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# Loose Party Times: The Political Crisis of the 1850s in Westchester County, New York

## **Abstract**

On November 7, 1848 William H. Robertson rose early and rushed to the post office in Bedford, a town in Westchester County, New York. The young lawyer was brimming with excitement because two weeks earlier, the Whigs in the county's northern section had nominated him as their candidate for the New York State Assembly. Only twenty-four years old and a rising legal star, Robertson hoped that holding political office would launch his nascent career. After casting his ballot at the Bedford Post Office, Robertson paid a visit to Sheriff James M. Bates, his political manager, to await the election results. Robertson's intelligence, collected a week before Election Day, that "news from every part of the district is favorable," proved accurate. The Whig attorney heard later that evening that he had defeated his Democratic opponent, with 57% of the vote. To celebrate, Robertson and Bates feasted on "chickens, turkeys, oysters, and Champaign" before retiring around midnight at Philer Betts' Hotel. The following afternoon, they boarded the 3:00 PM train from Bedford to the county seat of White Plains, seventeen miles south. There, the two triumphant Whigs gossiped and caught up with their counterparts from Westchester's usually Democratic southern section. Hearing of their friends' overwhelming victories surprised Robertson, leading him to exclaim, "The Whigs have carried almost everything!" Indeed, the Whigs had swept every elective office in Westchester County. [excerpt]

## **Keywords**

Civil War, Westchester County, New York, William H. Robertson, Second Party System, Whig Party, Democratic Party

**Loose Party Times: The Political Crisis of the 1850s in  
Westchester County, New York**  
**Zachary Baum**

On November 7, 1848 William H. Robertson rose early and rushed to the post office in Bedford, a town in Westchester County, New York. The young lawyer was brimming with excitement because two weeks earlier, the Whigs in the county's northern section had nominated him as their candidate for the New York State Assembly. Only twenty-four years old and a rising legal star, Robertson hoped that holding political office would launch his nascent career. After casting his ballot at the Bedford Post Office, Robertson paid a visit to Sheriff James M. Bates, his political manager, to await the election results. Robertson's intelligence, collected a week before Election Day, that "news from every part of the district is favorable," proved accurate. The Whig attorney heard later that evening that he had defeated his Democratic opponent, with 57% of the vote. To celebrate, Robertson and Bates feasted on "chickens, turkeys, oysters, and Champaign" before retiring around midnight at Philer Betts' Hotel. The following afternoon, they boarded the 3:00 PM train from Bedford to the county seat of White Plains, seventeen miles south. There, the two triumphant Whigs gossiped and caught up with their counterparts from Westchester's usually Democratic southern section. Hearing of their friends' overwhelming victories surprised Robertson, leading him to exclaim, "The Whigs have carried almost everything!" Indeed, the Whigs had swept every elective office in Westchester County.<sup>52</sup>

The demise of Robertson's party a few years later marked the end of America's Second Party System, characterized by Whig-Democratic competition between 1824

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<sup>1</sup>William Robertson, "Diary of Judge William H. Robertson," Vol. 3, Oct. 31 (first quotation), Nov. 7 (second quotation), 8 (third quotation), 1848, Westchester County Historical Society, Elmsford, NY. Robertson received with 2,246 votes (57%). For election results, see *Westchester Herald*, "Official Canvass," Nov. 24, 1848.

and 1860. Scholars have extensively chronicled how and why this system rose and fell. Yet historians have overlooked one important area of the American political landscape: the suburb. Despite the recent popularity of suburbs as a subject of twentieth century history, few historians have studied politics in nineteenth century American suburbs. The most complete scholarly account of the county's history, a 1982 Ph.D dissertation, is a genealogical study that includes only scant analysis of voting behavior, political ideology, and party formation. One political scientist's observation, over eighty years ago, that Westchester County was "the unexplored...area of American politics," remains true to this day. Mapping the collapse of the Second Party System in what is perhaps the most famous suburb in America sheds light on how the development of new communities in 1850s New York enflamed political controversies and why the parties of Andrew Jackson's era became extinct.<sup>53</sup>

Historians continue to debate the causes of this political realignment. One prominent thesis is that the Democrats and Whigs disintegrated because the slavery extension issue fractured the American electorate along sectional instead of party lines. Another group of historians defend the so-called ethno-cultural interpretation, which posits that nativism, temperance, and religious conflict were the primary culprits in the death of the Second Party System. Though Westchesterites, like most other Americans, cared about slavery extension, it was primarily local ethno-cultural

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<sup>53</sup> Paul M. Cuncannon, "The Proposed Charters for Westchester County, New York," *The American Political Science Review* 22, no. 1 (Feb. 1928): 130; Kevin Kruse and Thomas Sugrue, *The New Suburban History* (Chicago, 2006); Lisa McGirr, *Suburban Warriors: The Origins of the New American Right* (Princeton, 2002); Becky Nicolaides, *My Blue Heaven: Life and Politics in the Working-Class Suburbs of Los Angeles, 1920-1965* (Chicago, 2002); Matthew Zuckerbraun, "Born to Rule: Aristocracy in New York Politics After Jackson, a Study of Westchester County, New York Families in Office, 1840-1910," (Ph.D diss., Columbia University, 1982).

issues that motivated voters to abandon their old parties in response to the political crises of the early 1850s. But as the Third Party System took form in the late 1850s, it was slavery that gave the Democrats and Republicans shape and substance.<sup>54</sup>

Westchester is a revealing case study of the Second Party System because the county enjoyed robust commercial ties to New York City, the financial capital of the United States and a central political battleground during the transition to the Third Party System. The journey from the county seat of White Plains to the southern tip of Manhattan, the largest market in the U.S., was only thirty-five miles. With the exception of New York and Kings Counties, Westchester had the largest merchant population in the state in the 1850s. As a county that was only beginning to transition from rural to suburban, however, the most common occupation for Westchesterites at the start of that decade remained farming. Though the county contained only an average population of farmers, the aggregate value of Westchester's farmland in 1850 was the sixth highest of any county in the United States, and exceeded that of six entire states. By the end of the decade, Westchester's farmland had appreciated to become the third most valuable of any county nationally. As the 1850s dawned, the county was a

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<sup>54</sup> On slavery extension as the impetus for political realignment, see John Ashworth, *Slavery, Capitalism, and Politics in the Antebellum Republic*, 2 vols. (New York, 2007); Eric Foner, *Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Men* (New York, 1970); and James L. Huston, *Calculating the Value of the Union: Slavery, Property Rights, and the Economic Origins of the Civil War* (Chapel Hill, NC, 2003). On the ethno-cultural interpretation, see Ronald P. Formisano, *The Birth of Mass Political Parties: Michigan, 1827-1861* (Princeton, 1971); William E. Gienapp, *Origins of the Republican Party, 1852-1856* (New York, 1987); and Joel H. Sibley, *The Partisan Imperative: The Dynamics of American Politics Before the Civil War* (New York, 1985).

commercial and agricultural powerhouse in both state and nation.<sup>55</sup>

These developments turned the county into an appealing place to call home. Westchester's population grew by 70% during the 1850s, raising it from the forty-third most populous county in the United States in 1850 to twenty-first most populous in 1860. Much of this growth was concentrated in the three towns adjacent to New York City in what is today the Bronx. One satisfied commuter from Morrisania observed that by 1850, southern Westchester was a desirable "location as a place of residence, for persons doing business in the city, being so easy of access" to midtown and lower Manhattan. Even twenty miles to the north, a White Plains editor complained in 1853 that as a result of Westchester's attractiveness to disgruntled New Yorkers, "the city is pouring out an unbroken tide of population into our midst."<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> Franklin B. Hough, *Census of the State of New-York for 1855* (Albany: Charles Van Benthuyssen, 1857), 187 (merchants), 313 (farmers); Charles E. Johnson, *Proceedings of the Board of Supervisors of Westchester County* (Yonkers, 1860); for national statistics, see University of Virginia Geospatial and Statistical Data Center, *Historical Census Browser*, <http://fisher.lib.virginia.edu/collections/stats/histcensus/> (accessed Nov. 24, 2009).

<sup>56</sup> Nicholas McGraw in *Westchester Gazette*, Sep. 20, 1850 (first quotation); *Eastern State Journal*, Sep. 23, 1853 (second quotation); Rohit T. Aggarwala, "The Hudson River Railroad and the Development of Irvington, New York, 1849-1860" *Hudson Valley Regional Review* 10, no. 2, (Sep. 1993): 67; Evelyn Gonzalez, *The Bronx*, Columbia History of Urban Life (New York, 2004), 1-40; Ira Rosenwaike, *Population History of New York City* (Syracuse, 1972), 52; Edward K. Spann, *The New Metropolis: New York City, 1840-1857* (New York, 1981), 189-191. In 1850, 58,263 people lived in Westchester. In 1860, 99,497 people lived in Westchester. For population statistics, see UVA, *Historical Census Browser* (accessed Nov. 24, 2009). See Table 1 in the Appendix for details about the county newspapers cited in this study.

