never expected his letter to be a matter for the public, Morton severely rebuked Tappan for having printed it in the pages of his paper.⁵⁰ This unintended publication, however, did not excuse Morton from some of the more damaging charges explicitly leveled at Henshaw and his friends.

The direct charges that Henshaw and Hazewell had engaged in less than savory procedures to help spread malignant ideals throughout the state and beyond could not help but rankle the Post clique. Although the group surrounding Henshaw had indeed by this time become accustomed to employing satellite papers and directing the actions of distant editors, Morton's direct and public accusations could not be ignored. Further efforts by Morton to raise doubts about the operations and actual political beliefs of the Post clique were also bothersome. In a series of articles written by Morton and close political associates, the members of the clique along with Hazewell were criticized on a host of issues. Ranging from the alleged inconsistency of these patent Calhoun supporters in both campaigning for and expecting offices from James K. Polk; to further questions about the group's connection with the Tyler-Calhoun alliance; to their alleged hypocrisy on the matter of annexation, these publications had sought to paint the clique as political schemers willing to change their views at a moment's notice.⁵¹

The most damaging charge issued by Morton involved Hazewell. His Concord Freeman had long been recognized as a paper that was directly connected to the Morning Post. Thus in the parlance of the day, it was a satellite paper. Hazewell had been tutored in

⁴⁸ Worcester, *Palladium*, Aug. 27, 1845.

⁴⁹ Morton, 15, 17 Sep. 1845, to Henshaw, *Morton Letterbooks*, MHS.

⁵⁰ Morton, 18 Sep. 1845, to Tappan, *Morton Letterbooks*, MHS.

⁵¹ Morton, 8 Dec. 1845, to Brand, *Morton Letterbooks*, MHS.

the offices of the Morning Post and had utilized Henshaw's influence to gain a position at a Nantucket paper before becoming editor of the Concord Freeman. Both of these previous employers were directly in the Morning Post's newspaper network. After having edited the Freeman for three years, Hazewell did move on to become proprietor of the Ohio Statesman, as Morton had speculated he would.⁵² Despite its affinity to the clique on most issues, the Concord Freeman had been overtly anti-slavery in sentiment during Hazewell's tenure. While favoring annexation, the paper argued for the action in spite of any gains it would bring to the institution, often offering the rationale that said that additional territory would in fact work against slavery's continuation.⁵³ Hazewell was indeed wont to espouse sentiments more directly associated with Abolitionist tenets than anything ever uttered by Morton in public. As a result, the collector and his associates included charges in their newly released articles that tried to prove that the Freeman's editor had made 'most rabid declarations in favor of Abolitionism, putting in the background even Garrison himself.'⁵⁴ Such a charge was sure to make Henshaw cringe.

When the charges against Henshaw's newspaper association were taken in combination with Morton's recent hostility toward the clique's favored candidates for federal appointments, as well as, the implications of Morton's comments to Tappan and of these published charges, the clique felt compelled to respond. At the direction of Henshaw, the Morning Post called the collector to task for his slanderous language against their leader. Morton's assaults upon Henshaw and Hazewell were criticized harshly. The collector was branded in the paper's columns as unfaithful and tainted by falsehood. Most of the issues raised by his various publications were addressed. In the words of the Morning Post, support for Polk despite an initial preference for Calhoun was a natural course for a group whose primary interest was the success of the Democracy and democratic ideals. The clique and its members had sought appointment in the same manner as had Morton and his allies, and by and large were unfairly proscribed in ways these others were not. Henshaw's and Rantoul's acceptance of high ranking office under

⁵² *Boston Daily Atlas*, Oct. 9, 1845.

⁵³ Concord, *Freeman*, 1843-1844.

⁵⁴ Morton, 8 Dec. 1845, to Brand, *Morton Letterbooks*, MHS.

Tyler was a result of their respective commitment to serve the populace no matter the party in charge. Finally, the Morning Post's vehement support for annexation was not challenged in any way by the state legislative resolutions of 1843. Since nearly all Democrats favoring the anti-Texas policy were members of the 'Country' group, such measures had been passed with the approval of Governor Morton and his faction, and not the clique or its leading members. In fact, the paper noted, its sentiment for annexation predated the Baltimore Convention, a statement Morton and his Bay State Democrat could not make.

The Post's approach to the allegedly Abolitionist sentiments of Hazewell was less direct. The Boston organ never denied the existence of anti-slavery sentiment in the columns of the Concord Freeman. Instead Greene's paper blamed the course followed by Morton's administration regarding Texas as having led to Hazewell's issuing such statements. Under this interpretation, the creation of an atmosphere that was hostile toward the expansion of slave interests, and in fact the institution in general, had forced Hazewell into a position on the matter that he had never espoused publicly in the past. The legislative resolutions against annexation at any time were based mainly upon antipathy toward slavery's extension to such a vast area. Since they were wholly attributable to Morton and his political associates, the Post reasoned that its own allies had no culpability in the matter. Hazewell, attempting to be a loyal party member, had felt obliged during that time period to offer sentiments against annexation.

His additional sentiments against the institution itself, though somewhat troubling to the Post clique, were a matter of personal conviction. The paper noted that such antipathy toward the institution was perhaps inevitable amongst the majority of Massachusetts citizens. Though publishing such beliefs in the columns of the Concord Freeman was not the most commendable approach, the Post noted that the legislative actions of Morton and his political associates had made such a course seem more acceptable to Hazewell. Indeed his anti-slavery beliefs coupled with the desire to remain loyal to those in charge of the party had perhaps corrupted the editor's thinking and he was thus induced into an editorial decision that seemed somewhat regrettable in hindsight.

Whatever one thought of his actions, the bulk of the blame was to be placed on Morton and the Democratic caucus in the Massachusetts Legislature during the 1843 session, Henshaw's mouthpiece alleged.⁵⁵

At the same time that the Post clique was defending itself against the various charges from Morton and his affiliates, Henshaw was leading a public assault against the collector. Over the period of several months the Post group would publish a series of deprecations against Morton. These claims fell into four major categories. First among these was that Morton was and always had been hostile to policies that were of the highest import to the South. The foremost manifestation of his parochial attitude toward politics was his patent hostility for Texas annexation. To prove this point the oft-visited Legislative Resolutions of 1843 were adduced as evidence. Secondly, in his appointment policies Morton had vacillated between an arbitrary approach and outright hostility toward men who were associated with Calhoun. Of course such a charge addressed the very proscription of clique members that had been discussed for months previously. Third, Morton was hostile toward Catholics. His secret disregard for members of that faith, it was alleged, was currently on clear display when viewing Custom House appointments and removals. Finally, and most damaging to his reputation in light of the still ongoing confirmation proceedings in Washington, Morton was an Abolitionist. This charge was directly related to allegations that in his attempts to gain election as governor in both 1837 and 1843, Morton had relied heavily upon the votes of Abolition men. His long-known anti-slavery sentiments were also referred to as predisposing the collector toward actions that would work against national harmony.⁵⁶

The timing of Henshaw and the Post clique's public accusations against Morton was directly related to the confirmation process for the Head Collector position. This fact partially explains the heavy emphasis placed upon Morton's northern partisanship among these charges. The maneuvers of Hallett and Rantoul in Washington, in attempting to turn

⁵⁵ *Boston Morning Post*, Nov. 3, 1845.

⁵⁶ *Ibid*, July 12, 1845, Jan. 2, 1846; "Refutation of the Charges of Abolitionism Against Marcus Morton," (Boston 1845); "Reply to the Attacks of the Boston Morning Post Upon Governor Morton" (Boston 1846).

southern Senators and Secretary of the Treasury Walker against Morton's candidacy, had already helped reveal this strategy. Morton was well aware of the activities of his opponents within the Post clique. His supplications to George Bancroft to refute the charges made to influential southern politicians, most particularly Robert Walker, are proof of his knowledge of these efforts.⁵⁷ Realizing that further evidence to paint the candidacy of Morton for the post in the most negative light stood a decent chance of being successful, the Post clique redoubled their attacks during the second half of 1845. Much of their incriminating evidence against Morton was intended to raise doubt about his actual concern for measures that many saw as beneficial to the South above other regions. Therefore, exaggerating or over-emphasizing the actions taken and sentiments expressed by Morton against matters that would be of particular concern to the southern men directly involved in the confirmation process seemed a logical approach. Since the clique, most especially Henshaw, truly believed in Morton's antipathy toward the South as a region and its most treasured ideological commitments, this course of action seemed destined to offer some measure of political capital.

Due to the high priority that Texas annexation had held throughout 1844 and 1845 and the acceptance of the merit of the policy among national Democrats, the Post chose to expend a great deal of its energies illustrating Morton's alleged opinion against the policy's benefits. His role as Massachusetts Governor while the controversial Legislative Resolutions against annexation were debated and approved was once again brought to bear as proof of anti-annexation sentiment. According to the Post, 'The representatives of the democracy of Massachusetts, while under the lead of Mr. Morton, he being then governor of the State, and doubtless at the instigation and advice of him and his immediate and confidential friends, very foolishly placed the whole democratic party of Massachusetts in a false position with regard to the subject of annexation, by adopting, in the legislature, a resolution declaring it to be wrong under ANY CIRCUMSTANCES.' As Governor and leader of the faction that made these declarations, Morton was directly to blame for the

⁵⁷ Morton, 1 Jul. 1845, to Bancroft, *Bancroft Papers*, MHS.

negative consequences that attended this decision.⁵⁸ Morton's hostility toward annexation did not end with his term as governor, however. In a letter to the Post, Henshaw offered further evidence of Morton's position on that now approved and popular action. According to this correspondence Morton had earlier denied the 'constitutional right of congress to admit Texas under any circumstances.' His vote to that effect was recorded in the Massachusetts House of Representatives journal for all to see. Morton's silence on the matter of annexation during the late presidential campaign also further illustrated his hostility for the measure. Though an alleged avid supporter of Polk, he continued in fact to denounce the admission of Texas, 'and declared that his vote at the polls should conform to his anti-Texas vote in the house, despite being given to the annexation candidate.'⁵⁹

The affinity that Morton had shown as collector for Van Buren and anti-Texas men in his appointment policies seemed to be further proof of his enmity for supporters of Polk's allegedly 'pro-southern' policy, the Morning Post continued. Since assuming the post of Head Collector, it was charged, Morton's appointments had 'generally been from the anti-Texas side of the house.' Henshaw went on to state that 'in one glaring instance he [had even] appointed a full blooded, anti-Texas abolitionist to the office of inspector of the revenue.' During Morton's initial months in office men who had approved of the actions of both Tyler and Polk in favor of territorial expansion had been turned out of office. In their stead were placed individuals who were proven allies of Morton and his clique against Texas annexation, and unsurprisingly erstwhile Van Buren men. Moreover, all men who had previously been able to gain office as a result of their connection to the union of the Post men with Tyler's administration were summarily terminated, no matter their level of competence. In the interpretation of the Post and its satellites in Massachusetts, such a policy was patently unjust and discriminatory in nature.⁶⁰ Since most of the Custom House decisions seemed to have been made at the expense of individuals known to have favored John C. Calhoun's candidacy, Henshaw hoped that publicizing Morton's removal policies would serve to rub further salt into the wounds of the southerners Henshaw hoped to turn

⁵⁸ Boston *Morning Post*, Nov. 3, 1845.

⁵⁹ Ibid, Dec. 17, 1845.

⁶⁰ Worcester, *Palladium*, Aug. 16, 1845.

against Morton.⁶¹

In addition to proscribing Calhoun and Texas supporters in his appointment proceedings, Morton had shown a general level of incompetence, claimed the 'City' faction leadership. Though they had been usually ascribed to his partisan nature, on several occasions Morton's decisions were said actually to have been merely a reflection of his general inadequacy to meet the demands that came along with the collector position. The fact that most of the removed Custom House employees had been Democrats was offered as proof of Morton's disloyalty to the party in general. That he had coupled these removals in some instances with the appointment or maintenance of Whig officials was offered as further proof of the damage that Morton would inflict on the party if allowed to remain in his post.

The Morning Post pointed to three specific men whom Morton had replaced in order to illustrate both his incompetence and his lack of compassion as Collector. All three of these cases drew defensive remarks from Morton. The first removed official was a man named Major Harrison. Harrison was a crippled veteran of the Revolution who had served in the Custom House under several different presidential administrations. Thus he seemed a useful example for the Post to adduce in arguing the arbitrary nature and attendant cruelty of Morton's actions. Although Morton's decision in this instance was supported by a recommendation from Secretary Walker, the example of a venerated member of the Revolutionary generation being terminated from employment by the Collector was utilized to help make the clique's case. 'Peanut' Leland, the Calhounite appointed as Collector of New Bedford, was also displayed as a casualty of the Custom House policies under Morton. Though he had no jurisdiction over Leland's post, Morton's warnings to the Cabinet in Washington helped bring about Leland's dismissal. Averting his belief that the appointment of this man in 1843, as a result of the Tyler-Calhoun-Henshaw union, had been an unfortunate mistake, by stating that, "No man did more in 1843 to disgrace and

⁶¹ Boston *Morning Post*, Nov. 3, 1845, Dec. 17, 1845.

injure the party than Dr. Leland,” Morton was able to effect his removal.⁶² Finally George Gipson’s dismissal from the Boston Custom House brought about the most dissent. In this instance the recriminations were not solely from the Post clique. Both Bancroft and Robert Walker at various times admonished Morton for discarding such a loyal Democrat and a man previously believed to have been an efficient officer. Despite Morton’s insistence that after reviewing Gipson’s job performance, he ‘became fully convinced that he performed his official duty in such a negligent, unfaithful, and disagreeable manner that both the interest and character of the administration require a change,’ both Bancroft and Walker cautioned Morton to adopt a more moderate approach. This squabble led to Gipson’s remaining in his position. Morton, however, believed so strongly in the righteousness of his course that he threatened to resign as collector if the administration officials continued their criticism of his appointment policies.⁶³ His political opponents capitalized on Marcus Morton’s relative intransigence on the matter to question Morton’s ability to continue as Custom House leader.⁶⁴

Morton’s alleged anti-Catholicism was based on a single recommendation he had made to Postmaster General Cave Johnson. In discussing a potential appointment as Postmaster of New Bedford, the collector had given his warm endorsement to Stephen Ilsey. This approval was offered at the expense of the Administration’s favored candidate, Michael O’Neil. Morton noted that the latter, as a Catholic in religion and an unknown political entity, would be unpopular with the citizenry. While he expressed no personal animosity toward the man, Morton thought his appointment would not meet with widespread approval among New Bedford residents or the Democracy at large. Henshaw and the Post clique seized upon these words of warning about O’Neil on the grounds of his religion as having been a hindrance to his success, thus bolstering their charges against the former governor. If he could be presented as a man intolerant of Catholics as well as southerners, annexation men and Calhoun supporters, Morton’s qualifications for such an important post as Head Collector would be brought into further doubt. It is also quite

⁶² Morton, 24 May 1845, to Bancroft, *Bancroft Papers*, MHS.

⁶³ Morton, 24 Jun. 1845, to Walker, *Morton Letterbooks*, MHS.

possible that Henshaw and his associates were attempting to garner the favor of the growing minority of Irish Catholics arriving in Boston during this period. If such was their intent the language of Morton, once made public, almost certainly furthered their cause.⁶⁵

For his part, Morton was appalled by these allegations of bigotry toward Catholics. After the charges of Henshaw and the clique, he repeatedly expressed concern over what he viewed as an outright misrepresentation of this matter. To the contrary, Morton reminded George Bancroft that as leaders of the Massachusetts Democratic Party they had been at the forefront of a move to eliminate from the Massachusetts Bill of Rights, a provision giving Protestants preferment over Catholics. Although Morton denied having considered his religion as working against O'Neil, the collector noted that even if any of his language or actions seemed to indicate that attitude, for a variety of reasons allowances should be made. After all, Morton's whole course in politics had served to enhance the rights of all groups, Catholics included. He asked Bancroft, "Is a man to be condemned for an occasional remark even if it will admit of an unfavorable construction, against the profession and practice of a whole life?" Since his reasons for preferring Ilsney over O'Neil had been directly related to the superior skills of the former, the mention of either man's religion was actually an irrelevancy, and a mere political ploy by the enemies of the party. Reynolds was the better man for the job in the opinion of Morton as well as the citizens of New Bedford. Therefore this instance led him to one obvious conclusion. Expressing disbelief that any genuine controversy could be related to this decision, Morton noted, "I thought the wishes and opinions of the people, whether founded on reason or prejudice, on religious or political considerations, ought to be regarded by a Democratic Administration. And [it] was in obedience to those wishes and opinions, that I recommended Colonel Reynolds and not because one was a Protestant or the other a Catholic." In his mind this was one appointment for which all criticism was unwarranted.⁶⁶ Despite his warning against McNeil, Marcus Morton believed, and evidence supports the belief, that he was not

⁶⁴ Boston *Morning Post*, Dec. 17, 19, 1845.

⁶⁵ Morton, 14 Jun. 1845, to Johnson, *Morton Letterbooks*, MHS; Darling, pg. 325.

⁶⁶ Morton, 26 Feb. 1846, to Bancroft, *Bancroft Papers*, MHS.

prejudiced against Catholics in any way.

By far the most serious charge against Morton leveled by the Post clique at Henshaw's behest was that of Abolitionism. While allegations of endorsing anti-annexation policy, harboring Nativist sentiments, or incompetence in office were all potentially damaging charges that could certainly have undermined his chance for confirmation as collector, it was the last and most frequently offered criticism that was most essential to the case against Morton's nomination. Because Henshaw and his associates were focusing their campaign mainly on Democratic Senators from the South, offering any plausible evidence that Morton was an Abolition man would be damaging beyond measure. Since Boston was seen as the heart of the reform movement against the South's peculiar institution, allowing the city's most important federal patronage office to be occupied by an Abolitionist was not in the best interests of these senators or their region. It was worried that a city some thought already predisposed to the seditious notions of anti-slavery men would be further in the thrall of Garrisonian doctrine if important Custom House appointments could be distributed among similarly minded men. With the added knowledge that Morton had already shown a predisposition against the spread of slavery and was known to harbor antipathy toward the institution, Henshaw's case was made even stronger. Finally, the alliance that the Post clique had formed with Calhoun and the influence among southerners that would inevitably come along with such a union could not hurt their case in this endeavor.

Beyond the scope of political posturing and the undeniable element of revenge for the role Morton had played in his own confirmation as secretary of the navy, however, Henshaw's reasons for confronting the collector on the issue of Abolitionist sentiments were more elemental in nature. The clique's leader genuinely believed in the language and import of his charges. It is true that Henshaw was tired of seeing the Democracy of Massachusetts run by a faction not his own. On a higher level though, it was the political ideology that the 'Country' group brought to the party that truly disgusted him and his associates among the Post faction. To his mind, Morton and his closest allies had introduced abolitionist ideals into a political movement founded on completely different

principles. The actions taken by Morton both as governor and Head Collector had, in Henshaw's mind, served to damage the Democratic organization irrevocably. The ex-governor's unqualified support for Van Buren coupled with his requisite opposition to Texas annexation had served to hinder the potential progress of the party in Massachusetts, causing it to suffer significant electoral setbacks. The restrictive patronage policies assumed by Morton as collector had further helped ensconce his faction in a leadership role, while reducing the numerical strength of the Democracy.

Firmly placed in power and able to follow whatever course he wished, Morton would, Henshaw believed, continue to move the Democratic Party of Massachusetts into a closer alliance with Abolition men. In the course of this development the more nationally-minded, or as their opponents would charge 'pro-southern,' doctrines of the Post clique would be pushed further into the background. Viewing the increase of Abolitionist sentiment in Boston, and Massachusetts as a whole, the clique had reason to worry about Morton's ability to tie the state's Democracy to that despised crusade. Henshaw, Greene and their associates were genuinely concerned with the effect such an approach would have upon the Massachusetts Democratic Party. As the discord the public introduction of the issue would cause within the party in the near future proved, the clique had great reason for this concern. For them it was a very real issue, one that went well beyond the desire simply to defeat their opponent in Washington, and to replace him with one of their allies, thereby gaining vast amounts of patronage. Simply put, to judge their charges of Abolitionism against Marcus Morton as mere political posturing overlooks the most important aspects of the case.⁶⁷

The clique's numerous charges of Abolitionism against Morton can be reduced to three basic categories. First, several important actions of his while Governor of Massachusetts directly worked against the interests of slaveholders and southern states in general. Such things as the institution of laws allowing for interracial marriages,

⁶⁷ Boston *Morning Post*, Dec. 17, 1845. A public letter from David Henshaw was included in that day's paper, expressing his concerns about the role Abolitionism was beginning to play in Massachusetts Democratic politics.

injunctions against the rights of pursuers of fugitive slaves, and the governor's approval of delegations to two southern states to protest for the rights of African-Americans were adduced as evidence. Additionally Morton was alleged to owe his electoral victories in both 1837 and 1843 to his having courted the support of Abolitionists, drawing large numbers of those hostile to slavery to the ranks of his constituency. Secondly, Morton's appointments and dismissals as Collector of Boston indicated a penchant for rewarding those who shared anti-slavery and anti-Southern beliefs with himself. This tendency was most prominent in Morton's having appointed or retained several officers known to harbor and even publicly display Abolition sentiments, while dismissing others who did not. Finally, and meant to be most damaging, Henshaw and the clique claimed that Morton was and always had been a man predisposed to Abolitionism. Though he had never publicly claimed interest in such a radical movement, his political activities and private conversations and correspondence proved him to be deeply antagonistic to the institution of slavery. His more recent activity made evident to those leveling these charges against him that Morton was becoming more radical in his sentiments against the institution and would in a short time publicly declare himself in favor of the doctrines of Abolition.⁶⁸

Morton's use of Abolitionist votes in securing his electoral victories left the ex-governor particularly susceptible to these charges. His hopes of attaining gubernatorial victory had twice hinged upon drawing the votes of anti-slavery men to the Democratic Party. In so doing, Morton had sold his political soul to individuals who had no right to expect support for their unpopular policies from true Democrats. Because of his clear opposition to the institution and later resistance to the annexation of Texas, Morton was able to induce such men into his column. Additionally Morton had written a letter to noted Abolitionist George Whittier during the deadlock that had attended the 1843 election. The clique charged that this letter was irrefutable proof that the candidate had directly courted the support of a prominent Abolitionist.⁶⁹ Hallett, Henshaw and the Morning Post alleged

⁶⁸ Boston *Morning Post*, Nov. 3, 1845; Beals and Greene, "A Refutation, By His Friends, of the Calumnies Against David Henshaw, In Relation To the Failure of the Commonwealth Bank, and the Transfer of South Boston Lands to the United States," (Boston 1844).

⁶⁹ Ibid, Benjamin F. Hallett's letter included in the *Post* proposed these charges against Morton.

that such a direct connection between Morton and at least one prominent Abolitionist had helped to sway the election in the Massachusetts House of Representatives in his favor. This result would not have been possible for a man who better represented the interests of the party.

On other occasions, it was charged that Morton had capitalized on the manifold government appointments that would be at his discretion as governor to solicit the support of anti-slavery men. Most noteworthy among these individuals was Ellis Gray Loring, who became Master of Chancery for Suffolk County, and Isaac Worth, nominated but not approved as Nantucket Postmaster. Morton's influence had also helped the latter more recently to attain a position in the Boston Post Office, after his abolitionist leanings had brought protests against his obtaining the Nantucket job.⁷⁰ The Post clique sought to present these and other promised appointments as having been calculated to ensure the governorship for Morton. Henshaw viewed such activity as demeaning to the Democracy, noting that 'the known disposition of Mr. Morton, who so long stood at the head of the democratic nominations, had a material influence in recruiting the ranks of the abolitionists from the democratic party.' Such recruits had tainted the actual cause that the party sought to promote. By submitting his candidacy to the whims of the 'Abolition Party,' Morton had greatly reduced the respect that Democrats from other states had for the organization in Massachusetts. In so doing he had undermined his term as Governor in the minds of many both in and outside the state. Morton's actions had not helped this minority party in any way. 'The Massachusetts democracy have had to contend with this embarrassment in addition to the inherent difficulties of their position in the most essentially federal state in the Union.' Thus in attaining the highest political position in the state, Morton had served to ruin his party's credibility. It would have been better in the minds of his critics to have remained out of office while retaining an orthodox Democratic agenda than to sell out their interests to Abolition men.⁷¹

⁷⁰ Morton, 26 Jun. 1845, to Bancroft, *Bancroft Papers*, MHS; Henshaw's letter in *Boston Morning Post*, Nov. 3, 1845.

⁷¹ *Boston Morning Post*, Dec. 17, 1845.