Political parties struggled to adapt to Westchester's changing demography over the course of the 1850s. Local Whigs and Democrats were largely unable to address the new issues that arose during this turbulent decade. The new suburbanites were typically affluent Protestants who brought their anti-Catholic and pro-temperance proclivities with them, which inextricably altered Westchester's political landscape. Though the Democratic Party remained dominant in Westchester throughout the 1850s, this new constituency gave rise to political conflicts that determined election results, destroyed the Whig Party, divided the Democrats, gave rise to third parties, and reflected national sentiment on a variety of salient issues. The major parties' failure to address important policy issues of the early 1850s led the editor of Westchester's most popular Democratic newspaper, the *Eastern State Journal*, to observe that "we are indeed upon 'loose party times.'" But that same editor correctly predicted three years later, "out of this chaos, [new] parties will take form and shape." This chaos engulfed Westchester County, creating unusual political coalitions and realignments at all levels of government.<sup>57</sup>

Perhaps the most notable theme that permeated Westchester's politics during the early 1850s was antipartyism. This sentiment flourished across the county, but was especially strong in the southern section that had absorbed most of the well-to-do migrants from New York City. Cogswell and Hyde refused to endorse a party ticket during the 1850 national and state contests, instead instructing southern Westchesterites to vote "without distinction of party" for a "Union Ticket" consisting mostly of Democrats and a few Whigs. Even ten years prior to the Civil War, suburbanites generally felt a stronger allegiance to country than to party and expressed a willingness to shed their party ties for the sake of Union. In the aftermath of the 1850 elections, predicted these editors, "new parties will be formed, or...the two great parties of this day will be reorganized." In the new villages adjacent to the City, "party spirit has not yet been allowed to interfere with local affairs...it is no matter whether a Judge, assessor, tax-gatherer,

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<sup>57</sup> *Eastern State Journal*, Oct. 31, 1851, June 23, 1854.

Constable, &c. be Whig or Democrat,” declared the *Gazette’s* editors, in 1851. In advance of the April local elections, Cogswell and Hyde supported candidates “without reference to... party politics” and encouraged their readers to “break loose from party trammels, and act an independent party.” The electoral districts that bordered the City supported a so-called “Regular Dem. Whig” ticket that included a Democrat as town supervisor of West Farms and a Whig as town supervisor of Westchester. Though these two candidates were of different parties, they both won handily in nearly identical districts with similar constituencies. The electorate’s weariness of party labels revealed that the new residents of Westchester County had weak local political allegiances years before the slavery-extension crisis challenged the major national parties.<sup>58</sup>

Divisions within the parties posed just as much a threat to the Second Party System as did antipartyism. At the 1850 New York convention in Syracuse, for example, state and county Whigs divided into two groups: the Silver Grays and the Sewardites. Silver Grays represented the party’s conservative members, also known as Cotton Whigs, who bolted when the convention delegates incorporated into their platform William H. Seward’s anti-slavery policies. This faction derived its name from the silver-white hair of Frances Granger, one of the leaders of the bolting faction. Also led by Millard Fillmore, Silver Grays favored a conciliatory approach to southern slaveholders, strong temperance laws, and restricting immigrants and Catholics from civic life. Sewardites, known pejoratively as “Woolly Heads,” were “Conscience Whigs”

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<sup>58</sup> Westchester was the name of both a town in the southern section of the county that is now the south Bronx and the name of the county itself. On local inter-party cooperation, see Gonzalez, *The Bronx*, 39. Quotations in this paragraph are arranged in chronological order, from *Westchester Gazette*, Oct. 18, 1850, Mar. 21, 28, Oct. 31, 1851. For election results, see *Proceedings of the Board of Supervisors of Westchester County*, “Official Canvass,” (Yonkers, 1850); *New York Times*, Nov. 7, 1851; and *Proceedings of the Board of Supervisors of Westchester County*, “Official Canvass,” (Yonkers, 1851).

who opposed the Compromise of 1850, favored restricting the spread of slavery, and were generally indifferent toward foreign influence in domestic politics. This faction derived its name from a prevalent racial slur against blacks because of the faction's anti-slavery political views. Though Sewardites dominated statewide, the county was evenly split between them and Silver Grays: each Whig faction had a paper in the county and half of Westchester's delegates joined Granger's protest.<sup>59</sup>

These factions developed in the county along sectional lines. The Whiggish northern area contained commercial farmers, businessmen, and industrial interests who embraced the political views of Seward, Horace Greeley, and Thurlow Weed. The southern section contained ex-New Yorkers who hated Catholics, enjoyed commercial relationships with southern planters, and were generally evangelicals. In addition, clusters of French Huguenot refugees had long inhabited the southern Westchester communities of Pelham and New Rochelle, forming another crucible in which anti-Catholic sentiment flourished. Though the Silver Grays and Sewardites were ideologically opposed on slavery, when it came to local affairs, said a Democratic editor, they "lovingly embrace each other, and...make no distinctions between their own candidates of whatever faction." In the early 1850s, faction leaders horse-traded by splitting local nominations. But as nativism and slavery destroyed their national and state parties, Westchester Whigs followed their factional leaders into new political parties that upended the local and national party systems.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> On the Silver Grays, see Thomas J. Curran, "Know-Nothings of New York," (Ph.D. diss., Columbia University, 1963), v, 40; Michael F. Holt, *The Rise and Fall of the American Whig Party: Jacksonian Politics and the Onset of the Civil War*, (New York, 1999), 589; and Lee Warner, "The Perpetual Crisis of Conservative Whigs: New York's Silver Grays," *New-York Historical Society Quarterly* 57 (July 1973): 213-236. On the Sewardites, see *Eastern State Journal*, Oct. 11, 1850; Harry J. Carman and Reinhard H. Luthin, "The Seward-Fillmore Feud and the Crisis of 1850," *New York History* 24 (Apr. 1943): 169.

<sup>60</sup> *Eastern State Journal*, Oct. 8, 1852.

Divisions within the Democratic Party also influenced party realignments, though these factional disputes were fueled by slavery and financial policy. The more radical faction, called the Barnburners, favored the Wilmot Proviso to exclude slavery from all new western territories and opposed expanding the public debt to finance the Erie Canal. This faction derived its name from a farmer who burned down his barn to drive out rats. In New York, Barnburners were willing to destroy public works and the banks that funded them to root out waste and fraud. Led by Martin Van Buren, the Barnburners bolted from the Democratic Party in the 1848 presidential election to support the Free Soil Party—a coalition of Barnburner Democrats, abolitionists, and supporters of Henry Clay who fled the Whigs after they nominated Zachary Taylor for President. The conservatives, known as Hunkers, opposed the Wilmot Proviso, supported reconciliation with their southern slaveholding counterparts, and supported the Whig policy of borrowing money to pay for canal improvements. Members of this faction were loyal to William L. Marcy, an ex-governor, senator, and cabinet secretary, and derived their name by “hunkering” after the spoils of office. Westchester sent a Hunker, Benjamin Brandreth, to Albany as state senator while the Democratic Party was split in two.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> On the Barnburners, see *Peekskill Republican*, June 6, 1848; Herbert D.A. Donovan, *The Barnburners: A Study of the Internal Movements in the Political History of New York State* (New York, 1925), 25, 99. On the Hunkers, see *Peekskill Republican*, May 30, 1848; Dale Baum and Dale T. Knobel, “Anatomy of a Realignment: New York Presidential Politics, 1848-1860,” *New York History* 61 (Jan. 1984): 70-72; Donovan, *The Barnburners*, 9. In 1848, the Hunker ticket in Westchester County polled 2211 votes (29%), the Barnburner ticket polled 1378 votes (18%) and the Whig ticket polled 4030 votes (53%). With the Democratic Party split in two, Taylor coasted to victory in County, State, and Nation. In 1849, Brandreth won election as state senator, with Hunker support. *Westchester Herald*, Nov. 24, 1848; *Eastern State Journal*, Oct. 26, Nov. 16, 1849.

Mixed reaction to the Compromise of 1850 within and between the major parties foreshadowed party fragmentation and realignment. The parties were in the midst of such a crisis that a month after the Compromise passed, the Democratic press predicted, in November 1850, that “the two old parties...will entirely break up before the next Presidential election” in 1852. Sutherland’s prediction was incorrect, but his forecast had some convincing evidence: a Silver Gray Whig President had signed the legislation, which passed Congress with the support of Democrats whose views aligned with the Hunkers; Sewardite Whigs and Free Soil Democrats opposed the bills. The unusual coalitions that supported and opposed the Compromise nationally also existed in Westchester. The Silver Gray and Hunker presses predictably observed that “all party feelings and party politics seemed merged” after a meeting of pro-Compromise Westchesterites passed a set of bipartisan resolutions supporting the controversial Fugitive Slave Law but repudiating secession. The Sewardites, of course, decried the Law as “inhuman and revolting,” criticizing the Compromise for “forcing us back into bondage and servitude.” Westchester’s leading Barnburner editor, of course, also considered this piece of the Omnibus Bill “a most gross usurpation of power by Congress; a plan, palpable violation of the Constitution.” Party affiliation, then, was not a reliable indicator of a voter’s views on slavery: Hunker Democrats and Silver Gray Whigs favored compromise with the South, whereas Barnburner Democrats and Woolly Head Whigs sought to restrict slavery’s spread. The evaporation of differences between local parties when it came to national policy had grave consequences for the Second American Party system. “Consensus, not conflict,” according to one historian, destroyed the Jacksonian parties. Without clear differences between Whig and Democratic policies, voters shed their old political affiliations.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> *Hudson River Chronicle*, Feb. 5, 1851; *Peekskill Republican*, Mar. 4, 1851; *Eastern State Journal*, May 24, Nov. 8, 1850; Michael F. Holt, *The Political Crisis of the 1850s* (New York, 1983), 13.