The clique further charged that once in office, Morton had continued his questionable association with Abolitionists and anti-slavery ideals. In the words of David Henshaw, “The whole policy of Mr. Morton’s administration (while he was governor) was bent, and the democratic party was prostituted to please the abolition party and to serve the abolition cause.” Documentary proof of this penchant was profuse, according to Henshaw and his associates. The most prominent piece of evidence was the oft-mentioned Legislative Resolutions of 1843. Though these were primarily protests against the proposed annexation of Texas, Henshaw and the clique took great pains to present them as antithetical to the interests of slavery. The reason that Morton and his legislative allies sought to restrict territorial expansion in this instance was to limit the spread of slavery. The matter was presented as plainly and simply related to Abolition sentiment.

Other actions of Morton’s as governor were proffered as further proof of his hostility toward all elements of slave society, a sure sign of a policy favorable to Abolitionists. During his second term as governor Morton had supported and ultimately signed a bill to repeal existing laws against inter-racial marriages. Such legislative activity, it was claimed, was done without consideration of the sure political ramifications of these unions both in Massachusetts and other regions. Morton had also sought to impinge upon the rights of owners attempting to retrieve their property, while Governor. He had approved of an act barring judges and justices of the peace from recognizing any order to arrest escaped slaves in Massachusetts. Furthermore, he had denied the requisitioning of public prison space to house captured fugitives temporarily, and imposed a one thousand dollar fine upon any state official who helped in the arrest of such persons. All of these pieces of legislation were in direct violation of constitutional provisions and the federal fugitive slave acts. Morton’s antipathy toward slaveholders’ reclaiming their property in his state was also made clear in the case of George Latimer, a fugitive slave from Virginia tracked down in Massachusetts during Morton’s second term. In this instance, despite Latimer’s having been seized by local officials, Morton denied the request of Virginia’s Lieutenant Governor Gregory for Latimer’s rendition, thereby obstructing a process that

the Governor was obligated to expedite by law.⁷² Finally, Henshaw alleged that Morton as governor had officially approved the commissions of Samuel Hoar and Henry Hubbard. These men were appointed by Massachusetts legislators to visit and petition the respective Legislatures of South Carolina and Louisiana to rescind local laws that required black sailors to be imprisoned temporarily upon their vessels docking at harbors in those states. Their visits to each of these states would surely engender public protest and animosity among many southerners. The *Post* clique itself had also condemned the rationale behind these missions, terming each an infringement upon the sovereignty of separate states.⁷³

The *Post* further claimed that Morton's course as Collector of Boston had shown similar favor toward Abolitionists. The most important instance of his sentiments in this regard was to be seen in his appointment and retention policies. Henshaw and Hallett both claimed that the employment of the individuals most hostile to Abolition sentiments, men whose political sympathies were known to favor the interests of the South and the Union above specifically northern policies, was almost uniformly discontinued. At the same time, Abolition men were either allowed to remain in office or were in some cases directly appointed by Morton. The collector for his part repeatedly denied having ever appointed a single Abolition man to any office under his direction.⁷⁴ Morton was also alleged to have declared publicly further sentiments in favor of anti-slavery doctrine since his installation as collector. At the recent Democratic State Convention, he had sponsored an effort to defeat a resolution denouncing the course of Abolitionists as tending toward disunion. That resolution read:

'Resolved, That there always has been, and probably will always continue to be, a party of DISUNIONISTS in this country, who will seek to cover their designs under the garb of assumed patriotism or false philanthropy; that in former times this party was auxiliary to the old federal party, and guided its councils, and at the present time exists in nominal

⁷² Boston *Morning Post*, Dec. 12, 1845, Hallett's letter.

⁷³ Ibid, Dec. 17, 1845, Henshaw's published letter; "A *Refutation of the Charge of Abolitionism, Brought by David Henshaw, And His Partizans, Against the Hon. Marcus Morton,*" (Boston 1845).

⁷⁴ Morton, 21 Feb. 1846, to Atherton, *Morton Letterbooks*, MHS.

separate organization, but in close communion with the whig party, under the [guidance] of the abolition party. That so far from advancing the cause of emancipation, which, if left where the constitution places it, in the free disposition of the states that are alone responsible for their domestic institutions, would ere this have resulted in an increase of free states, the political organization in the free states against slavery has only consolidated the south for it, and closed the mouths of its advocates in those states where alone they could have been heard with effect. And, therefore, while we hold ourselves in no wise answerable for this peculiar institution of the south, which we should rejoice to see discontinued by the voluntary action of those who have the political right to control it within their own limits, this convention can hold no communion with those who make opposition to slavery the one idea of their political organization, or who hold to the abominable doctrine which has been proclaimed by some of their conventions, that no honest man can take an oath to support the constitution of the United States, because it guarantees the existence of slavery.⁷⁵

Henshaw and his associates were appalled that Morton or any other Democrat would disapprove of such a moderate declaration. It was obvious to them that failure to endorse a statement of commonly accepted doctrine, one that merely criticized the inflammatory actions of Abolitionists in general, was tantamount to accepting the policies and proceedings of these firebrands. Since this action of Morton's had occurred a mere two months earlier, while serving as collector, it illustrated for all that his sentiments had changed in no way from those he had held while Massachusetts Governor. Furthermore, Morton could not claim that such an indication of his beliefs had been forced upon him by others, as he would try to do with several of the actions that had taken place while he was at the head of Massachusetts political affairs. The rejection of this resolution was offered to those considering Morton's confirmation as collector as proof that his sympathies were in direct opposition to southerners, and all impartial Americans for that matter.

In defeating this resolution, Morton and his associates had brought on themselves the wrath of anti-Abolitionists in Massachusetts. The Post clique and its allies thought this action proved that the collector was wittingly assisting the party's move to a closer alliance with Abolitionists, with all their attendant principles. Even though the majority of Democrats in the state did not harbor any such sentiments, the power that Morton had

⁷⁵ Worcester *Palladium*, Sep. 15, 1845.

attained at the behest of the Polk administration allowed for him to help move the Democracy in this dangerous direction. In the words of the Worcester Palladium, a Morning Post affiliate, ‘In all this section of the State we believe those rejected resolutions [would have expressed] the common sentiment of the convention, had not the abolition section of the party been made the special recipient of the confidence of the National Administration, many of its leading men holding seats in the convention, giving direction to its action, and controlling its proceedings.’ This recent action was a reprise of Morton’s activities as governor. He and his allies, the paper asserted, ‘have ever sought an affiliation with that faction of the discontented fragments of all parties, and emboldened by the confidence reposed in them by the Administration, they now seek to strengthen their own positions by wheedling votes from a party with which the democracy, as a national party, can have no fraternity of feeling.’ The rejection of this resolution signaled an attempt to conjoin the Democracy’s political efforts with the most divisive group of all. The Palladium and their associates at the Morning Post viewed this course of action as injurious to the welfare of the Democratic Party in Massachusetts. In aligning their political organization with the interests of political Abolitionists, Morton had justified the doubts of southerners about the purity of the party in New England, an area alleged to be rife with anti-slavery sentiment. Only by a change in approach, most likely meaning new leadership, would the Democracy be freed from continuing upon this patently detrimental course.⁷⁶

All of these actions taken by Morton while governor and Port Collector, helped to prove the final charge of the clique against him: that he was and always had been an Abolitionist. The course that he had followed in these instances was more notable because of the public nature of the events in question. Outside of public and ordinary political view, however, Morton had always shown patent antipathy for the institution of slavery and a desire to work actively against the interests of the institution in general. Morton’s actions as a United States Representative during the Missouri Crisis, when he had twice voted against the admission of that territory because of the presence of slavery within its

⁷⁶ Ibid, Sep. 17, 1845.

boundaries, had first indicated his anti-slavery sentiments. The clique alleged that a similar description of Morton's opinions could be deduced as to his attitude toward the rights of the South where the institution already existed. His repeated public attacks on the institution and declarations that Congress had the authority to abolish it in the District of Columbia and United States territorial possessions seemed to legitimate these claims.⁷⁷ Excerpts of several letters from Morton were also offered in the Boston Morning Post of December 17, 1845. Each of these pieces of correspondence included evidence of Morton's hatred for the institution of slavery at various points in his political career.

Most important among the letters published in the Post along with affiliated papers was Morton's letter to Morton Eddy from September 1837. Previously printed in the Boston Advocate during the gubernatorial campaign of that same year, it was proffered once again by his political opponents for an important purpose. This letter, which Morton had regretted penning for some time, seemed to show the collector in a most negative light to those predisposed to loathe all Abolitionist sentiment.⁷⁸ In it he had outlined his personal views on slavery. Calling it a heresy against humanity, Morton went on to offer a viewpoint much more liberal than even the typical anti-slavery man at the time. He remarked that 'for one human being to hold others, whom the Almighty has created his fellows, in bondage, is entirely repugnant to that principle of equality which is founded in religion as well as in natural right.' Such an ideal was separate from any 'distinction of race or condition [and] includes in its embrace the whole human family.' In its implications such a sentiment was exceedingly radical for the time. Belief in the equality of African Americans was a concept that few even in Abolition circles espoused.

Such sentiments coming from Marcus Morton, one of the most prominent members of Massachusetts Democracy, were sure to shock most of the Democratic Senators responsible for confirming his nomination as Custom House Collector. For his part Morton realized the damaging nature of this letter. In the midst of the charges of

⁷⁷ Morton, 23 Sep. 1835, to Perry, *Morton Letterbooks*, MHS; Jonathan Earle. *Jacksonian Antislavery and the Politics of Free Soil, 1824-1854* (Chapel Hill 2004), pg. 131-133.

⁷⁸ Morton, 28 Sep. 1837, to Eddy; Morton, 7 Dec. 1837, to Bancroft, *Bancroft Papers*, MHS.

Abolitionism against him, he wrote Bancroft to offer his concerns, noting that the portions of the letter that had been published, both originally and in more recent days, were damaging when taken out of context. Since this was the only manner in which the public had been exposed to his ideas, such an approach was bound to shed a negative light upon the ex-governor's views. While this letter had been meant only as a piece of private correspondence, the fact that it had become a matter of public record could not be reversed at this point. In hopes of remedying the situation, Morton beseeched Bancroft to offer his assistance with the Senators who were to decide his fate in the confirmation hearings. If the damage could be minimized by emphasizing Morton's other noteworthy characteristic, his loyalty to the Democratic Party since the days even preceding Jackson's administration, it was hoped that the negative impact of these charges could be avoided. Furthermore, portraying his accusers among the Post clique in an unfavorable light would also offer a potential antidote for the political dangers faced by Morton.⁷⁹ Regardless of the approach to be taken by his allies, Morton's very real concerns in the immediate aftermath of these various attacks upon his political and social ideology are made evident from his correspondence.

As a result of the effectiveness of the Post clique's approach in casting doubt upon the political character of Marcus Morton, several of the collector's most prominent friends endeavored to enhance his image with the public. While such a display of support may not have been necessary in the past, with the current situation their defense seemed requisite. Offering successive pamphlets in December 1845 and January 1846, quite likely at Morton's behest, these associates sought to confront and dispel many of the charges that had been leveled in the pages of the Morning Post as well as in the published letters from David Henshaw and Benjamin Hallett. Since the most damaging charges found in these sources related to Morton's fidelity to anti-slavery sentiments, these two documents focused heavily upon proving that the collector was no Abolitionist. Given Morton's past statements, however, such an endeavor would be difficult. Therefore the authors of these pamphlets attempted to direct attention away from the most radical charges of the Post

⁷⁹ Morton, 13 Jan. 1846, to Bancroft, *Bancroft Papers*, MHS.

group, while acknowledging the basic truth of some of their statements. Though they conceded that Morton did indeed condemn the morality of the institution, charges that he had displayed a penchant toward interfering with it where it already existed were vehemently denied. The first pamphlet, entitled “A Refutation of the Charges of Abolitionism, Brought by David Henshaw and his Partisans against Hon. Marcus Morton,” made this point clear. Although Morton was most definitely ‘opposed to the institution of slavery in common with the civilized world’, he was far too politically astute to believe in meddling with its constitutional operation where it already existed. Because of this belief, he had continually rebuked, ‘the unwarrantable interference of the North, in the domestic institutions of the South, as Governor, in 1840, as well as in 1843.’⁸⁰

Evidence of his known antipathy to northern interference in the affairs of the South was furnished by the realization that Morton’s entire course as governor had ‘been always opposed by the Massachusetts Abolitionist Party.’ The charges of the Henshaw faction that Morton had courted the votes of Abolition men to gain the gubernatorial position were patently false. When facing his greatest potential political success—his election by the legislature to the governorship in 1840—Morton had refused to become involved with Abolitionists, despite what Henshaw had alleged. The writers claimed, “Thus, then, stood Marcus Morton, the Henshaw accused Abolitionist, presenting the noble spectacle of a man, just within the grasp of his most laudable ambition, determinedly risking its final attainment, in maintaining the constitutional rights of our sister States of the South.” Additionally, Morton had appointed no man previously known to harbor Abolitionist sentiments to office during either of his terms as governor. If Morton had so assiduously avoided becoming involved with the designs of Abolitionists, the authors wondered, what right did the noted schemer David Henshaw have to criticize his political actions? Since the political machinations of the clique were alleged to have involved temporary alliances with Abolition men in their quest for regaining control of the party, their charges against

⁸⁰ “A Refutation of the charges of abolitionism, brought by David Henshaw and his Partisans against the Honorable Marcus Morton,” (Boston 1845).