The other major source of disagreement between the Barnburner and Hunker Democrats, and Silver Grays and Sewardite Whigs, concerned how to finance Erie Canal improvements. In the age of Andrew Jackson, the parties split cleanly on this issue: Democrats resisted government sponsorship of internal improvements, whereas Whigs favored them. But according to one historian, in the 1850 and 1851 statewide contests the canal question surpassed even slavery as a divisive force in the extant party system. The unusual alignment of the parties on this question, with the conservative factions proposing to use projected toll revenues as collateral for a loan and the radical factions proposing a direct tax on canal shipments, confirmed Sutherland's view that "the Canal question is...above party." Westchester became embroiled in this controversy when its state senator, Hunker Benjamin Brandreth, broke with the state party over canal funding. After Whigs forced a vote on a bill to borrow \$9 million to finance improvements, twelve Democratic senators walked out of the chamber. The state senate became paralyzed as it lacked the necessary three-fifths attendance required for a quorum. Though Brandreth did not support the bill, he was one of two Democratic senators who remained in the chamber to vote nay. "It appeared to me contrary to the spirit of Republicanism," Brandreth observed in October 1851, to block a vote. Few Westchester Democrats supported Brandreth's decision, or shared his fear that the bolters would further weaken their already divided party at the polls.<sup>63</sup>

This clash between Brandreth and his party leadership reflected how local concerns accelerated the crumbling of the Second Party System. Westchester's Barnburner press, which opposed Brandreth because he was a Hunker, "wanted no new

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<sup>63</sup> Ronald E. Shaw, *Erie Water West: A History of the Erie Canal, 1792-1854* (Lexington, KY, 1990) 361-368; De Alva Stanwood Alexander, *A Political History of the State of New York*, 3 vols. (New York, 1906), 2:163; *Journal of the Senate of the State of New-York at their Seventy-Fourth Session* (Albany, 1851), 603-607; *Eastern State Journal*, May 16, 1851; Benjamin Brandreth to Cogswell and Hyde, Oct. 25, 1851 in *Westchester Gazette*, Oct. 31, 1851.

issue...the party would probably be better off if the contending leaders of both the late sections of the party were overthrown.” The Hunker press, which generally supported the senator, endorsed the bolting senators and correctly pointed out that “the Democracy do not appear to be united in this movement...with such disunion in the Democratic ranks,” there was no such thing as a “majority opinion of the Democracy of this county.” Brandreth’s decision to buck the state party reveals that even the most prominent Westchester politician shared his constituents’ antiparty sentiment. Brandreth paid a steep cost for contravening his leadership: the party denied him re-nomination in 1851, and he was trounced at the polls running as an independent candidate. The near unanimous condemnation of the bolting Democrats, coupled with editors’ rhetorical support for ousting party leaders, would remain a driving force behind the demise of the Second Party System in Westchester.<sup>64</sup>

If political affiliation did not reflect voters’ views on extending slavery and expanding the Erie Canal, party ties were an even more unlikely indicator of Westchester politicians’ views on temperance. Former Whigs in Cortlandt, a town on the county’s northern border, believed that curtailing drunkenness represented “a crisis in which the principles of the two leading parties are not involved.” These temperance advocates encouraged fellow Westchesterites, during the local elections in spring 1851, to support an independent slate of anti-liquor politicians “without reference to creed or party.” The temperance ticket posed such a threat to the major parties that Thomas A. Whitney, the Democratic candidate for Cortlandt Town Supervisor, withdrew two weeks before the race and supported his Whig opponent. Most of these local contests in the twenty-two municipalities across the county, according to Sutherland, were “waged on other than party grounds...the issue was rum or no rum.” The orientation of Westchester’s electorate as either pro-temperance or anti-temperance, instead of Democratic or Whig, indicated that the

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<sup>64</sup> *Eastern State Journal*, Apr. 25, 1851 (first quotation); *Westchester Gazette*, May 9, 27, 1851; *Westchester Herald*, May 20, 1851 (second quotation).

process of party realignment was not solely connected to national debates about slavery. Rather, the breaking up of the Second Party System was deeply rooted in local affairs that affected daily life, and was catalyzed when the two major parties failed to address ethno-cultural issues plaguing northern communities. According to a Hunker editor, Westchester voted “without regard to strict party lines” in 1851.<sup>65</sup>

In the southern section of the county as well, the prevalence of ethno-cultural issues led commuters to drift from their old parties. During the 1852 election, hundreds of West Farms Protestants coalesced around an antiparty prohibitionist ticket. Though this slate was narrowly defeated, the *Eastern State Journal* observed, “the contest was not a party one; it was between the...Maine Liquor Law [Temperance] advocates on the one side and the opponents of the Law on the other.” Many of these commuters, like their northern counterparts, held stronger allegiances to the temperance movement than they did to political parties. “It is a glorious thing that party ties begin to hang loosely on the people, and that considerations other than party interests are beginning to...call out the votes of our citizens,” reported an anonymous temperance advocate in the *Peekskill Republican*. He wanted elected officials to close taverns on Sundays, create strict requirements for obtaining a liquor license, and require any establishment that served alcohol to also provide housing. Neither the Democrats nor the Whigs incorporated these demands into their platforms, causing many voters to flee from their ranks, weakening their own

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<sup>65</sup> Many Friends of Temperance, Peekskill to William Richards, Mar. 29, 1851 in *Peekskill Republican*, Apr. 1 (second quotation), 15 (first quotation), 1851; *Eastern State Journal*, Apr. 18, 1851 (third quotation); *Westchester Herald*, Apr. 8, 1851, Mar. 9, 1852 (fourth quotation); Mark Voss-Hubbard, *Beyond Party: Cultures of Antipartisanship in Northern Politics before the Civil War* (Baltimore, 2002), 93-95.

electoral strength, and foreshadowing the rise of new parties that did address issues about which commuters cared.<sup>66</sup>

The salience of the temperance issue, and the Whigs' inability to address it, accelerated the party's disintegration. In the 1852 election, the Westchester County Temperance Alliance held a convention to nominate candidates for statewide office. The first ballot for state assemblyman of the county's northern district was evenly divided between John Collett, a Whig, and George Mason, a Democrat. Collett ultimately won the Alliance nomination and spoiled the election for the Whig candidate: though the Whigs typically won this seat comfortably, they lost to the Democrats by 39 votes out of 4,266. "If the Whigs had nominated a Maine Law Candidate in this District...he would have been elected," lamented J.J. Chambers, the Sewardite editor of the *Peekskill Republican*, a few days after the election. Comparing the split between the Whig and Temperance Parties to "a big Railroad accident," a Silver Gray likewise observed in the *Hudson River Chronicle* that Whigs who defected to the Alliance "find themselves and the Temperance cause crushed...[Collett] will feel that he has injured his own party." By 1852, temperance movements had siphoned thousands of voters from the Whig Party, which was well on its way to extinction.<sup>67</sup>

The debate over temperance intensified in the spring of 1853 when Democratic Governor Horatio Seymour vetoed a prohibitory liquor law. In response, the antiparty County Temperance Alliance passed resolutions to consider nominating any Democrat or Whig for state office who supported the Maine Law. Though Horace Greeley was the group's choice for state senate, he declined the nomination. The convention instead selected William Robertson, the Whig attorney from Bedford, as their candidate. Robertson's original party was still reeling from its 1852 defeat, and so to avoid past

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<sup>66</sup> *Westchester Gazette*, Oct. 4, 11, 1850; *Eastern State Journal*, Apr. 2, 1852; *New York Atlas*, Apr. 6, 1852 (election result); *Peekskill Republican*, Apr. 22, 1851 (third quotation).

<sup>67</sup> *Proceedings of the Board of Supervisors*, "Official Canvass," 1852; *Peekskill Republican*, Nov. 9, 1852; *Hudson River Chronicle*, Nov. 9, 1852.

mistakes, the Whigs also nominated him. Perhaps party leaders were swayed to support the temperance candidate upon hearing Samuel Wood, a powerful Alliance organizer, declare that “it were better...that existing political parties were annihilated, than that the evils [of liquor] we complain of should be perpetuated.” County Whigs had no choice but to take Wood seriously and cooperate with his anti-liquor party. This marriage proved fruitful: on Election Day, the fusion ticket picked up both a state senate seat and an assembly seat from the Democrats. Reflecting on the temperance organization’s recent victory, one of Wood’s colleagues, D.D. McLaughlin, boasted that they “held the balance of power, and could thus by firm and united action control any election.” Westchester Whigs’ experience with the temperance movement was a microcosm of a national trend that intensified in 1853 and left their party feeble and fragmented. Across the north and mid-Atlantic, voters expressed anti-liquor sentiment not through their traditional parties, but through state and local temperance organizations. By contributing to the destruction of the Whig Party, the Maine Law movement turned the 1850s into an era of realignment.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> *Eastern State Journal*, Nov. 12, 1852; *Peekskill Republican*, Sep. 27, Oct. 18, 25, Nov. 15, 1853; Samuel Wood, President of the Tarrytown Temperance Alliance, “Address of the Tarrytown Temperance Alliance to the Voters of that Town,” in *Eastern State Journal*, Oct. 28, 1853; D.D. Tompkins McLaughlin, “Report of the Westchester County Temperance Alliance,” in *Peekskill Republican*, Feb. 28, 1854; Tyler Anbinder, *Nativism and Slavery: The Northern Know-Nothings and the Politics of the 1850s*, (New York, 1992), 17; Clifford Griffin, *Their Brothers’ Keepers: Moral Stewardship in the United States, 1800-1865*, (New Brunswick, NJ, 1960), 151; Holt, *The Rise and Fall of the American Whig Party*, 800; Daniel Walker Howe, “The Evangelical Movement and Political Culture in the North During the Second Party System,” *Journal of American History* 77 (Mar. 1991): 1232; Kyle Volk, “The Perils of ‘Pure Democracy’: Minority Rights, Liquor Politics, and Popular Sovereignty in Antebellum