Morton were hypocritical at best.⁸¹

In the course of both the first pamphlet and its sequel, entitled “A Reply To the Attacks in the Boston Morning Post Upon Governor Morton,” the collector's allies went through a laborious process to prove that none of the legislation or actions referred to by Henshaw and the clique displayed genuine Abolitionist leanings. Regarding the now infamous resolutions against Texas annexation passed in 1843, the authors claimed that Morton was not in agreement with the Legislature’s action. “Marcus Morton utterly disapproved of these Resolves, both privately and officially; and they stand among those Acts and Resolves of that Legislature, to which he did not affix his signature of approval.” In denying an important symbol of approval for an action passed by a body dominated by fellow party members, Governor Morton had indicated a clear disapprobation of these proposals. Ignoring this obviously important element of the story, the Post clique had purposefully been attempting to paint the collector in a damaging light to southern Senators. Similarly, the Legislative initiatives that had appointed Hoar and Hubbard to their missions to South Carolina and Louisiana were approved by the previous Governor Isaac Davis, Morton’s predecessor, and a state legislature dominated by his fellow Whig Party members. Although Morton certainly sympathized with the plight and the rights of black sailors from Massachusetts more than 'City' faction rivals did, his journalistic friends claimed that his role in the formulation of this policy was non-existent.

Although Morton’s actions regarding inter-racial marriage could not be explained away so easily, his allies attempted to palliate this situation in the eyes of outside observers. The December pamphlet conceded that Governor Morton had repealed a previously existing law against these marriages. This action, however, did not prove that he supported such unions. Allegations to this effect made by Hallett and Henshaw were untrue, said the friends of Morton. Annuling the legal injunctions against marriages of this sort was simply an attempt to return the Massachusetts law on this matter to its most basic state. It was alleged that since most southern states at the time had no legislation

⁸¹ Ibid.

barring whites and blacks from intermarrying, it made little sense for Massachusetts to codify such a prohibition. More importantly the pamphleteers opined that marriage in a republican state should be based upon natural considerations. All men and women should be free to choose their mates. This was a belief held by Morton and all true humanitarians. However, such a sentiment did not mean that Marcus Morton thought interracial marriages were desirable. To the contrary, despite his hatred for the institution of slavery, the writers made clear Morton did not believe in equality of the races. His inherent racism directly influenced Morton's feelings on marriage. Since to his mind Caucasians were superior to blacks, it was only natural that marriage between the groups would be unlikely. Simply put, Morton's annulment of injunctions against interracial marriages was made upon the assumption that his action would have no real effect upon the rate of white and black conjugal relations.⁸²

The legislation regarding fugitive slaves was also defended, though not denied in these two pamphlets. It was true that Morton had barred the use of municipal and state jails for holding escaped southern blacks. The reasoning for such a policy, however, was explained as a matter of legality. As Massachusetts prison space was reserved for citizens of the United States, problems arose when considering the incarceration of out-of-state African Americans whose criminality was questionable. Emphasizing the anti-abolition sentiments of the former governor, the authors stated that Morton denied the citizenship of all blacks. Therefore both state and city prisons were technically unable to house such individuals. Along the same lines, Morton had barred the use of state officials to seize fugitives from the South in accordance with the 'old State rights principles,' it was said. Since the pursuit and capture of escaped slaves was part of the jurisdiction of the Federal Government, Massachusetts law officers had no right to assist in this matter, the governor asserted. Due to his background as a Supreme Court Justice, Morton understood these legal limitations better than most politicians. Hence his knowledge of these technicalities had necessitated the actions he had taken. It was not any particular personal solicitude for the rights of fugitives that had induced such a policy, alleged the pamphlet authors, but

⁸² Boston *Bay State Democrat*, Feb. 8, 1843.

merely a regard for constitutionally mandated divisions of authority.

In the case of George Latimer, the Virginia fugitive found in Massachusetts, Morton's friends once again defended their patron. The Post clique was charged with having misrepresented the situation. Apparently Virginia Lieutenant Governor Gregory had made his original request for extradition to Governor Isaac Davis prior to Morton's term in 1842. At that time the Whig leader of Massachusetts refused to return the fugitive. Upon Morton's assuming office, he was sent a request by Gregory to revisit the matter. The governor, following the normal course on such occasions, asked for a revised presentation of the case. Since Gregory never responded to this request, the matter was forgotten. Until Henshaw alluded to this issue in his published letter of December, 1845, Morton and all other political men in Massachusetts had forgotten about the incident. The pamphlet claimed that if the retrieval was not deemed important enough for Latimer's owner or any high ranking officials in Virginia to take the time to write a revised rendition request, it was not a matter that needed to worry the Democracy of Massachusetts.⁸³

Addressing Morton's appointment as collector, the successive pamphlets attempted to refute the charges of the clique of a preference for Abolitionists. There were no cases to indicate that the newly nominated collector had favored men with anti-slavery sentiments over others. Since this charge appears to have been the thinnest one made by the clique, Morton's allies spent less time proving their point on the issue. Pointing out that the denial of office to men known to harbor overtly pro-southern sentiments was by no means the same thing as a promotion of Abolitionist ideals, these arguments sought to prove the untenable nature of most of Henshaw, Hallt and company's charges. Observing that a predilection for Calhoun over Van Buren did not constitute a reason for appointment or offer insurance against removal for incompetents, the authors sought to eliminate any connection between partiality for the Carolinian and predisposition against Abolitionists. While they admitted that several Democrats had been removed from office under Collector Morton, it was noted that such a policy followed the Jacksonian doctrine of regular

⁸³ "A Refutation of the charges of Abolitionism, against the Honorable Marcus Morton," (Boston 1845).

rotation. The charges of the Post and its allies that Calhoun and anti-abolition men were removed at a higher rate and generally denied appointments by Morton were also denied.

The second pamphlet offered statistics to prove its point on this matter, at least tangentially. It noted that when Morton became Collector of Boston in 1845 there were 103 officeholders under his control. Of these men, seventy-three were Democrats, twenty Whigs and six neutral. Over the next several months, the Collector removed sixteen Whigs and nine Democrats. His current Custom House now stood at ninety-six Democrats, four Whigs and three undecided men. Although he did remove Democrats from office, he replaced them with other Democrats. Such an analysis did not disprove Morton's favor for anti-Abolition men, of course. But the authors stated that it need not. Morton's removals had taken place with equal consideration of party affiliation and competence. Sentiments on slavery played no role it was alleged. More qualified Democrats had replaced both Whigs and fellow party members, without any attention to their Abolition leanings. The removed members of the party were all recent converts to the tenets of Democracy. They had been replaced with men more versed in party doctrine and ideology. Morton's careful attention to matters of removal and appointment were beyond refutation, it was claimed. He had made sure to procure the best possible candidates for each office. Hence his appointment process could not draw any legitimate criticism from the Post. The eleven Whigs who had been jettisoned had been replaced with Democrats of the highest caliber. None of them had any ties to Abolition sentiment, the authors asserted.

The most important goal of Morton and his friends in these replies was disproving the basic charge that the collector was an Abolitionist and thus an improper man for southern Senators to approve for the position in question. In surveying his actions while governor and Head Collector, they viewed it as imperative to prove this one point. While his anti-slavery sentiments could and would not be denied, Morton's respect and penchant for harmony, order and political decorum made it impossible for him to have even the least bit of respect for such inflammatory doctrines as those spouted by Abolitionists. The original pamphlet stated, "Against no man in the Commonwealth, can the charge of Abolitionism be made with less truth, than against Marcus Morton." All impartial men

who had dealt with Morton on any continuing basis knew of his true sentiments on the matter. “In private conversation, in public letters, and in his official acts, Gov. Morton has always expressed the greatest alarm at the rash thoughtless course pursued by this band of modern fanatics.” Only by taking limited parts of certain letters could Morton even by implication he claimed to be an Abolitionist. His defenders asserted that the true sentiments of the man were seen in an 1843 letter he had written to Charles Whittier. In that document, printed in the Refutation, he had claimed, “I am no political abolitionist. I think the ultra measures and doctrines of the two extremes, the North and the South are alike unfavorable to the relief and the emancipation of the Slaves. I am also constrained to believe that while the great mass of abolitionists are sincere in their efforts, and are governed by pure motives, many of their leaders are governed by selfish and sinister designs.” This would not seem to be the language of an Abolitionist, both Morton and his defenders noted.⁸⁴

The pamphleteers concluded that displaying such beliefs about Abolition despite his obvious hatred of the institution made Morton a northern man that southerners should accept as a worthy candidate for such an important position. Unlike Henshaw, Hallett and other members of their political faction, Morton’s political activities were and always had been conducted in full public view. Whereas these others displayed no qualms about secretly dealing with Abolition men and Whigs in order to enhance their political careers or gain patronage appointments, Morton’s career had been based on openness and had followed sound democratic principles. The misrepresentations offered in recent months in the columns of the Morning Post, and in published letters and private contacts between these men and the government officials in Washington who were considering acting against Morton’s nomination, were further proof of their nefarious character traits. In attempting to besmirch the image of the collector, they had once again offered proof of their own unsavory temperaments.

In their addresses these defenders hoped to gain the approval of fellow party

⁸⁴ Ibid.

members by appealing to their political obligations. Marcus Morton, they claimed, was one of the original Massachusetts Democrats. He had been selected to the collectorship by President Polk. As a result any opposition to him implied disapproval of the president's course. Beyond considerations of party loyalty, however, Morton's impeccable character and trustworthy service in the past were bound to remove any doubt from the proceedings. Thus the Senate should have no reason to hesitate in approving the nomination. Having proved the patent untruth of the charges against him, the pamphleteers insisted that the southern politicians in Washington to whom Henshaw's appeals had been aimed, should have no doubts about disregarding these false representations. 'If they regard the voice of the democratic party in and out of Massachusetts-if they desire the services of a man of unquestioned integrity, of spotless purity of character, of tried and undoubted democracy, and of pre-eminent qualifications, they will unanimously confirm the nomination.'⁸⁵

The final attempt of the clique to undermine Morton's candidacy for the collectorship followed the second pamphlet. In late March of that year the Suffolk County Committee, long the bastion of Morning Post influence, submitted a petition to the State Legislature. This statement declared that Morton's confirmation as Head Collector would not be accepted by the Democracy of Massachusetts. The motion to submit such a petition was offered by D.D. Brodhead, a long-time lieutenant of Henshaw. Morton realized, however, the imprint of his greatest political rival on this document. Writing to Governor John Fairfield of Maine he declared that Henshaw, Greene and Hallett working in conjunction had forced this measure through their County Committee. Illustrating the lack of weight their hostility to Morton carried, the collector noted the inability of the clique to gain a majority vote on the matter among a body of politicians they had been alleged to control. Only eleven of twenty-eight permanent members of the Committee had endorsed the petition. The ability of the clique to include the signatures of five men who did not officially belong to the group explained its subsequent passage.⁸⁶ The clique's skill at manipulating this committee and generating a petition of protest was not seconded in the

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Morton, 4 Apr. 1846, to Fairfield, *Morton Letterbooks*, MHS.

Massachusetts Legislature. This document was never forwarded to Washington, much to the chagrin of David Henshaw and his important associates at the Morning Post.

Employing the aid of several northern Senators, some known to harbor Abolitionist sentiments, Morton succeeded in having his case ably presented to the United States Senate. Perhaps most importantly, Morton's old friend and political crony George Bancroft took advantage of his position in Polk's Cabinet to present the case for the nominee to the collectorship. Speaking before a selected Senate committee in early May, the newly appointed secretary of the navy insisted that the charges that Morton's past words and deeds had signaled a tendency to endorse inflammatory designs toward slavery were patently false. Having known Morton intimately for a long period of time, Bancroft asked the Senators to trust his representation of the beleaguered politician. It was his belief that the evidence adduced by his enemies had been either exaggerated or taken out of context. Morton, he declared, was the most trustworthy Democrat in New England and deserved his important post.⁸⁷ The respect that Bancroft held with most politicians in Washington was of undeniable importance to the fortune of his friend. In the end, despite the strenuous efforts of the Post clique to paint Marcus Morton in a harsh light, especially from the perspective of important southern Senators, his past service to the party and influence with several key political figures ensured the confirmation.⁸⁸ The day after Bancroft's impassioned testimony before Congress, Marcus Morton was confirmed as Head Collector of the Port of Boston.

Morton's victory over his Post clique opponents would be short-lived, however. Less than a week after his confirmation hearing had been completed, the United States and Mexico went to war. No doubt feeling the sting of the allegations made against him regarding the annexation of Texas, Morton publicly kept silent on the righteousness of the war. Later correspondence along with his future actions proved that this silence masked deep-seated hostility to the course being followed by the administration. Bancroft for his part did not follow the lead of the president right away. The secretary of the navy, along

⁸⁷ Bancroft, 8 May, 1846, to Morton, *Morton Letterbooks*, MHS.

with a majority of New Englanders, opposed the war at its start.⁸⁹ With American military success, however, he would change his opinion by the middle of the following year.⁹⁰ Whatever his private sentiment though, Bancroft refused to condemn the course of the president publicly at any point. Henshaw and the Post clique, as avid followers of Calhoun, were whole-heartedly behind the use of arms to subdue Mexico and assert the rights of the United States in Texas and further territories in the southwestern portion of the continent. Ironically enough, despite their early opposition on the Mexican War, the events that proceeded from its outbreak would serve to drive Bancroft and the clique closer together, while continuing the separation between the two former leaders of the 'Country' clique that had begun over Morton's appointment policies. With the increased prominence of the territorial expansion issue and the attendant debate over the rights of slave owners to bring their chattel to the newly conquered lands, the Democracy of Massachusetts underwent an irreparable split.

The circumstances brought about by the Mexican-American War helped to break down old alliances. In their place unions of convenience were formed. This new calculus made for interesting and unexpected political bedfellows at times. The highly controversial war would help to bring about a change in the structure of political processes. Whereas in the past Morton had been able to utilize his influence and popularity among the state's Democrats to exert his will within the party, the new political climate resulting from the war would change this ability. Taking advantage of their favor for Polk's policies, the clique was largely successful in undermining the power traditionally invested in the Head Collector of Boston. Having established closer relations with Bancroft and through him much of Polk's Cabinet, over the next two years Henshaw and his associates gained unprecedented success in going over the head of Morton to get their favorites appointed to several offices in both the Custom House and other key positions in Massachusetts. Their

⁸⁸ Earle; Bancroft, 4 Apr. 21, to Fairfield; Bancroft, 21 Apr. 1845, to Tappan, *Bancroft Letters*, MHS.

⁸⁹ Sam W. Haynes. *James K Polk and the Expansionist Impulse* (New York 2006), pg. 142. Haynes notes that Bancroft was the only member of Polk's Cabinet to voice disapproval over the president's course at the start of the war.

⁹⁰ Morton, 3 Nov. 1847, to C.G. Greene, *Morton Letterbooks*, MHS.

personal achievement in this realm further exacerbated the hatred of Morton. Already piqued by his public feud with the Post group and growing personal animosity for Henshaw, the collector now had another difficulty to confront. The defection of his old friend Bancroft to a political position that nearly mirrored that of the clique he found troubling to no end. George Bancroft's inspired testimony in favor of Morton before Congress appears in hindsight to have been merely a temporary restoration of their former alliance. For the previous year Bancroft had not seen eye to eye with the collector. After the temporary renewal of their political friendship in May, 1846 the two men would continue to drift farther apart until they had become members of distinct political parties. All the while the Post clique was increasingly successful in converting this important ally to their cause, helping them regain a large measure of their lost power. The circumstances brought about by the war, the ensuing debate over slavery in the territories, and the resultant rending of Massachusetts Democracy would help them complete their return to power, albeit over a severely weakened political organization.

Because the Boston Morning Post was the only Democratic newsheet in Massachusetts's capital city, the clique was able to command the public discourse of the party regarding the war. Thus the overtly pro-war, pro-annexation sentiments of the paper, standing in stark contrast to the more representative feeling against the war found in Whig journals, easily distinguished Henshaw's and his allies' feelings from those of opponents. Morton, for once without a journal to record the sentiments and political leanings of the 'Country' group, felt no need to declare his opinions on the war. It is certain that he viewed the course followed by Polk's administration in a negative light, particularly given his original hostility to the annexation of Texas. Unable and most likely unwilling to confront or approve the policies of Polk, Morton began losing favor with the administration despite his powerful position. In this instance their years of having publicly avowed favor for annexation measures and their moderate attitude toward the expansion of slavery to southern territories, most likely began to pay dividends for the Post clique. Henshaw's important role in casting aspersions on Morton as a politician who routinely acted against the interests of the South was also undoubtedly important in turning several members of Polk's Cabinet and other influential southerners in Congress against the collector.

Similarly, the connection between Calhoun and Henshaw that had formerly succeeding in influencing appointment decisions in the favor of the clique again began to bear fruit.

From the outset of hostilities with Mexico, the Morning Post was in the vanguard of northern Democrats favoring the war and the course that Polk's Administration followed. Much of this support seems to have been a matter of course. The clique had long advocated rapid expansion, regardless of its implications for slavery's extension. With this consistent strategy, they had made clear their accord with Calhoun on the issue. Because of the divisions that the war with Mexico caused in New England, and more specifically in their own party in Massachusetts, the Morning Post probably saw the debate over the conflict as a great opportunity to prove their loyalty to the administration. This approach was made manifest by the temporary criticism of Calhoun's developing moderation toward annexation as the war dragged on. Lamenting the demographic effects that absorbing vast swaths of territories inhabited by non-Anglo Saxon peoples would bring about, the Carolinian began publicly to criticize the course of the administration by the middle of 1847. Much as it had in the early stages of the Nullification Crisis, the Morning Post clique offered a brief critique of Calhoun's changed sentiments at that point of the war, while never breaking with the Senator. In response to Calhoun's resolution of December 18, 1847 to end the 'conquest of Mexico' which was currently underway, the Post responded with a slight rebuke. Calhoun, despite his early patriotism at the outset of the war, had allowed the length of the conflict to color his opinions. The Post countered his misgivings by asserting the alleged untruth of his accusations that the current course of Polk's Administration constituted unjust treatment toward the Mexican government. Neither did the present course denote any insatiable desire for territory. The facts, as interpreted by the Post, were that the Government had dealt justly with Mexico. On five separate occasions peace commissioners had offered respectable terms to end the war at a cost that would have preserved the honor of the defeated nation. Unwisely, the Mexican Government had chosen to ignore each offer, they claimed. Thus the opposition government and not Polk were responsible for the continuation of fighting to the heart of Mexico.

Greatly to his credit, the president had not given up on trying to resolve the war

peacefully, noted the paper. 'And even now, when Mexico madly persists in continuing a war which past experience, dearly bought and painfully felt, should teach her how hopeless are all her efforts to resist us, the President has, if all we learn can be believed, in meditation another peace offering.' Calhoun's language against the course of the administration therefore was unwarranted. Because of their respect for his character, the clique was confident, it said, that once he had been apprised of the injustice of his remarks, the Senator would rescind his anti-administrative views. Such a public appraisal made clear the Post faction's desire to remain in agreement with the president at all costs. This policy was followed in large part as a hoped for means of drawing to its support the influence of the administration, the political entity most likely to help the clique in its efforts to regain power in Massachusetts Democratic circles.⁹¹

At the same time, the Morning Post publicly approved the course followed by Polk on the settlement of the dispute between the United States and Great Britain over the Oregon Territory. Although many northerners, Whig and Democrat, believed their section had been compromised by the division of the territory at the forty-ninth parallel instead of pressing for a more northerly boundary, Henshaw and his associates proclaimed the measure to be a satisfactory conclusion to a potentially disastrous situation. In this sentiment they were following the language of Calhoun, who had counseled moderation in dealing with a world power like Great Britain. In promoting the final resolution of these potential difficulties, the Post admonished the proponents of a more favorable division of land among their fellow Democrats. Considering the interests of the entire nation was paramount, on this occasion as on all others. Because most southerners did not want war over tracts of unsettled land in the northwestern portion of the continent, Democrats in New England and elsewhere should welcome this resolution, the paper claimed. In establishing American rights in such a vast territory, Polk had followed the wise advice of Calhoun, who had cautioned the president against acting in a rash manner. The clique urged all northern Democrats to follow the lead of their president and his most knowledgeable advisor on the matter. Furthering their connection to Polk's

⁹¹ Boston *Morning Post*, Dec. 20, 1846.

administration, the Morning Post group placed great emphasis on its accord with the president. Without an organ to record their sentiments, the 'Country' clique's opinions were not directly represented. The language of the Post group, admonishing its intra-party rivals against any criticisms of this measure on the grounds of its being an insufficient recognition of the interests of the North, leads to the obvious conjecture that many Democrats outside the Post orbit were showing an inclination to disagree with the settlement of Oregon's border. In light of the rapid descent of the country into war with Mexico, it is very likely that many 'Country' Democrats, along with most of their Whig rivals, saw the administration's actions as selling out the interests of the North, while offering aggressive support to those of the South.⁹²

In large measure the efforts of the clique to gain favor with Polk and his most important advisors appear to have been successful. Retaining ties to Calhoun and his wing of the party, while cementing a direct tie to the administration, the clique was able increasingly to influence the appointment process in Massachusetts. During the time between Morton's nomination and his confirmation as collector, no less than six of the most important positions outside of Boston were granted to men beyond the 'Country' clique's orbit. These six patronage appointments consisted of the Collectors of Fall River, New Bedford, Edgartown, Barnstable, Plymouth, and Gloucester, as well as the Naval Officer and Surveyor of Salem. These posts were to be held respectively by Peanut Leland, William Adams, Andrew Stacy, James Jackson, William Hinckley, and Isaac Pease. Only the Collectors of Nantucket and Marblehead were men suitable to Morton. At the same time within Morton's own jurisdiction, a similar situation arose. Of the eight newly appointed principal officers in Boston, four were members of the Post clique. Most important among these were Nathaniel Greene as Post Master and District Attorney Robert Rantoul. The former man's continued presence at the forefront of local Democratic officials was particularly galling to Morton. No matter the depth of Morton's opposition to Greene for the job, however, rumors that Benjamin Hallett represented the only other alternative caused Morton to be somewhat hesitant to support Greene's removal. By the

⁹² Ibid, Apr. 15, Jun. 27, Jul. 1, 1846.

end of 1848, the collector declared that only with a Whig presidential success would the dilemma regarding this post come to a successful conclusion. Such a sentiment makes obvious the degree of Marcus Morton's disillusionment with the Polk Administration's appointments to these prominent offices.⁹³ In addition to these influential posts, the City Marshal and Naval Store-keepers were also minor clique members.⁹⁴ Several officers in the Custom House had been forced upon Morton at the request of higher-ranking members of the administration as well. Indicating the increasing troubles between the collector and George Bancroft, the secretary of the navy had demanded that Morton acquiesce to his wishes on these matters on two separate occasions.⁹⁵

Most of these 'City' faction gains came to the obvious frustration of Morton. Relying upon the long-held assumption that control of the Custom House in Boston would ensure his leadership of the state's Democracy, Morton expressed a great deal of disbelief at the long list of officers placed in positions throughout the state despite his objections. His correspondence with important officials in Washington reveals a man disappointed at having lost the unanimous support of the administration. Though it is quite possible Morton never had actually possessed this level of power, especially in light of the acrimonious debate over his confirmation, the collector believed the power formerly associated with his rank should be awarded to it once again. As previously mentioned, Morton had attempted to resign from the collectorship in June, 1845 due to his early ineffectiveness in ensuring the appointment of his favorites to office.⁹⁶ Renewing his complaints at the course of appointments in Massachusetts allowed by the administration, Morton now noted the disproportionate representation of men who had worked against the interests of Martin Van Buren in the previous presidential election in government posts. 'The great Van Buren party in this state, which is really the Democratic party, seem to be proscribed. Although it is believed to contain nine-tenths of all who claim to vote the

⁹³ Morton, 28 Feb. 1848, to John M. Niles, *Morton Letterbooks*, MHS.