Westchester's Democratic Party pounced on the fusion of Whigs and the Temperance Alliance in a desperate attempt to woo anti-liquor Democrats back into the party's fold. Attrition from the Democrats began in 1852 when temperance forces came close to installing one of their own as Democratic candidate for state assembly in Westchester's northern district. With the prohibitionist threat to Democratic Party strength fresh in mind, the *Eastern State Journal* noted the "divided and confused condition of the Democratic party on the one side, and the rotten, crumbling state of the Whig party on the other, together with the 'loose party times' prevalent in every quarter" of the county. These three phenomena, continued the editorial, "gave to the Maine Law organization, or 'Alliance,' a potency and effectiveness at the [1853] election just passed, which no clear-sighted sagacious politician could have failed to foresee." The county's other Democratic paper, the *Westchester Herald*, endorsed the Maine Law a month before that election. Ambivalent Democrats now had political cover to vote the Temperance ticket, confirming the *Eastern State Journal's* fears. By providing a political vehicle for anti-liquor advocates, the temperance party enticed voters to abandon the Democrats, and, of course, the Whigs. Flight from the major parties, in turn, led to the unraveling of the institutions that sustained the Second Party System.<sup>69</sup>

As the relative stability ushered in by the Compromise of 1850 gave way to turbulence by the end of the 1853, yet another split emerged in the Democratic Party that facilitated political realignment. Many Barnburners found themselves without a major party affiliation after the disappearance of the anti-slavery Free Soil Party in 1849. Westchester Hunkers, however, needed Barnburner votes in advance of the 1852 Presidential contest. But many Hunkers believed so strongly in supporting Southern slavery policy that they refused to reconcile their differences with the Barnburners. This dispute cut a deep divide within the Hunker camp between Softs, who

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America," *Journal of the Early Republic* 29 (Winter 2009): 645; Voss-Hubbard, *Beyond Party*, 52, 100.

<sup>69</sup> *Eastern State Journal*, Nov. 11, 1853; *Westchester Herald*, Oct. 18, 1853; Holt, *The Political Crisis*, 101.

would welcome Barnburner bolters back into the party, and the Hards, who would penalize them. In 1853, Westchester Democrats generally supported the Hards because Softs in Albany had temporarily fused with the Whigs in support of temperance candidates. A week after this unusual coalition of Softs and Whigs won a few state and local offices, the county's Hard press decried "these traitors to the cause of Democracy," who "have led off a portion of the honest masses from us, and defeated our candidates." Stung losing by an important state senate seat, Westchester's leading Barnburner, Edmund Sutherland, attributed his party's 1853 statewide defeat to "the Temperance Alliance...but Free Soil treachery and bolting did more." The division between the Hards and Softs continued to plague Westchester Democrats throughout the mid-1850s, ultimately contributing to the party's only two electoral losses in the county during that decade.<sup>70</sup>

The tumult of 1853 intensified the following year when Stephen Douglas's Kansas-Nebraska Act pushed slavery to the forefront of national, state, and local politics. In Westchester, both Democrats and Whigs sought to exploit anti-Nebraska sentiment to win elections. The Sewardite press made the most vocal appeal to anti-slavery advocates by decrying the bill's passage as "the darkest day in the Senate" and promising "political death to every man who lifted his hand or voice in favor of slavery." The largest of many anti-Nebraska meetings in the county took place at the White Plains Courthouse in August 1854, and featured speeches by politicians from both parties. The county's Barnburner organ, the *Eastern State Journal*, also commended Westchester's Democratic Congressman, Jared V. Peck, for voting against the Kansas-Nebraska Act. Sewardites and Barnburners united in opposition. Westchester's Hards, however, split. Most prominent among them, State Senator Benjamin Brandreth encouraged his supporters to remain "true to [their] northern instincts and experience" by opposing the Kansas-Nebraska

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<sup>70</sup> *Peekskill Republican*, Sep. 13, 1853; *Eastern State Journal*, Nov. 17 (traitors quotation), Dec. 2, 1853 (Free Soil quotation); A National Democrat, *New York Hards and Softs: Which is the True Democracy?...* (New York, 1855), 24-26.

Act. But Caleb Roscoe, the editor of the *Westchester Herald*, supported Douglas's bill because it established the doctrine of popular sovereignty, or local referenda on whether or not to permit slavery in the territories. Despite this minor division within an already factionalized Democratic Party, anti-slavery sentiment generally united Westchesterites. Whereas reaction to the Compromise of 1850 was mixed, reaction to the Kansas-Nebraska Act was nearly unanimous. So although slavery became a salient national issue, fault lines between the local parties formed based on ethno-cultural distinctions. In the 1854 contest, nativism and temperance did more than slavery to upend Westchester's party system.<sup>71</sup>

Across the North, voters expressed nativist sentiment through a third party called the Know-Nothings. The rank-and-file often belonged to secret fraternal lodges affiliated with the Order of United Americans (O.U.A.) or the Order of the Star Spangled Banner (O.S.S.B). According to a county Know-Nothing, these lodges consisted mostly of former Hunkers and Silver Grays, who coalesced around a conservative political agenda of prohibiting alcohol, creating tough naturalization laws, and limiting Catholic influence in public institutions. In the southern towns of West Farms, Pelham, and Westchester, anti-Catholic, anti-liquor, and antiparty sentiment had flourished since at least 1850, providing a rich pool of voters for the Know-Nothings. "They seem, down in the lower part of the County, to deal in Native Americanism," charged a Peekskill Whig who lived on Westchester's northern border. This sentiment was, in reality, ubiquitous in the anti-Catholic and temperance enclaves along Westchester's New York City border. Commuters who fled the City, in part to avoid Irish immigrants, found a home in the Know-Nothing Party. Likewise, the Huguenot Protestants, who fled persecution from a French Catholic monarchy to settle in Pelham and New

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<sup>71</sup> *Peekskill Republican*, Mar. 7, 1854 (first quotation); *Eastern State Journal*, Aug. 11, 1854 (second quotation). Address of Benjamin Brandreth" in *Peekskill Republican*, Mar. 7, Oct. 3, 1854; *Westchester Herald*, Feb. 14, 1854; Michael Kirn, Jr., "Voters, Parties, and Legislative Politics in New York State, 1846-1876," (Ph.D diss., University of Virginia, 2003), 488.

Rochelle, also flocked to the Know-Nothings. Many voters in West Farms, according to a *Peekskill Republican* correspondent feared the “foreign and antagonistic population” a few miles south, whose “noisy and riotous proceedings” disturbed otherwise tranquil country lives. By providing a vehicle to elevate the ethno-cultural issues that neither the Democrats nor the Whigs adequately addressed, the Know-Nothings weakened these two factionalized parties and dominated Westchester politics in 1854 and 1855.<sup>72</sup>

Though Know-Nothingism thrived in Westchester, some lodges suffered from factional rivalries. These divisions stemmed primarily from previous party affiliations and prevented the Order from establishing itself as a potent political force as the Third Party System took form. “I have tried for the last six or eight meetings to procure an acceptance and endorsement of this ticket,” complained an Ossining Know-Nothing to party leader and 1854 gubernatorial candidate Daniel Ullmann. A week before the election, Know-Nothing cohesion appeared to be unraveling in that town because “two thirds of this council will vote directly for Seymour, and the Whig members insist that a State nomination by our Order is intended to entice the Whig members to throw away their votes on our nominee.” This worst-case scenario became a reality when Ullmann was routed in Ossining, with the Soft candidate and the Whig candidate receiving a combined 80% of the vote. An Ossining Democrat mocked this lodge, in an *Eastern State Journal* column, as being “led by a set of old party hacks and broken down politicians who have managed to crawl into their Order.” Alexander H. Wells, the leader of O.S.S.B Chapter #72 in Ossining, conceded that his fellow nativists would most

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<sup>72</sup> *Peekskill Republican*, Aug. 1 (second quotation), Oct. 3 (first quotation), 17, 1854; *Westchester Gazette*, Sep. 13, 1850, Mar. 28, 1851; Mark Berger, *The Revolution in the New York Party Systems, 1840-1860* (Port Washington, NY, 1979), 2, 63; Gonzalez, *The Bronx*, 24, 38; Bruce Levine, “Conservatism, Nativism, and Slavery: Thomas R. Whitney and the Origins of the Know-Nothing Party,” *Journal of American History* 88 (Sep. 2001): 460; Voss-Hubbard, *Beyond Party*, 109.

likely vote “with their previous party predilections.” Though his concern proved valid for his lodge, most others around the county supported Ullmann. O.S.S B members shed their old party ties and united with previous political rivals to vote the Know-Nothing ticket in the fall of 1854. J.P. Sanders, a Peekskill Know-Nothing who assured Ullmann that “everything is smooth in this section,” better measured the Westchester electorate’s pulse than did his Ossining counterpart.<sup>73</sup>

Both parties feared the Order as the 1854 elections approached. “Every vote given to Ullmann [Know-Nothing] will be taken from *Clark* [Whig] and practically given to Seymour [Democrat], the Rum candidate and advocate of slavery propagandism. Why then should any Whig or Temperance man...worse than waste his vote, by casting it for this altogether useless nomination?” inquired the county’s Whig organ in advance of the gubernatorial election. Though Clark narrowly edged Seymour to capture the governorship, Ullmann likely siphoned hundreds of Westchester voters from his Whig opponent, almost leading to a Democratic victory.<sup>74</sup> But the Democrats surprisingly had more to fear from the rise of the nativist party. As the election returns demonstrate, from 1853 to 1854, Democrats’ share of the vote was slashed by 25%, whereas the Whig share of the vote declined by 13%, which equaled the Know-Nothings’ 38%. “From the number of Know Nothings, it will be a task of much difficulty to elect a Democrat from Westchester to Congress,” *Eastern State Journal* editor Edmund Sutherland predicted, after observing large defections from his party. His fears were valid. At the 1854 canvass, the Know-Nothing ticket polled pluralities in a majority of Westchester municipalities. Westchester’s

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<sup>73</sup> Ullmann finished in last place in Ossining with only 61 out of 649 votes. *New York Times*, Dec. 21, 1854 (election result); “Letter from ‘A Workingman,’” *Eastern State Journal*, Oct. 20, 1854; A.H. Wells to Daniel Ullmann, Oct. 30, 1854, Ullmann Papers, New-York Historical Society; J.P. Sanders to Daniel Ullmann, Sep. 27, 1854, Ullmann Papers, NYHS.

<sup>74</sup> *Albany Evening Journal*, Nov. 3, 1854; *Peekskill Republican*, Oct. 17 (quotation), Nov. 7, 1854.

Congressman, Bayard Clarke, was now a loyal member of the Order, as were most countywide officials.<sup>75</sup>

By 1854, party lines had become dismantled and traditional political apparatuses were rendered impotent. “A perfect whirlwind seems to have passed over the county, rooting up and tearing down all previous political calculations, electing those in many instances least expecting to be elected,” wrote Sutherland. This editor astutely observed that “from out of the political chaos” of divided Whigs and Democrats, “the Nativist element, with its secret and close organization called ‘Know Nothing,’ sprung up, absorbing materials of every description of opinion and character.” Westchester Whigs boasted that the Democratic Party had become “a house divided against itself” because temperance and slavery overshadowed party lines. Adding the secret political organization of Know-Nothings into this political stew even further clouded the electoral landscape. The large number of parties, and the myriad of diverse issues at stake, represented that the stability created by two-party competition during the Second Party System had given way to chaos by the mid-1850s. After the 1854 election, yet another threat to the Jacksonian political system emerged in the form of a new party.<sup>76</sup>

As anti-slavery sentiment intensified, it cleaved existing fissures in the Whig Party and led to its complete disintegration. The major turning point came in May 1854,

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<sup>75</sup> In 1854, Know-Nothings enjoyed the greatest success at the polls in Massachusetts, followed by New York. Within the state, Westchester County contained a disproportionate amount of Know-Nothings. According to a County Know-Nothing, reported the *Peekskill Republican* on Oct. 17, 1854, “the City of New York and its immediate vicinity held control” at the state Know-Nothing Convention, with Westchester County alone furnishing more than 10% of the delegates. For Sutherland’s analysis, see *Eastern State Journal*, Oct. 13, 1854. For election results, see Table 2 in the Appendix; *New York Times*, Nov. 18, 1853 and Dec. 21, 1854.

<sup>76</sup> *Eastern State Journal*, Nov. 10, 1854; *Peekskill Republican*, Oct. 31, 1854.

when Congress passed the Kansas-Nebraska Act along sectional, instead of party, lines. Sewardites, Barnburners, and a few Softs who also opposed the act, joined with anti-liquor politicians to found the Westchester Republican Party in 1855. "Let all party differences be thrown to the winds," proclaimed a Whig-turned-Republican editor, who welcomed anyone "whether hitherto known as a Democrat or Whig." Meeting at the spot in White Plains where the Provincial Congress of New York had received the Declaration of Independence, the men at the first County Republican Convention "disregarded their former party associations by uniting" on a platform dominated by anti-slavery policy. Specifically, Westchester Republicans repudiated the influence of the Slave Power, opposed repeal of the Missouri Compromise, and decried the fighting between pro- and anti-slavery forces in the Kansas territory. Like the handful of other northern suburban counties around New York City, Boston, and Philadelphia, Westchester embraced a moderate brand of Republicanism. The federal government lacked the authority to meddle in states' affairs, the Westchester platform contended, and thus could not abolish slavery in the states where it already existed. Rather, the institution should die gradually by excluding slavery from western territories and rejecting admission of additional slave states. The local 1855 platform almost exactly mirrored the first national Republican one in 1856, which one historian considers the handiwork of the party's moderate wing.<sup>77</sup>

Though free labor dominated Republican ideology, the party in Westchester also organized to counter Know-Nothingism. The county platform contained a unique plank explicitly "repudiat[ing] the order of Know-Nothings." Party leaders considered Know-Nothings more threatening than Democrats. In the first election the local Republicans contested, they joined with Democrats to create an Anti-Know-

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<sup>77</sup> *Peekskill Republican*, July 24, Sep. 11 (first quotation), Oct. 11 (second quotation), 1855; *Hudson River Chronicle*, Oct. 3, 1855 (platform); Republican Party, "Republican Party Platform of 1856," The American Presidency Project, University of Santa Barbara; Foner, *Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Men*, 186-188.

Nothing Union County ticket “in opposition to the apostates and renegades from all parties who have banded themselves together in an oath-bound secret conspiracy.” Though New Yorkers could choose from four statewide tickets in 1855, the *Hard Westchester Herald* analyzed, “the local contest lies between the secret unprincipled, and prospective order of Know Nothings, and the PEOPLE without distinction as to the former party ties.” The anti-Know-Nothing state senate candidate, Benjamin Brandreth, published an editorial in several Westchester papers declaring that, “the contest in this campaign is not between Democrats and Republicans, but between patriots and Know-Nothings.” Brandreth’s appeal to patriotic principles, in addition to his anti-slavery credentials, mollified reluctant Republicans loath to support Democrats. Opposing Know-Nothingism superseded party lines in Westchester. According to the *Eastern State Journal*, “the Whigs are ready to sustain Dr. Brandreth in this contest—not because he is a Whig, for he is not...but to defeat the Know-Nothing[s].”<sup>78</sup>

Though Westchester Know-Nothings consisted primarily of ex-Democrats, they nonetheless enthusiastically supported an ex-Whig for state senator. Their nominee, John W. Ferdon, typified northern Know-Nothingism by supporting the Maine Law and opposing the Kansas-Nebraska Act. But Ferdon appealed to ex-Democrats primarily because he opposed William H. Seward. As state senator in the 1840s, Ferdon had supported Ogden Hoffman, a Democrat-turned-Whig, over Seward for U.S. Senate because the nativist

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<sup>78</sup> *Hudson River Chronicle*, Oct. 3 (platform), Nov. 6 (quotation), 1855; Benjamin Brandreth to Russell Smith, Joseph T. Carpenter and James J. Smalley, Oct. 20, 1855 in *Eastern State Journal*, Oct. 26, 1855; *Eastern State Journal*, Oct. 26, 1855; Curran, “Know-Nothings of New York,” 86; Kirn, “Voters, Parties, and Legislative Politics in New York State,” 528-529. Though J.J. Chambers, the editor of the *Republican*, had been disgusted at Brandreth’s “total want of all moral fitness” during the 1849 state senate race, six years later, he declared “the traitor” fit for office, in part because he was not a Know-Nothing. *Peekskill Republican*, Oct. 30, 1849.

opposed Seward's plan to create publicly funded schools for Catholic children. Schooling again played a critical role in the 1855 election, and was perhaps the clearest policy distinction between Ferdon and Brandreth. The Democrat had long supported Seward's policy. Brandreth's status as an English immigrant, moreover, enraged county Know-Nothings who favored extending the naturalization period to twenty-one years. Such a policy would have forced Brandreth to wait one more year before earning citizenship, precluding him from even running for office. Because both candidates opposed the Kansas-Nebraska Act, national issues were minimized in the 1855 contest. Ethno-cultural issues figured most prominently. On the one side, an ex-Whig Know-Nothing supported embraced nativism and temperance. On the other, an ex-Democrat "Unionist" rejected them.<sup>79</sup>

This strategy had mixed results. In the state senate race, Brandreth narrowly carried Westchester, but in the district, which also comprised Putnam and Rockland counties, Ferdon, the Know-Nothing, won by a mere 62 votes out of 11,116 cast. Nevertheless, the anti-Know Nothing ticket won both assembly seats and a host of local offices. The impressive Republican showing indicated that the new party united the political forces that had paralyzed Westchester Whigs. The opportunity to converge with anti-slavery and temperance men in a new political party opposed to Democrats and Know-Nothings proved attractive to Sewardite Whigs, who shed their old party label.<sup>80</sup> This temporary coalition of Republicans, ex-

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<sup>79</sup> *Peekskill Republican*, Nov. 6, 1855; *Hudson River Chronicle*, June 5, Oct. 23, 1855; *Eastern State Journal*, Aug. 24 and Sep. 14, 1855.

<sup>80</sup> The razor-thin margin led to a months-long, yet abortive, legal challenge by Brandreth's supporters who alleged mass voter fraud. James Malcolm, ed., *The New York Red Book* (Albany, 1922), 384; "Report of the Committee on Privileges and Elections in the matter of the contested seat of John W. Ferdon by Benjamin Brandreth," in *Documents of the Senate of the State of New York, Seventy Ninth Session 2*, no. 89 (Albany, 1856), 1-47. As the results indicate, the Republican share of the vote in 1855 was nearly identical to that of the

Whigs, and Democrats sufficiently routed Know-Nothings in local contests for coroner, surrogate, superintendent of the poor, and county treasurer, among others. Joel T. Headley, who headed the American ticket as nominee for secretary of state, polled a plurality in Westchester, and the Know-Nothing ticket polled pluralities statewide. Still hopelessly divided into Softs and Hards, the Democratic Party was too crippled to seriously contend for elective office. In Westchester, the party system that dominated since Jackson's presidency was now dead.<sup>81</sup>

The Democrats remained factionalized heading into the 1856 presidential elections. The party's leading organ attacked party leaders. "Setting aside both factitious organizations now existing... which divide the ranks and break down the energies of the party," Sutherland suggested that the decades-old organization "start anew." Such antiparty expressions a few months prior to the presidential election seemed to foreshadow a weak performance at the polls. Fierce inter-party competition in the immediate wake of the Second Party System's collapse also complicated Democratic efforts on two fronts: dissolving the 1855 fusion with Republicans and defeating Know-Nothingism. Engulfed by antipartyism, nativism, and slavery, Westchester became a bloody battleground during the 1856 presidential campaign.<sup>82</sup>

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Whigs in 1854; the Democrats and Know-Nothings saw negligible changes in their party strength between those same years. For election results, see Table 3 in the Appendix.