⁹⁴ Morton, 12 May 1846, to Bancroft, *Bancroft Papers*, MHS; Morton, 23 Jan 1846, to John Fairfield, *Morton Letterbooks*, MHS.

⁹⁵ Morton, 3 Jul 1845, to Bancroft, *Bancroft Letters*, MHS.

⁹⁶ Morton, 26 Jun 1845, to Bancroft, *Bancroft Letters*, MHS.

democratic ticket; yet it does not hold one quarter of the offices. Indeed there has scarcely a single important appointment been made, in the state in conformity to the wishes of that great party.' This alleged outcome had come in direct opposition to his wishes, he noted.⁹⁷

Continuing his criticism of the administration's penchant for working against the desires of its most influential representative in Massachusetts, Morton offered an appeal to Bancroft. Implying that his former chief confidant had done nothing to ensure the success of the true Democrats in Massachusetts, Morton once again denounced the disproportionate power Henshaw and his friends had been able to gain since Polk came to office. Though they constituted a small minority of party members in state, the followers of Calhoun had been able to occupy nearly nine-tenths of the offices turned over since March, 1845, Morton claimed. While such an assertion was an obvious exaggeration, it was meant to stir Bancroft to action against a faction both men had regularly viewed as dangerous to the interests of the party. Morton urged Bancroft to give due consideration and appropriate support to men with their shared ideology in future appointment decisions.⁹⁸

Frustration with the restrictions upon his own Custom House leadership would continue for the collector. Unable to gain the sustained support of even Bancroft, Morton found his connection to the inner circles of the administration constantly decreasing while those of the Post faction were correspondingly rising. Writing to T.G. Coffin, a personal friend, who had been denied the District Attorney position in early 1848, Morton described his enemies as 'the little Boston clique who dispose of the patronage of the General Government for this State.' He claimed that their utter opposition to any candidate would doom his cause, as it had Coffin's. Additionally the increased tendency of the secretary of the navy to heed this clique's counsel allowed that small faction to have a near complete control over appointments and nominations to office.⁹⁹ In essence, by the end of 1847,

⁹⁷ Morton, 21 Apr 1846, to Benjamin Tappan, *Morton Letterbooks*, MHS.

⁹⁸ Morton, 11 May 1846, to Bancroft, *Bancroft Papers*, MHS.

⁹⁹ Morton, 26 Apr 1848, to Coffin, *Morton Letterbooks*, MHS.

Morton found himself in the unenviable position of being merely the nominal leader of the Democracy in Massachusetts. In actuality he had lost much, if not the bulk, of his initial influence due to the success of Henshaw and the Post faction in cementing their ties to Polk's presidency.

Much of the clique's strengthened affiliation with the administration would come as the result of its developing union with George Bancroft. This political bond would form the final blow to the power of Morton as collector, and undermined any degree of control he might earlier have held upon the Democracy of Massachusetts. It also played an important role in his temporary abandonment of the Democratic Party. Although Morton had known for some time of the disapproval Bancroft felt toward his recent course as collector, he still hoped that their formerly strong bond would lead to continued support from his only true link with Polk's administration. In the summer of 1847, this hope was suddenly terminated. The official severance of this long-time political alliance came about because of the overt favor Bancroft showed toward a Morning Post satellite in preference to a devoted ally of the 'Country' group in Western Massachusetts. In May of that year the Hampshire Statesman, published in Springfield, was selected by Polk to replace the Pittsfield Sun as the exclusive news organ publishing national laws in that part of the state. This right was one that was much contested during the period. It indicated the favor of the administration for which ever paper was given the task, in addition to guaranteeing a steady income from the federal government. Since the Sun was an original Democratic paper with a much higher rate of subscription than the Statesman, such a move was unprecedented, to Morton's way of thinking. Apollos Munn, editor of the Statesman, had been a recent convert to the Democratic Party. Thus his political credentials were relatively unknown. Furthermore, this paper was of inferior quality in every way when compared to the Sun. Its editor was known to engage in libelous accusations that would only serve to demean the administration by its association with his concern. Writing to Secretary of State James Buchanan, Morton said of the Statesman, "I believe that I informed you that it was the youngest paper in the State, and had fewer subscribers than any other; and that it was filled with scurrility and personal abuse of members of the Democratic party. I certainly did not exaggerate if I also informed you that there was not a respectable man in the state who

would assume the responsibility of the appointment or acknowledge himself in favor of it.¹⁰⁰

This mark of official favor toward a paper directly tied to the interests of Henshaw and his followers signaled to Morton a final movement by Bancroft into the columns of the opposition ranks within the state's Democracy. Because of this conviction, the relationship between the two men immediately became strained. Although Bancroft denied having helped the Statesman to gain this administrative plum, it is rather apparent upon examination that this claim was made in an attempt to obscure the break between himself and Morton. Buchanan admitted that the administration's granting of publishing rights to the Springfield paper was done out of a sense of obligation to the secretary of the navy.¹⁰¹ Regardless of the exact role that Bancroft played in this affair, from this period on the relationship between Morton and Bancroft was undoubtedly changed. No longer would Morton trust his former confidant with important information about the affairs of the Democracy in Massachusetts. Even following Bancroft's appointment as Minister to England the following year, a position that reduced his ability to influence the administration's policies on appointments or political decisions in Massachusetts, the correspondence between the two men was much more strained than it previously had been. George Bancroft's evolution of belief on annexation toward the camp inhabited by the Post clique between the start of the war with Mexico and his departure for the Court of Saint James, no doubt furthered the division between the two men. Writing to Charles G. Greene in late 1847, he urged the Post faction leader to continue publicizing sentiments in favor of the most acquisitive policy imaginable. Noting that it was the right of the United States to quell anarchy and spread democracy to the benighted country of Mexico as far as possible, Bancroft came to sound much more like an earlier version of John C. Calhoun or the current David Henshaw. By this point in time he had moved far from his earlier affinities with the 'Country' group.¹⁰²

¹⁰⁰ Morton, 21 Jun 1847, to James Buchanan, *Morton Letterbooks*, MHS.

¹⁰¹ James Buchanan, 2 Jul 1847, to Morton, *Morton Letterbooks*, MHS.

¹⁰² Bancroft, 3 Nov 1847, to Greene, *Bancroft Papers*, MHS.

In the summer of 1847, Morton made an initial attempt to reverse the downward spiral of his fortunes within the Massachusetts Democratic power structure. At this time, he urged President Polk to visit Massachusetts. Fearing the ability of the Post clique once again to steal his political momentum, Morton planned to exclude all men who did not represent his Democratic faction from meeting with the president. Ultimately his attempt to gain the president's ear exclusively was tied to Morton's desire to disassociate the Democracy of Massachusetts from any connection with pro-slavery policies. He hoped to separate President Polk's perception of the state's party from the sentiments successfully expressed by Henshaw on the matter. If that could be done, Morton hoped the course of the local party would be accepted by Polk despite the president's obvious affinity with the Henshaw group on the matter of annexation. Morton excluded members of the Post clique from his proposed committee to greet the president, instead selecting only men known to be against the further spread of slavery. In so doing, he served notice of the irreconcilable differences between the factions in Massachusetts. Placing Pliny Merrick and other former Van Buren men at the head of the group responsible for selecting local Democrats to meet Polk, Morton made clear that he would allow no influence from the Post group to interfere with his designs. By this point, however, the affinity that the latter segment of the party held with Polk's expansionist ideals carried greater weight than any public measures Morton could undertake. In any case, the failure of the collector to induce Polk northward foiled his plans.¹⁰³

Despite his split with Bancroft and concomitant loss of power and influence within the Massachusetts Democracy, Collector Morton still essayed to maintain control over the party as best he could. These efforts were largely in vain. Despite claiming in a February 1847 letter to George Bancroft that he regretted the prominence the matter of slavery had recently assumed on the national political scene, the collector would soon make his own attempt to steer his party in the direction he had actually always favored on the issue.¹⁰⁴ At the Democratic State Convention in Worcester, meeting that fall, Morton's closest

¹⁰³ Morton, 1 May 1847, to Merrick; Morton, 1 May 1847, to Polk, *Morton Letterbooks*, MHS; Darling, pg. 346.

¹⁰⁴ Morton, Feb 1847, to Bancroft, *Bancroft Papers*, MHS.

associates attempted to gain an expression of approval for the Wilmot Proviso, the Congressional measure that sought to ban slavery from all territories gained through the war with Mexico. Due in no small part to the Convention President Benjamin Hallett's actions, a resolution to pledge the entirety of the state's party behind this measure failed to make it off the table. It was defeated by a nearly unanimous vote. However, Amasa Walker, Bancroft's trusted associate at the Convention, was said to have claimed that the party could not survive in Massachusetts, 'if it must be forever bound to the shameless, undemocratic institution of chattel slavery.'¹⁰⁵ Once again, the Post clique's machinations and successful measures in gaining party power had paid off in foiling the plans of Morton and his political allies.

The failure of Walker's and Morton's attempts to turn the Democracy of Massachusetts on a path hostile to the interests of slavery constituted a final point of division between its major factions. Past conflicts of interest had been based in part on differing ideology, but mostly hinged on the personalities of faction leaders. The importance of slavery in their ongoing debates, however, would make even the unity that customarily attended the annual gubernatorial campaign season nearly impossible to effect. The Worcester Convention, heavily under the influence of the Post clique, nominated Caleb Cushing. Cushing was a merchant from Newburyport who had defected from the Whig Party in order to remain loyal to President Tyler, during the latter's administration. At that time he had concluded a union of sorts with Henshaw and Hallett. His place on the Democratic ticket came at the expense of Isaac David, the regularly accepted candidate of the 'Country' faction. Throughout the Convention and the subsequent gubernatorial campaign, Cushing placed great emphasis on his approval of the course followed by Polk's administration during the war. He and his associates at the Post also assailed the impropriety of the Wilmot Proviso. Slavery, to the minds of the spokesmen for the Massachusetts Democracy, should not be an issue in the state's campaign for governor.

¹⁰⁵ Boston *Atlas*, Sept. 23, Oct. 16, 1847.

Candidate Cushing's statements combined with the overt rejection of Walker's resolutions in September caused a great deal of dissatisfaction with many party regulars. To the minds of many in the 'Country' faction, these actions were unrepresentative of the party's actual sentiments and had gone too far astray. Unfortunately for Morton and his fellows, these were the ideals of the Post clique, who because of their increased influence had managed to become the driving force behind the direction of the Democracy once again.¹⁰⁶ Cushing's ability to generate six thousand more votes than the previous Democratic gubernatorial candidate proves the strength the Post group had managed to attain by this point.¹⁰⁷ While many in Massachusetts were adamantly opposed to the war, the party of President Polk, otherwise unpopular in New England, had significantly increased its tally in this election with a nearly nineteen percent gain. Even though they lost the election to Whig candidate Theodore Briggs, the Democrats behind Henshaw's favored representative Cushing had shown actual signs of increasing strength, despite having lost Morton's support.

Thus the 1847 Massachusetts campaign for Governor served as the final breaking point for the coalition that had composed the Jacksonian Democratic Party in Massachusetts. In its aftermath, Marcus Morton would complete his increasingly inevitable separation from the Henshaw clique, finding his way within the next few months into the Free Soil Party. Morton placed a great deal of emphasis in his own thinking on Democratic Party affairs in New York. There, a significant faction of the party, loyal to Van Buren and opposing the extension of slavery, had defected from the interests that had controlled the Syracuse State Democratic Convention. At that gathering the party leadership, in maneuvers largely paralleling events in Massachusetts, had managed to rescind a resolution in support of the Wilmot Proviso. Opponents of this action, known as Barnburners, had officially detached themselves from the regular Democracy by leaving the convention. This defection had in turn ensured the party's defeat in the fall gubernatorial election. Though Morton and his associates had nominally continued to

¹⁰⁶ *Boston Atlas*, Sep. 27, Oct. 13, 16, 1847.

¹⁰⁷ Darling, pg. 346-47.

support Cushing as the Democratic candidate, the course of affairs in New York helped to goad the former governor to follow his conscience in the days to come. Unable to condone a direct association with a party that officially sanctioned policies calling for the rapid expansion of territory along with the possible spread of domestic slavery, Morton would execute an abandonment of the Democracy that mirrored that of the Barnburners. In the process he once again followed the course and policies of his long-time favorite, Martin Van Buren. This road led all the way to the Free Soil Party and increased national prominence for the Massachusetts leader.