<sup>81</sup> *Board of Supervisors*, "Official Canvass," 1855; *Peekskill Republican*, Nov. 13, 1855. Whereas the Pearson Coefficient, or correlation, between Whig popularity at the polls in 1854 and Know-Nothing strength in 1855 is relatively weak (.44), the same measurement between Whigs and Republicans is tremendously strong (.89). This difference suggests a preference among Westchester's ex-Whigs for Republican candidates over Know-Nothing candidates in 1855. For election results see *New York Times*, Dec. 21, 1854; *Proceedings of the Board of Supervisors of Westchester County*, "Official Canvass," 1855.

<sup>82</sup> *Eastern State Journal*, Mar. 21, 1856.

Westchester Know-Nothings met with mixed emotions Millard Fillmore's 1856 nomination for president on the American Party ticket. "There is a strong feeling here favorable to the American candidates," Alexander Wells and Abram Hyatt, prominent Ossining Know-Nothings, wrote Daniel Ullmann. "We have plenty of votes." Wells and Hyatt supported Fillmore because they shared Whig antecedents. But among Democrats who dabbled in Know-Nothingism, Fillmore's nomination was not acceptable. "What Democrat, who wishes well to his country, can vote for Fillmore?" asked a Hard who sympathized with the Know-Nothings. "None surely," he answered, because a victorious Fillmore would dole out patronage only to former Whigs. Paralyzed by internal disputes between ex-Democrats and ex-Whigs, Know-Nothings became crippled and would never again seriously contend for elective office.<sup>83</sup>

If even Westchester Know-Nothings could not fully shed their old party affiliations, then the American Party lacked the cohesion required to wage a winning national campaign for the presidency. Fillmore's candidacy confronted ex-Whigs with a dilemma regarding slavery. As President he had signed the controversial Compromise of 1850, which precipitated the New York Whigs' split into Sewardites and Silver Grays. Fillmore had led the conservative faction and still favored conciliation with southern slave interests, a position which, by 1856, had become anathema to northern voters. Violent conflicts over whether to allow slavery in the Kansas territory, which came to a head in the months prior to the campaign, persuaded anti-slavery Know-Nothings to cast their lot with the Republican candidate, John Fremont, who ran on a free labor platform. The election results indeed suggest that voters who bolted from the Know-Nothings after 1855 migrated almost entirely into the Republican fold. These mass defections occurred because nativism was "made secondary to the

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<sup>83</sup> A.H. Wells and Abram Hyatt to Daniel Ullmann, July 12, 1856, Ullmann Papers, NYHS (first quotation); "Whiggery and Nativism Coalesce," *Westchester Herald*, Aug. 19, 1856 (second quotation); *New York Times*, Dec. 14, 1855; *Eastern State Journal*, Apr. 25, 1856.

question of Slavery,” analyzed an American Party voter. Amidst this confusion among anti-slavery forces, the Democratic candidate, James Buchanan, squeezed out a close victory in county and a landslide in country.<sup>84</sup>

Little did Buchanan know that Westchesterites ironically elected a Congressman who would become a sharp thorn in his side. In 1856, New York’s Ninth Electoral District, comprised of Westchester, Putnam, and Rockland counties, sent Democrat John B. Haskin to Washington. Born in 1821 into a family of New York shipping magnates, Haskin was raised in Fordham on an estate that is now part of Woodlawn Cemetery in the Bronx. After studying law, Haskin became involved in Democratic politics when the political crisis of the 1850s commenced. As a conservative Hunker Democrat, he resisted agitating the slavery question by refusing to take a position on the Compromise of 1850 and by supporting the Baltimore Platform of 1852, which affirmed the local character of that divisive issue. He also staunchly opposed the Maine Law and was elected to four consecutive terms as Town Supervisor of West Farms, beginning in 1850, before the influx of Protestant immigrants from New York City turned the southern towns into prohibitionist enclaves. When it came to state politics, Haskin opposed the \$9 million bill to finance Erie Canal improvements and considered his fellow Democrat, Benjamin Brandreth, a foe for refusing to bolt the Assembly in protest. By 1854, national events forced Haskin to take a stand regarding slavery, so he supported Stephen Douglas’ Kansas-Nebraska Bill repealing the Missouri Compromise and endorsing popular sovereignty. Now in Congress, Haskin was

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<sup>84</sup> *Hudson River Chronicle*, Dec. 8, 1857 (quotation); Gunja Sengupta, *For God and Mammon: Evangelicals, Entrepreneurs, Masters and Slaves in Territorial Kansas, 1854-1860* (Athens, GA, 1996), 132. The New York State Democrats had reconciled their differences in 1856 to present a single united ticket for the presidential election. For election results, see Table 4 in the Appendix; *Board of Supervisors*, “Official Canvass,” 1855; *New York Times*, Nov. 25, 1856.

well positioned to take a pre-eminent role in the national debates regarding the extension of slavery.<sup>85</sup>

Though slavery consumed national politics after the election of 1856, in Westchester ethno-cultural issues remained pre-eminent. Fillmore's poor showing made it clear that Know-Nothings would soon cease to exist. And with local elections in April and November 1857 quickly approaching, Republicans sought to envelop the key swing voting bloc—American Party voters. First, leaders re-nominated John Ferdon, the Know-Nothing incumbent, for state senate, even though the Republican rank-and-file had opposed his candidacy in 1855. Second, the Republican-controlled state legislature passed the Metropolitan Police Bill, which unified the police departments of the City and several downstate counties, including Westchester. In West Farms, Westchester, Pelham, and Morrisania, Know-Nothings and Republicans alike supported the bill based on their preference for law and order. These areas' proximity to the City "exposed [them] to the attacks of unscrupulous marauders," most of whom, Rowe charged, were immigrants. "We have come to resemble the city in our moral as well as our physical character," he decried. As early as 1853, Edward Wells, the county District Attorney, acknowledged that these southern towns along the Harlem Railroad were disproportionately plagued by crime committed by New Yorkers. Ferdon's vote in favor of the bill as state senator encouraged Republicans to believe that nativists would consider ethno-cultural issues at the ballot box and migrate into their camp.<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>85</sup> For Haskin's biographical information, see J. Thomas Scharf, *History of Westchester County including Morrisania, Kings Bridge, and West Farms which have been annexed to New York City*, 2 vols. (Philadelphia, 1886), 1:561. On slavery policy, see *Eastern State Journal*, May 9, 1852, Aug. 24, 1855; *Peekskill Republican*, Feb. 4, 1851. On canal policy, see *Westchester Herald*, Aug. 17, 1852.

<sup>86</sup> *Yonkers Examiner*, Sep. 3, Oct. 22 (American quotation), 29, Dec. 18, 1857 (immigrant quotation); Kenneth M. Stampp, *America in 1857: A Nation on the Brink* (New York, 1990), 132; Edward Wells to Supervisors of Westchester County,

Democrats, in response, waged a vicious campaign against Republican positions on the Police Bill, slavery, and nativism. They vilified Ferdon for voting with the Republicans to consolidate downstate police forces, which, they warned, would result in Westchester's occupation—similar to the British occupation of the colonies. To make matters worse, county taxes would increase. Describing the “Black Republican Party” as the refuge of aristocratic elites, the *Eastern State Journal* charged that, according to party creed, the government was “the omnipotent source of power, above the people, instituted to control and manage them.” The Democratic editor applied this philosophy to both slavery and temperance. Denying Kansas popular sovereignty would turn territorial residents into subjects of a monarchy in Washington, while legislating morality turned government into a guardian authority. Westchesterites, according to the Sutherland, could either support Brandreth who thought “poor white people are as good as Niggers,” or support Ferdon who was allegedly in favor of black suffrage. As Know-Nothingism waned, the Democrats and Republicans took opposing positions on a host of national and local issues. If consensus destroyed the Second Party System, conflict was fast constructing the Third.<sup>87</sup>

In the battle for the remnants of Westchester's American Party, the Democrats bested the Republicans. Little consensus exists on what caused this peculiar realignment. A Republican blamed his party's 1857 defeat on “the general combination of the American with the Democratic Party.” Low turnout because of the off-year election compounded the Republicans' woes. Sutherland correctly pointed out that Democrats who had become Americans would switch back in 1857. Both Sutherland and contemporary historians have pointed out that these voters had become fed up with the nativists' impasse over slavery. Other historians have stressed

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Nov. 22, 1853 in Charles E. Johnson, *Proceedings of the Board of Supervisors of Westchester County, NY* (Yonkers, 1853), 1148.

<sup>87</sup> *Eastern State Journal*, Mar. 27, May 8, 15, June 19 (government quotation), Aug. 28, Oct. 3, 30 (suffrage quotation), 1857.

opposition to the Police Bill as the major 1857 election determinant. The results for state senate seem to support this conclusion. Though Ferdon polled better than the Republican Party generally, he lost even in municipalities bordering New York City that had the most vested interests in the Police Bill. By 1857, most residents in these southern towns were migrants from the City who still held strong allegiances to the Democratic machine at Tammany Hall, which opposed ceding control of the police force. Whereas most historians agree that northern Know-Nothings generally migrated into the Republican camp, in Westchester it appears that local issues pushed them in droves towards the Democratic Party.<sup>88</sup>

Know-Nothings who flocked there would soon discover that factional divisions regarding slavery once again plagued their party. After disputes between pro-slavery and anti-slavery settlers in Kansas erupted in violence, the official territorial legislature met at Leecompton in 1857. There, they passed a constitution allowing slavery and put the document to the territorial inhabitants for an up-or-down vote, which anti-slavery forces boycotted. Amid this uproar, President Buchanan endorsed the Leecompton Constitution. Democrats splintered about whether to follow his lead. Senator Stephen A. Douglas of Illinois led a faction in opposition to the administration. They criticized the Leecompton Constitution because the circumstances surrounding its passage seemed to contravene the principle of popular sovereignty. Westchester's Congressman, John Haskin, was one of twelve House Democrats to cast his lot with Douglas, and against Buchanan.

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<sup>88</sup> *Yonkers Examiner*, Nov. 5, 1857; *Eastern State Journal*, Aug. 21, 1857. On the combination of slavery and local issues determining the 1857 election, see James Huston, *The Panic of 1857 and the Coming of the Civil War* (Baton Rouge, LA, 1987), 50. On the Police Bill, see Anbinder, *Nativism and Slavery*, 255; Spann, *The New Metropolis*, 387. On the relationship between County and City, see Zuckerbraun, "Born to Rule," 127-128. For election results, see Table 5 in the Appendix; *New York Times*, Nov. 25, 1856; *Board of Supervisors*, "Official Canvass," 1857.

On a stifling evening in June 1858, Haskin rose to address a crowd of 250 supporters, who had assembled to re-nominate him for Congress. The Lecompton Constitution, he said “would have entailed upon that virgin territory [of Kansas] the curse of Slavery.” Turning the election of 1858 into a referendum on this issue alone, Haskin accused Buchanan, his fellow Democrat, of abandoning the platform upon which he was elected. Taking cues from Douglas, Haskin argued that the Administration’s policy of supporting a fraudulent constitution denied Kansans the right to exercise democratic control over local issues. Prominent Westchester Democrats, ex-Whigs, Republicans, and Know-Nothings agreed with Haskin. According to Robert H. Coles, an ex-Barnburner Democrat from New Rochelle who attended the meeting, Haskin “exposed one of the most...shameful swindles that was ever perpetuated upon the Government.” Should his opponents “succeed in disturbing and dividing our party, a wound will be opened that will bleed more profusely than the wounds of bleeding Kansas.”<sup>89</sup>

The partisan Democratic press not only opened these wounds, they also poured salt into them. “We are perfectly willing that the Republicans should take [Haskin] up and adopt him as their own,” said Fenelon Hasbrouck, a Peekskill Democratic editor who called for his fellow Democrat’s resignation from Congress. In White Plains, the Second Assembly District convention adopted a resolution condemning Haskin for his “adulterous communion with unscrupulous Black Republicans, or Bastard Know-Nothings.” In the first and third assembly districts as well, Democrats met to condemn Haskin for breaking with the national administration at a time when the major parties were still in flux. In April 1858, Sutherland observed that Haskin was “languishing in the loving embraces of Black Republicanism...he has excited *disgust* in the minds of a large proportion of his constituents, who feel that he has enacted the part of a betrayer of his party.” These

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<sup>89</sup> Speech of the Hon. John B. Haskin and Robert H. Coles to William Cauldwell, June 18, 1858, in “Reception of the Hon. John B. Haskin...” *New York Times*, June 23, 1858.

vitriolic editorials continued throughout the summer and drove a wedge through the county Democratic Party.<sup>90</sup>

What particularly incensed Westchester's Democratic establishment was Republican support for Haskin. "I only mean to make sure that Haskin shall be returned," Horace Greeley confided to a friend in the summer of 1858. The Bedford resident publicly declared his support at the Republican Congressional Convention, where the Committee on Resolutions, which he chaired, reported that "Haskin notably resisted every inducement to give his voice and vote for the enslavement of Kansas....By thus discharging his imperative duty as the representative of a free labor constituency," he had become an ideological ally with Republicans, who published his name at the top of their ticket. "We have only to choose between Mr. Haskin and a full blown Lecompton Democrat. The election of a Republican is an impossibility," the *Yonkers Examiner* conceded before also endorsing Haskin. Westchester Republicans had ample political cover to support a Democrat, for Haskin was now "independent of administrative requirements and party trammels." Though Westchester Republican leaders, especially Greeley, were motivated by policy considerations to endorse Haskin, electoral strategy also factored into this momentous decision. Supporting anti-Administration Democrats, they hoped, would divide the party and pave the way for a Republican victory in the 1860 Presidential contest.<sup>91</sup>

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<sup>90</sup> *Highland Democrat*, Sep. 11 (first quotation), "2<sup>nd</sup> Assembly District Convention, Met at White Plains," Sep. 8, 1858 in *Highland Democrat*, Sep. 11 (second quotation), 1858; *Eastern State Journal*, Apr. 9, 1858 (third quotation).

<sup>91</sup> Horace Greeley to J.S. Pike, July 7, 1858 in James Shepherd Pike, *First Blows of the Civil War: The Ten Years of Preliminary Conflict in the United States* (New York, 1879), 422; *Yonkers Examiner*, May 20 (fourth quotation), Sep. 2 (third quotation), Oct. 28 (resolutions), 1858; *Highland Democrat*, July 24, Oct. 23, 1858; Robert C. Williams, *Horace Greeley: Champion of American Freedom* (New York, 2006), 195-197.

Consistent with their embrace of anti-Lecompton Democrats, Republican leaders and editors now refused to compromise with members of the fledging American Party. “No fusion should take place whereby the Republican Party shall sacrifice...its central principle of opposition to slavery,” Rowe declared, though the local party welcomed nativists who shared the free labor ideology. Westchester Republicans did not incorporate into their platform nativist or temperance policies. After American and Republican Party leaders failed to unite on strong anti-slavery language at the statewide nominating conventions, Rowe rationalized that his party stood “better today because we have not incumbered ourselves with unsympathizing comrades.” Sutherland, of course, spun this impasse as a victory for his party. County Know-Nothings, he editorialized, “regard any sort of connection with Black Republicanism as political prostitution, and are fast arranging themselves on the side of the National [pro-Buchanan] Democracy.” An August declaration by Know-Nothing Council #32 in Peekskill repudiating Haskin’s stance on Lecompton seemed to confirm Sutherland’s analysis. Though most Democratic candidates won in the 1858 contest, the local electorate was sufficiently anti-Lecompton to reward Haskin’s independence with a second term in Congress.<sup>92</sup>

As Democrats and Republicans took their seats in the Thirty-Sixth Congress, in the summer and fall of 1859, sectional discord hurtled towards climax over the slavery extension issue. Abolitionist John Brown sought to stir up a slave revolt by raiding a federal garrison in Harper’s Ferry, Virginia. Horace Greeley distributed Hinton Helper’s *The Impending Crisis of the South*, in which a southern farmer argued that slavery blocked economic growth in his section. And Haskin continued opposing Buchanan’s Lecompton

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<sup>92</sup> Yonkers Examiner, Aug. 25, Sep. 15, 1858; *Eastern State Journal*, Aug. 20, 1858; George P. Marshall and E.L. Hyatt, “At a meeting of Council #32, held in Peekskill...” Aug. 19, 1858 in *Highland Democrat*, Aug. 28, 1858; Don E. Fehrenbacher, *Slavery Law and Politics: The Dred Scott Case in Historical Perspective* (New York, 1981), 264; Foner, *Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Men*, 254.

policy, proclaiming that he would “sooner co-operate with that [Republican] party than with those who have...endeavored to force a slave State into the Union.” These three events helped re-orient the parties as sectional organizations, convinced the South that the North would stop at nothing to destroy slavery, and, according to Westchester Democrats, threatened the Union, which they feared “cannot hold together under the pressure of...*Helper* and *John Brown*.”<sup>93</sup>

The stakes for the 1860 Presidential election had been set. Edmund Sutherland, editor of the most widely circulated county paper, astutely predicted that the contest “will reduce the political elements of the district and County into two parties.” On the one side, the Democratic Party was paralyzed regarding slavery: though the Westchester party opposed extending slavery to the territories, southerners who wanted to secure those rights dominated the national organization. Fed up with decades of infighting in county, state, and nation, the *Highland Democrat* lamented, “party strife has...assailed the most sacred compacts of *our* Union.” On the other side, the Republican Party stood in favor of abolishing slavery in western territories and in favor of free labor, which included Whiggish economic policies such as a protective tariff and internal improvements. Choosing a new President was, according to one editor, “the most important crisis through which the country has been allowed to pass.” At risk was “the perpetuity of the Union of these States.”<sup>94</sup>

No campaign typified Democratic infighting better than that of 1860. New York Democrats failed to coalesce around a single candidate for the highest office in the entire country. In July, the party assembled at Schenectady, about

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<sup>93</sup> John B. Haskin, *Remarks of the Hon. John B. Haskin, of Westchester County, New York, in reply to attack made by the President's Home Organ...* (Washington, 1859), 16 (first quotation); *Highland Democrat* Dec. 17, 1859; *Eastern State Journal*, Mar. 2, 1860 (second quotation).