As a result of events within this own state's Democratic Party, along with what he saw as the penchant of President Polk to yield to the direction of the South in formulating administration policies, Morton became more and more inclined to base his politics on northern sectional issues. He feared the consequences, should the Democratic Party once again nominate a southerner or 'dough-faced' northern man for the upcoming presidential election. In order to combat such a circumstance, the collector began to solicit the aid of prominent allies in the latter part of 1847 and early months of 1848. Although Morton conceded that the conciliation of the different wings of the national party was still a desirable course for the approaching national election, he came to believe that the forms that such appeasement had taken in the past had served to undermine the true interests of northern Democrats. He maintained that "a victory obtained on temporizing expedients," would be 'even worse than a defeat.' Considering the current state of political affairs, with the expansion of slavery dominating discussion, Morton worried that the party would once again allow calls for the affirmation of southern rights to dictate its platform. Such an approach would have dire consequences for the party, particularly in the northeast. Having already lost the respect of many former political allies in that region, the New England party further risked breeding the contempt of the South. Continuing to appear either weak or too willing to sell its interests out to the other region, would make the Democrats of the North the most ineffectual type of political men. Believing in drawing a clear line, Morton wrote John A. Dix in February, 1848, "It is quite time [Northern anti-slavery Democrats] asserted their rights and let the South know that a man who disapproves of Slavery is to stand on an equality with a man who approves of it." Ultimately the only manner in which

the North could prove this determination would be to present a candidate who was publicly opposed to the spread of slavery, if not the institution in its entirety, to the public as their party's candidate in that fall's election. No more northerners with southern principles could be silently allowed to represent the Democracy, if the party were to continue in any viable form in Morton's region, he declared. Since the Post clique's leading members represented the most prominent local examples of such despised politicians to Morton, his assertions undoubtedly had them in mind.¹⁰⁸

Although Morton remained somewhat optimistic that the Democratic Party would nominate a suitable candidate for the Presidency, his hopes were soon disappointed. In the early months of 1848 he believed that there were four likely candidates for the nomination: Levi Woodbury, Lewis Cass, James Buchanan and George M. Dallas. Among these four Morton announced no preference. He ultimately felt reasonably confident that the recent divisions within the Whig Party would allow for any of them to run a competitive campaign. That being said, Morton had little confidence in the party's prospects. Most of his negativity hinged upon the current administration's having heeded poor counsel both in terms of appointments and as to which policies to focus upon. Having allowed men utterly opposed to the adoption of principles favored by the majority of Democrats to assume control, Polk and his associates had significantly reduced the influence of true party beliefs. As a result, especially in the North, the Democrat Party faced an unenviable struggle, no matter which of these men was able to secure the nomination, or even if some other candidate did so.¹⁰⁹

In the aftermath of the selection by the Democratic National Convention in Baltimore, Morton was no longer able to follow his previous path of party loyalty. Although one of his expected candidates, Lewis Cass, was indeed selected to head the presidential ticket, activities elsewhere along with his penchant toward anti-slavery political doctrine, caused a reevaluation of strategy for the collector. Having followed the

¹⁰⁸ Morton, 2 Mar 1848, John A. Dix, *Morton Letterbooks*, MHS.

¹⁰⁹ Morton, 24 Mar 1848, to Bancroft, *Bancroft Papers*, MHS.

actions of the Barnburner wing of New York's Democracy during the previous fall's gubernatorial campaign with some measure of approval, Morton once again found a great deal of coincidence with this group following Cass' nomination. This connection is not surprising, given the presence of Martin Van Buren, the 'Country' clique's long-time mentor, as a leader of this radical branch of the party in New York. The Barnburners could not approve of Lewis Cass, a northerner whom they considered sympathetic to the expansion of slavery because of his opposition to the Wilmot Proviso, as their party's candidate in the coming election. Already frustrated by the inability of the national party to pass the Wilmot Proviso, they would brook no more conciliation with the South. To their minds Cass was no better than any nominee the Whigs could put on their ticket. Even before the Barnburners' split from the party at Baltimore, Morton believed this faction to be of the utmost importance to the determination of the direction the Democracy would take in the coming months. Seeing Van Buren's group as one that could act as a force able to reform the party from within, Morton eagerly anticipated the changes their anti-slavery beliefs could bring to any potential campaign platform.¹¹⁰

Due to his predisposition toward favoring the sentiments of New York's Barnburners and his less than ardent support for Cass' candidacy, Morton had few qualms in following the lead of this radical branch of the Democratic Party. That body's defection from the party proper, while an unconventional move, seemed to the collector to have been done out of reasonable concerns. While the Post would criticize the actions of this body of Democrats as patently disloyal, most especially Martin Van Buren, Morton had little trouble seeing the wisdom of their actions. Since the Democratic Party had long been tainted by the presence of ardent supporters of the extension of the institution of slavery, the defection of any body of true-minded Democrats pledged to support the principles of equality and freedom, seemed a praiseworthy course, to his mind. The presence of his favored politician within their ranks, proved to Morton the sagacity of this group. Van Buren's leadership in their movement also caused the collector to believe in the viability of their fledgling organization.

¹¹⁰ Morton, 17 May 1848, to John Van Buren, *Morton Letterbooks*, MHS.

Quickly after the action of the radical Democrats of New York to separate themselves from the main body of their party, Morton indicated an interest in joining them in their effort. Initially, however, Morton expressed a great deal of concern about what such a defection from the Democracy's ranks would portend politically. His initial hesitation came mainly as a result of Morton's position as Collector of Boston. Since he was given that appointment because of his connections to the national Democratic Administration, it was initially difficult for him to abandon this important political connection. As he said to Barnburner David Dudley Field on June 17, "Were I my own man, it would delight me to embark with my whole might in the glorious cause in which you are engaged and to give to our friends a carte blanche to use me and my name just as they should judge most beneficial to the cause. But in my present situation I have to look to the interest of others as well as myself."¹¹¹ When asked if he would consent to join Martin Van Buren on the ticket of this newly minted Free Soil Party, however, his timidity began to wane. Morton had always admired Van Buren as the greatest symbol of Democracy besides Andrew Jackson. The two men had been inextricably tied since the 'Little Magician's' rise within Jackson's administration and thus seemed like a natural team. Given their equal hostility to the expansion of slavery into the territories, their support for the Wilmot Proviso, and distaste for the candidacy of Lewis Cass, Morton was intrigued by his proposed placement on Van Buren's ticket.

His own ambitions were probably somewhat influential in helping to remove the doubts that he had felt regarding a movement into the ranks of the Free Soil Party. Answering the inquiry of New Yorker Azariah C. Flagg, Morton averred, 'I am devotedly attached to the principles of the radical Democracy of New York, and fully sympathetic with them in the injustice done them by the Baltimore Convention. Indeed the manner, in which most of our Conventions are got up, renders them mere mockeries of democratic and all other principles.' Of the proposal to become the vice presidential candidate on the party's ticket, he noted, 'Nothing would gratify me so much as to have my name connected

¹¹¹ Morton, 17 Jun 1848, to D.D. Field, *Morton Letterbooks*, MHS.

with that of the pure but betrayed and abused Patriot, Martin Van Buren.’ However, Morton’s position as collector still restricted him from making an outright promise to join the ticket. In addition, he expressed concern with the lack of geographic balance a ticket consisting of two northeasters would represent. To Morton it seemed more logical to draft a Western man with anti-slavery sentiments to run as Van Buren’s second. He was committed to offering his limited support to such a campaign, but could not promise to bring any other elements of the Massachusetts Democracy with him.¹¹²

Though Morton did not accept a spot on the Free Soil ticket, he would eventually come around to supporting the candidacy of Van Buren publicly. His position as collector limited him from openly trying to convert Massachusetts Democrats. The recent separation between himself and Bancroft was made known to Van Buren on this occasion, in order for Morton to express the difficult situation he faced in Massachusetts. Noting that all true Democrats would follow the Free Soil principles, the collector told the presidential candidate that their old friend and associate Bancroft could not be counted in that column. His defection made the course of Free Soil political affairs that much more difficult in Massachusetts. That a man for whom Van Buren had done so much had defected to the vilified clique of southern-oriented politicians currently impugning the Free Soil party as an unpatriotic movement created to undermine the regular Democratic cause, rankled both collector and ex-president to no end. With this unexpected and inexplicable change in sentiment, the Minister to Britain, they thought, had proven himself to be what neither Van Buren nor Morton had ever suspected: a self-interested and anti-democratic politician. Morton lamented that his friend had become a true member of the Henshaw clique. Regretfully, Morton informed Van Buren, upon receiving news of Van Buren’s nomination, that ‘from the time of his coalition with Hallett, Greene and Company, no one did so much to proscribe your friends and mine, as our late friend Bancroft.’¹¹³ Morton further assured the candidate that his inability to join Van Buren directly in his pursuit as the vice presidential nominee stemmed from his desire to continue to combat the clique

¹¹² Morton, 17 Jun 1848, to Flagg, *Morton Letterbooks*, MHS.

¹¹³ Morton, 24 Jun 1848, to Van Buren, *Morton Letterbooks*, MHS.

from within the Democracy in Massachusetts. The strength the clique had attained had forced the collector to maintain his position in order to prevent their unanimous control of party affairs. Although he would vote for Van Buren, Morton could not publicly detach himself from the Democracy, lest he cede all operative control of the party to the likes of Henshaw, Hallett, and Greene. It no doubt pained him greatly to include the name of George Bancroft in the column of his opponents within Democratic circles in Massachusetts.

With the official separation of Morton from Bancroft and his decision to join Martin Van Buren's movement to become president on the Free Soil Ticket, the calculus of the Massachusetts Democratic Party had been greatly altered. The collector, though still nominally committed to the administration of Polk, for all intents and purposes was a Free Soil man. In the months leading up to the election Morton marshaled all of his past connections within the old Democratic Party, urging them to vote for the Free Soil candidate. Principles and not party alliances should guide decision-making, he claimed repeatedly.¹¹⁴ Although Van Buren stood no chance in the national election, he did well enough in Massachusetts to outpoll Democratic nominee Lewis Cass. The Free Soil Party was able to generate enough support in the Bay State to reduce Whig preeminence. That party would never again hold majority support among Massachusetts voters. Nonetheless, Whig Zachary Taylor's electoral triumph spelled doom for Morton as port collector. On May 1, 1849 he surrendered the post to Philip Greely, Jr. In his mind, Morton left the collectorship post as a 'radical Democrat.' From that time forward, however, he would cease to claim allegiance to the Democracy's national leadership. His political loyalties from that date were rooted in past images, and associations to men who no longer called themselves Democrats. To him the issues of slavery and democracy could no longer mix. He would only subscribe to a politics that distinguished the first as antithetical to the second. In his final public act before resigning, Morton reiterated the claim that the evil ideology of the Post clique had vitiated the Democratic Party proper in Massachusetts. He stated, 'If the Democratic party ever wish to rise in this State, they must cast off the malign

¹¹⁴ Morton, 9 Sep 1848, to Knox Walker; Morton, 2 Oct 1848, to John Mason, *Morton Letterbooks*, MHS.

influence of the selfish, unprincipled central Clique. If the country will take the matter into their own hands, independent of Boston, they will prosper. But as long as they submit to this miserable metropolitan dictation, they will drag along a wretched existence as small and disreputable as their selfish dictators may desire.” At the core of its benighted policy was the clique’s direct connection to the institution of slavery.¹¹⁵

Since the Democratic Party on the whole was now increasingly dominated by southerners and pro-slavery northern men like Henshaw, Morton chose to leave the political organization to which he had dedicated his best years. In announcing his official defection to the Free Soil organization, in August 1849, Morton wrote, “Co-operation with the Slavery power in its sectional and exclusive policy [will] break down the great Democratic party. Let them cast off this incubus, discard the dough faces, who court the slave influence, for the patronage it can bestow, and return to the doctrines of Washington, Jefferson...and they will triumphantly regain the ascendancy which was sacrificed, by an unjust concession of principle to political harmony and party discipline.” Only by purging many of the rank and file Democrats whom Morton considered doughfaces would any political organization in the North succeed. Convinced of this fact, Morton decided to throw his loyalties firmly behind the group he had personally supported in the previous fall’s electoral campaign.¹¹⁶ His future actions would always show that Morton never abandoned his core Democratic attachment. He had merely been unable to continue co-habitation with men who favored policies friendly to slavery. Morton still had problems associating with long-time Whigs who had joined the Free Soil Party, in spite of his shared beliefs with them on the expansion of slavery. His attempts to undermine Charles Sumner’s candidacy for a Senate seat in 1851, because of the former Whig’s well known favor for corporations and banks, show that Morton still desired to continue his former crusades against all alleged economic evils. Slavery was merely an additional demon to confront concomitantly with other detested monster institutions.¹¹⁷ His

¹¹⁵ Morton, 11 May 1849, to Hildreth, *Morton Letterbooks*, MHS.