<sup>94</sup> *Eastern State Journal*, Nov. 11, 1859 (first quotation), Mar. 2, 1860 (third quotation); *Highland Democrat*, Sep. 24, Dec. 31, 1859, Apr. 28, 1860 (second quotation); *Yonkers Examiner*, Apr. 21, Nov. 10, 1859 (Republican platform).

twenty miles west of Albany, to nominate a so-called People's Union Ticket of presidential electors pledged against Abraham Lincoln. They hoped that a composite ticket of electors for Douglas, Breckinridge, and John Bell, the Constitutional Union candidate, would prevent Lincoln from securing New York's crucial thirty-five electoral votes. Indeed, had Lincoln lost the entire South and the Empire State, he would have been left with 145 pledged electors—just seven shy of victory. The election would then be thrown to the House of Representatives where a Democrat could have won. Which Democrat was unimportant, contended Sutherland, for “the defeat of Lincoln is the great object to be effected.”<sup>95</sup>

The campaign quickly became ugly, even by nineteenth-century standards. Westchester Democrats lobbed racist volleys against Lincoln by suggesting that a Republican victory would usher in black equality, “dragging [whites] down to his low and bestial capacity.” Talk of “Black Republicanism” became commonplace. When it came to slavery policy, Westchester Democrats ignored the issue and focused on developing industry, preserving nebulous “economic rights,” and building a railroad to the Pacific. But each of these issues was wrapped up in sectional controversy. Would the transcontinental railroad, for example, pass through free or slave territory? The Schenectady platform avoided this key question.<sup>96</sup>

Republicans adopted a platform demonstrating that by the end of the 1850s, the ethno-cultural issues that had broken up the Second Party System had faded into the background. Though the *Yonkers Examiner* had supported New Yorker William H. Seward for the 1860 nomination, the editor touted Lincoln's compelling life story and anti-slavery credentials after the Illinoisan secured the nomination. Rowe

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<sup>95</sup> *Highland Democrat*, July 7 (electoral strategy), 21 (Union Ticket), 1860; *Eastern State Journal*, June 20 (electoral strategy), Aug. 31 (quotation), 1860.

<sup>96</sup> *Eastern State Journal*, “Equal Rights Under the Constitution,” May 11, Nov. 2, 1860; “Schenectady Convention on Behalf of the People's Union Ticket,” July 18, 1860 in *Highland Democrat*, July 21, 1860.

rejected black equality but argued that extending slavery to the territories placed hard-working whites at an economic disadvantage. Popular sovereignty was not an acceptable alternative because it was “destructive to law and order” by frequently degenerating into deadly conflicts brought on by outside agitators. In fact, Rowe’s views more closely paralleled the moderate Lincoln’s than the radical Seward’s. Though his party had never won a major election in Westchester, Rowe clearly drew the battle lines for the Presidential contest.<sup>97</sup>

Lincoln swept the northern states on his way to a landslide victory. But in Westchester, the Democratic/Constitutional Union slate bested that of the Republicans by about 10% of the vote. This rejection of Republicanism took no Westchesterite by surprise; after all, the county Democratic Party had won the previous four elections. Nevertheless, Republicans rejoiced and Democrats sulked. Westchester Democrats regretted the result, “not so much on party grounds, as for the continued peace and prosperity of the country.” The most important question confronting Westchesterites—and all Americans—in the wake of the first Republican presidential victory was whether Lincoln should “attempt by force of arms to coerce [the South] back, and thus plunge the country into all the horrors of a civil war.” Though Sutherland hated Lincoln, he nonetheless concluded that the Union, “which cost our fathers so much toil and sacrifices and blood to establish,” was worth preserving. On this much, both parties agreed.<sup>98</sup>

Yet during the loose party times of the 1850s, the Democratic Party dominated Westchester County’s politics. The candidate at the top of their ticket lost only two elections during the decade—both to a third party that did not survive past 1858. Although the Republican Party emerged out of the chaos of the 1850s as the northern sectional party, Westchester remained an anomalous bastion of anti-Lincoln voters.

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<sup>97</sup> *Yonkers Examiner*, Feb. 23, May 3, Oct. 4 (quotation), 23, Nov. 1, 1860.

<sup>98</sup> *Eastern State Journal*, Nov. 9, 1860 (quotations); *Yonkers Examiner*, Nov. 8, 1860.

Proximity to New York City accounted for much of this sentiment. As Westchester transitioned from rural to suburban, the county was pulled into the City's political orbit. And City-dwellers, just like their neighbors to the north, overwhelmingly favored the Democrats.

The local transition from the Second to Third Party Systems, moreover, produced unique political alignments. Perhaps no other northern county saw Republicans fuse with Democrats to counter the Know-Nothings. Three years later, Westchester Republicans again endorsed an anti-slavery Democrat for Congress rather than nominate one of their own. These two fusions demonstrated that Westchesterites voted for people who shared their ideology instead of consistently supporting a particular political party. The county's experience with Know-Nothingism also illustrated this peculiar trend. Whereas most historians view the nativist party as a stepping-stone from the Whigs to the Republicans, Westchester Know-Nothings primarily held Democratic antecedents. When the Know-Nothings disintegrated after the 1858 elections, its supporters, who most ardently embraced the party's ideology, migrated almost entirely back into the Democratic fold. Fluid party affiliation weakened political organizations, facilitating the massive realignment of the 1850s.

Ethno-cultural issues bear primary responsibility for realigning Westchester's electorate. Examining issues affecting everyday life, such as nativism and temperance, reveals that the Whig Party began unraveling well before the Kansas-Nebraska Act passed in 1854. The Democratic Party, too, suffered from fissures generated not by slavery, but by Erie Canal financing, the Maine Law, and antiparty sentiment. Slavery may have led to the ultimate extinction of the Second Party System on the national level, but state and local campaigns in off-year elections, such as the unusual 1855 contest, profoundly influenced political realignments. Know-Nothings elevated ethno-cultural issues to thrive in Westchester during two non-Presidential elections. This party, in turn, siphoned voters from the Whigs and Democrats, challenged the nascent Republican Party, and led to the Second Party System's mortality. It is impossible to tell the

story of how these four nationally competitive political parties divided, disintegrated, or formed without considering forces operating on the county and town levels. Most voters had closer ties with elected officials at home than with those in Washington, and thus ethno-cultural and financial issues—the stuff of local politics—induced voters to flee from the Whig Party and to change the complexion of the Democratic Party.

Towards the end of the 1850s, however, ethno-cultural issues had lost salience. By 1856, slavery consumed political affairs at all levels of government, filled the editorial pages of Westchester's partisan press, and strengthened the Republican Party pledged to preserve the principle of free labor. John Jay, grandson of the first Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, was one of the first Westchesterites to join the local party. On the eve of the 1860 election, Jay addressed a meeting of county Republicans in Bedford, down the block from the Post Office where William Robertson had cast his ballot in 1848. "It will be wise for the slaveholders, instead of harping on dissolution, to prepare for the abolition of slavery," he suggested, "not by the action of the Republican party, but by the operation of natural laws, that neither individuals nor parties can restrain." Although Jay's appeal did not sway his fellow Westchesterites to support Lincoln in 1860, the "natural laws" he cited ultimately triumphed over party and sectional divisions during the Civil War, culminating in emancipation and Union war victory. During the 1850s, Westchesterites transcended, blurred, and erased party lines regarding dozens of issues—most prominently on nativism, temperance, and slavery. After these ten years of loose party times, they again subordinated partisanship to principle. When the south seceded, Westchesterites finally found a universal rallying point: saving the very Union that gave birth to their political parties.<sup>99</sup>

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<sup>99</sup> John Jay, *The Rise and Fall of the Pro-Slavery Democracy and the Rise and Duties of the Republican Party...* (New York, 1861), 37.

APPENDIX

**Table 1. Westchester County Newspapers: Parties and Editors**

Newspaper	Party	Editor
<i>Eastern State Journal</i>	Democratic (Barnburner, Hard)	Edmund G. Sutherland
<i>Highland Democrat</i>	Democratic	Fenelon Hasbrouck
<i>Hudson River Chronicle</i>	Whig (Silver Gray)/American	William Howe
<i>Peekskill Republican</i>	Whig (Sewardite)/Republican	J.J. Chambers
<i>Westchester Herald</i>	Democratic (Hunker, Hard)	Caleb Roscoe
<i>Westchester Gazette</i>	Nonpartisan/Temperance	Eugene Hyde; John C.
<i>Yonkers Examiner</i>	Republican	M.F. Rowe

**Table 2. Percentage of Vote Won by Political Party, 1853-1854**

	Whig	Soft Dem.	Hard Dem.	Know-Nothing
Sec. of State)	39.5	21.7	39.8	--
Governor)	25.8	30.9	5.7	37.6

**Table 3. Percentage of Vote Won by Political Party, 1854-1855**

	Whig	Soft Dem.	Hard Dem.	Know-
1854 (Governor)	25.8	30.9	5.7	3
1855 (Sec. of State)	--	7	32.0	3

**Table 4. Percentage of Vote Won by Political Party, 1855-1856**

	Republican	Soft Dem.	Hard Dem.	Know-Nothing
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1855 (Sec. of State)	22.3	7.0	32.0	38.7
1856 (President)	35.3		36.4	28.3

**Table 5. Percentage of Vote Won by Political Party, 1856-1857**

	Republican	Democratic	Know-Nothing
1856 (President)	35.3	36.4	28.3
1857 (Sec. of State)	27.5	52.6	19.9