¹¹⁶ Morton, 18 Aug 1849, to Hildreth, *Morton Letterbooks*, MHS.

¹¹⁷ Morton, 22 1850, to Robinson; Morton, 12 Mar 1851, to Sumner, *Morton Letterbooks*, MHS.

trepidation about uniting forces with individuals who differed so greatly from him in his political ideals would hinder Morton from pursuing a position of national prominence in the Free Soil movement.

Following Morton's defection, the Democratic Party, now solely in the possession of the Morning Post clique, continued its existence as a minority group. In the years to come, the ability of the party to influence state electoral campaigns was even further reduced. No longer did the Democracy have the ability to unite behind a viable candidate like Marcus Morton, with a chance to win statewide elections. While Henshaw had finally managed to regain his hold on Democratic power, his long awaited triumph must have been bittersweet to say the least. On the whole, the tide of sentiment in Massachusetts had turned against the 'Slave Power.' Waning support for the regular Democratic Party in Massachusetts, due in large part to its continued association with slave interests, was made readily apparent in the dismal showing of Caleb Cushing in his second attempt at the governorship. In the November 1848 gubernatorial campaign, Henshaw's hand-picked favorite was able to garner less than nineteen percent of the total votes cast. Even more damaging to the Democracy's cause, in that campaign Free Soil candidate Samuel Phillips bested Cushing by over eleven-thousand votes, eleven percent of the canvass. Mainly because of the increased prominence of the issue of slavery and the Post clique's unwillingness to mollify critics of the institution, the Democratic Party had become the least powerful of three political organizations in Massachusetts by this date.¹¹⁸

Despite the inexorable collapse of the party they had helped to found, the clique continued their normal political course. Combating Morton in a quest to place their most prominent members in important offices, the group was largely successful in increasing its control over Democratic affairs. In the spring of 1848 they were able to defeat the Collector's attempts to deny the renewal of Nathaniel Greene's term as Postmaster of Boston. The process was so frustrating to Morton that he declared to an associate that the only way to end the clique's ability to force its will upon the appointment process was to

¹¹⁸ Darling, pg. 355-359.

assist the Whigs in the upcoming Presidential election. Similarly Morton refused to endorse the candidacy of T. G. Coffin, a close personal friend, for the District Attorney position in Boston. His reasoning was that since Coffin was known to be a like-minded associate of the collector's and had no affiliation with the Post clique, he stood no chance of attaining the position. Because the Post group and Bancroft in combination would assuredly block his efforts, Morton demurred and notified his friend to desist from pursuing the office.¹¹⁹ It would seem that by 1848 Henshaw's group had become so adept at directing the course of the administration regarding government offices in Massachusetts that Morton was now the weakest Custom House leader at any time during the Jacksonian period. Until the time Morton was removed from office in the spring of 1849, the Post group would continue to exert their will on the party's appointment and electoral nominating functions.¹²⁰

The clique's ability to gain success by strengthening their ties to the administration while maintaining the favor of influential southern allies, in large part fellow Calhoun men in Washington, made their continued attachment to the Democratic Party a foregone conclusion. Long before the campaign of 1848 it was well-known that Henshaw, Greene, Hallett, Rantoul and their associates would publicly endorse whichever candidate the Democracy placed on their ticket. Of course in the months leading up to the Baltimore Convention the group had their favored candidates. Chief among these were two fellow Calhounites. Alabama Senator Dixon H. Lewis gained the favor of the clique once it was acknowledged that Calhoun would abstain from seeking the presidency that fall. Lauding the course followed by Lewis during Polk's administration, the paper at various times during 1846 and 1847 indicated its potential preference for Calhoun's closest political associate in the Senate. Lewis had played a prominent role in both the enactment of the Walker Tariff, which vastly reduced the formerly protectionist import duties, and the restoration of the Independent Treasury System. His actions on these two most important efforts of Polk's administration, the clique maintained, proved Lewis to be a proper

¹¹⁹ Morton, 26 Apr 1848, to Coffin, *Morton Letterbooks*, MHS.

¹²⁰ Morton, 28 Feb 1848, to Niles, *Morton Letterbooks*, MHS.

candidate for party leadership after the president's retirement.¹²¹

At the same time Henshaw was known to be urging his New Hampshire ally Levi Woodbury to seek the party's nomination. Woodbury had been the prospective vice presidential candidate with Calhoun in 1844. During that electoral campaign he had become directly associated with the clique's faction of the Democratic Party. In the spring of 1848 a contingent of Democratic State Legislators nominated Woodbury as their choice to head the national ticket. This action was taken at the direction of the clique. Having now re-ascended to their former position of party leadership, the group was able to assert its will on this occasion.¹²² With Lewis having removed his name from consideration by the time of the Baltimore Convention, the clique came to support Woodbury's candidacy. Since neither Calhoun nor Lewis had chosen to pursue the nomination, the group's sentiments quickly turned to the New Hampshire Senator as the next best standard bearer. Although neither of its favored candidates was able to gain the nod from the Baltimore Convention, the Post clique whole-heartedly endorsed Cass' candidacy. His sentiments in favor territorial expansion and against the Wilmot Proviso made the former Governor of the Michigan Territory and secretary of war an easy compromise choice, and one the Morning Post could enthusiastically promote to its readership.

In the aftermath of Cass's unsuccessful attempt to perpetuate Democratic leadership in Washington, the clique continued to represent the interests of the national Democratic Party in Massachusetts. Their sentiments remained unchanged. The group's leaders earnestly promoted policies that overtly rejected the injection of the issue of slavery into the political arena, and protested against any infringement upon the rights of the South. Simply put the Post clique, following Henshaw's leadership, remained true to their ideological loyalty to Calhoun. All the way to Calhoun's death in 1850 even, the paper and its associates would continually insist that those who labeled their policies as detrimental to

¹²¹ Boston *Morning Post*, Aug. 15, 1846.

¹²² Donald Cole, *Jacksonian Democracy in New Hampshire, 1800-1851*, (Cambridge, MA 1970), pg. 240-241.

the interests of New England, or taunted their leadership as ‘dough-faced’ politicians, were in fact increasing the tensions between North and South. The Post, under David Henshaw's direction, continually claimed affinities with southerners, protesting against what it called an abolitionist course of policy taking hold in Massachusetts. Maintaining that Democrats who defected to the Free Soil Party or became outright Abolition men were doing more damage to the region than any policies that accepted the extension of slavery, the group sought to argue the righteousness of its course of action. During the course of the debates over the measures that came to be known as the Compromise of 1850, the clique began to adopt a more moderate approach. At times criticizing the actions of Calhoun and his allies who were unwilling to recede from their harsh demands, the paper called for a more conciliatory course. These rebukes of their political leader, as in past such instances, however, appear to have been made as a matter of necessity, considering the political context in Massachusetts. Never would the Post deny the overall justice of the policies endorsed by the Carolinian, despite their having been at times very radical in nature.¹²³ When Calhoun died in the spring of 1850, the paper made known its continued admiration for the positions he had asserted until his final breath.¹²⁴

It is beyond doubt that the political path followed by the clique made them a marginal group within the broad political scene of Massachusetts. Despite the proven disadvantage of their insistence on backing what critics called a pro-southern policy and one that certainly remained loyal to the leadership of Calhoun, Henshaw and his associates would not change course. Following this obstinate political commitment, the party continued to lose support in the changed environment increasingly marked by sectionalism that had emerged during the war with Mexico. At the same time, the Post group was strengthening its hold on the Democracy, much as it had during the formative days of the party. In many ways, this course of events mirrored what had taken place in the late 1820's and early 1830's. At that time, the clique's dominance of the Democracy had gained footing when the fledgling party was a significant minority within Massachusetts.

¹²³ Boston *Morning Post*, Dec. 1849-Feb. 1850.

¹²⁴ Ibid, Apr. 2, 3, 1850.

Likewise, on both of these occasions, the Post group's ascent was fashioned because of a close connection to Calhoun and so-called southern ideals. Also, in 1828 and 1848 the party was either in the process of formation or undergoing a transformation that would make it markedly different from what it had been. Finally in both instances the Post clique, once in power, jettisoned former intra-party allies in order to cement their hold on political affairs. Thus in assuming the reins of a weakened Democratic Party, the Morning Post group in many ways was reprising an earlier act on the Massachusetts political stage.

Realizing the similarities between these two cases, one might incorrectly assume that Henshaw and his associates were once again following a policy of limiting the scope of the party in order to strengthen their grip on the organization. Its earlier critics both within the Democracy and from rival parties had claimed that, given its focus on maintaining patronage posts, it made no difference to the Post group how much strength their party had in Massachusetts. Having a Democrat occupy the nation's highest office would ensure the continued prominence of the faction in control of the state's federal largess. By ejecting opponents to their reign, it had been claimed, the Post group had sought to monopolize all influential offices in state. Their connection to Calhoun had given them a medium through which to gain control at the bookends of a twenty-year interval. In that way, the group had been painted as opportunists who utilized their affinity with Calhoun and his southern ideals to gain power in their state. Such an interpretation is, however, essentially flawed. It is true that the clique profited by their affiliation with Calhoun, as the Carolinian was able to utilize his notable influence with three different presidents to help them gain the most important government positions. The desire to hold these posts, however, was not the reason for the clique's enlistment in the ranks of Calhoun's followers.

Their political course and oft-repeated ideology proves the group to have been political disciples of John C. Calhoun above all else. If the Post clique had simply wanted to enhance their power, it would have been more profitable for them to have shifted their focus and support from candidate to candidate, depending upon which one seemed most likely to gain power. Although they had abandoned Calhoun during his period of

separation from President Jackson, the clique had little choice in that matter for a variety of reasons. In immediately offering their unqualified support for Calhoun upon his return to the Democracy, Henshaw, Greene, and their associates had reestablished their initial connection. Similarly, in joining Calhoun's affiliation with John Tyler's presidency, the clique engendered harsh criticism from their fellow Democrats. Although offices and potential gain did result from this course, it was the affinity for Calhoun that was more important in their decision to offer support to Tyler. Without Calhoun's presence in the inner circles of the administration, the Post clique would not have followed the same course. Finally, with their unwillingness to abandon Calhoun or to offer public denunciations against slavery as most of the Democracy's northern political allies had done, the clique proved once and for all that their ideological disposition was an exact replica of the Carolinian's. Any group merely interested in political gain would have read the obvious signs and realized that the policies endorsed by Calhoun regarding expansion and slavery were political losers in the North. The Post clique certainly did realize the unpopularity of their beliefs, yet was unwilling to compromise. Above all else, the group's stubbornness on this issue proves them to have been Calhounites to the core.

An encomium to Calhoun printed in the Morning Post shortly following his death expresses much of the sentiment of the clique for its national leader. In substituting themselves for his Carolina constituents, one would be able to gain an almost exact measure of the sentiments of his most ardent supporters in Massachusetts:

'There is something noble and beautiful in the unwavering attachment of South Carolina to this great man. It has, for forty years, known no abatement. In every emergency it has looked to him with the same confidence. After every term of service, it has received him with the same generous voice of welcome and approval... There has been nothing non-committal about his conduct, no petty, special pleading about his speeches, no doubt expressed by himself as to the soundness of his own views. On great occasions he has often thrown himself into the breach, but always with that power which sincere conviction will give, and his vindication to his constituents has ever been characterized by the enthusiasm of perfect honesty and conscious integrity, united with that power which great intellect only can command.'¹²⁵

¹²⁵ Ibid, Apr. 3, 1850.

Although forced to abandon the then vice-president temporarily over the Nullification issue, the clique's attachment to him had been nearly as long and inexorable. Perhaps the best way to sum up the attachment of the Morning Post group to the eminent southern statesman is that they were Calhoun men before they were Democrats, and in the end remained Democrats because they were Calhoun men. It is surely an interesting and telling beginning and ending to the history of the Jacksonian Democratic Party in Massachusetts.

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