

H. Cobb one of small group of S. Dem Unionists, tho remembered chiefly as ardent pro-sl. + leading advocate of seced in 1860. His pub career 1842-1860 char by extreme sectionalism. In it Cobb held intense natl patriotism - saw no incompat betw sl + natlism. His course of unionism in 1850 alienated him from pol assoc in S. Sacrificed pol advancement for Union.

At age 28 went to 28 Congr. Emph nat views. Skill in debate + pol procedure made him a leader. First imp speech in second sess, on Wilnot proviso. Plea for fairness and liberality - saw no moral confl. Both parties engaged in effort to further econ + pol interests; both sections had a right to share fruits of Mex. victory. Proposed a division of the terr betw free soil + sl. If present dispute could be settled, he held long contest over extension of slavery would end, for status of d. determined in all land likely to be owned by U.S. Advoc extend Mo Comp. line. Later decl that had S. members stood together they could have gotten it. But Calhoun worked against such a compr., and time passed when N. likely accept such settlement. In debate 1847-8 over Mex session, N fixed determinat to excl sl. strengthened Calh. party. Calhoun urge S. to abandon party diff and act together in defense of sect. interests. "S. Address," Jan 1849, to S. Reps + Sens. Reviewed hist of slave fight, showed how n. states had violat const protection of sl. App. N. plotted total destr of sl. - such met only by united action of all S.

But S. Whigs would not cooperate. Just won election w/ Taylor, desire to minimize sect. hostility, give admin a chance at success. Only 2 Whigs signed the Address, remove non-partisan character. H. Cobb + few Dems also withheld support. Feb 26, 1849 Cobb wrote etc "To our constituents, signed by 3 other Dems, explaining the action. Was remonstrance against a S. sect. party. Showed that all in N. not a unit against the S. Cobb contrasted attit of N. Dems + Whigs on sect. issues. Esp. on Wilnot proviso - many votes taken in the + Sen." and it yet remains for the first northern Whig to record his vote against it. It has at different times been defeated by both branches of Congress and in every instance by the aid of northern Democratic votes. Cobb said he could not see how a distinctly S. sign could give addl security to S. interests. Such sign "possessed no charms to lure us from the old association which we had formed in the days of our earliest political recollection with the Democratic party of the Union. We preferred yet to rely upon the combined influence of the Southern and Northern Democrats for the protection of the rights of the South, so long as the same were dependent upon the legislation of our national government. We could not see how our strength was to be increased by diminishing our numbers. If Southern Democrats alone could, by party organization, throw ample barriers around the peculiar interests of the South, we were at a loss to understand how the aid and cooperation of our Northern friends would embarrass our movements or weaken our defenses. So long as we contemplate the continuance of the Union, as an element of our greatest strength and security. When the time shall come, if ever which God, in his mercy, avert, when the rights and interests of the South, under the Constitution, are spurned and disregarded, and we shall cease to be considered as equals with our northern brethren, we shall look to other and higher measures of redress than those which promise to flow from the organization of a Southern sectional party."

thus planted self on side of natl parties as neces machy for handling natl questions. Held faith in natl Dem pty until Chaston 1860. Also separated from S. extremists, as acceptance of Calhoun's Address was the test of loyalty. Augusta (Ga) Chronicle and Sentinel July 23, 1849: "It is known... that for some time past the Southern address has been the standard by which the patriotism of all parties has been judged of by certain politicians. Our Democratic friends have denounced as traitors, every man that did not sign it in Washington, and every one that refused to worship it in Georgia." Shower of curses upon Cobb for refusing.

Won friends among N. Dems, contrib to his election as spkr, Dec 1849, of 31 Congr. Small group of S. extremists threw away ballots rather than vote for the man who had opposed Calhoun. On 63 ballot Cobb in, after decis. to vote plurality - after 3 wks of balloting. Presided over the House that made Compr of 1850. First confl over Calif admission. John D. Doty, but resol requesting Comm of Terr to report a bill for adm. Failing to kill it, S. Reps begin filibuster. Wanted to force satisf. settlement of slar. in all Mex session. Cobb assisted by recogn filib. speakers.

Idea of Congr. nonintervention in Utah - N. Mex. Finally accepted. Sept 1850. Compr was result of sincere Unionists who saw that no settlement was possible w/o concessions - extremists on both sides saw it as humil surrender. Must now convince the masses of the wisdom of moderation. Arena of discussion shifted to the states. S. Whigs in Congr had been nearly unanimous in favor of compr; 29 S. Dems. had voted against. H. Cobb was only Dem who signed a paper pledging to support for pres or either ofc - holder only those who favored compr "and opposed to the renewal in any form of agitation upon the subject of slavery." Dem opposit due to revival of demand for Mo Comp line - seemed more advantageous than Congr non-intervention. Cobb that demand insincere. To Kinsman John B. Lamar, June 26, 1850:

"Does it not present a singular spectacle to see the very men who would have ostracized me for advocating the Missouri Compromise line, now making that their gine qua non? If they had united with me at the proper time we could have obtained that line as the basis of settlement, but Mr. Calhoun said, the South was sick of compromises and demanded the constitutional principle of non interference. Well, non interference is tendered and is to be rejected on the ground that the heretofore repudiated Missouri Compromise is preferable. I have no patience with such men. If they believed today that we could settle the question upon the terms now proposed, they would reject it and demand something else."

Others agreed that cry for No line was intended to keep alive agitation. A. H. Chappell, mid-Ga unionist and former Cong man, to Cobb, July: "the game of the destruction is to use the Missouri Compromise principle as a medium for defeating all adjustment and then to make the most of succeeding events, no matter what they may be, to infuriate the South and to drive her into measures that must end in disunion."

In lengthy defense of his part, Cobb decl that non interf. leave all terms open to sl - but it would be determined by nat condits. No Comp line did not of itself establish in any part of the country. "Soil, climate, and the general adaptation of the country to slave labor, are the great elements that must mould and regulate the institutions of those territories if left free from the operation of Congressional restrictions."

Unpopul in Ga. Columbus Sentinel Sept 12, 1850: "we have all along contended that the admission of California would fill to overflowing the poisoned cup of degradation which the South has for years been preparing for the South. ... we may now abandon the Union as an engine of infamous oppression. We are for secession, open, unqualified secession. Henceforth we are for war upon the government; it has existed but for our ruin, and to the extent of our ability to destroy it, it shall exist no longer."

Macon Telegraph Sept 17 1850: "It remains to be seen whether the men of the South will, with firm hearts, strike for their rights, or with the spirit of slaves and dastards submit to this Congressional quackery, until they are driven from their country like the Poles. ... the more politician who waits to see the course of the popular breeze before he sets his sails - the time-server and office-seeker, who palter with the great issues of equality and degradation, submission and slavery, despicable at all times is doubly so now. FOR OUR OWN PART, WE ARE FOR SECESSION, FOR RESISTANCE, OPEN, UNQUALIFIED RESISTANCE."

Ga platform infl by conven vote of Toombs, Stephen, Cobb. Decis of Ga to support Compromise contrib much to acceptance in S. Cobb's efforts unusually imp. in getting it.

Dec 1850 saw sign of a "Constitutional Union party" - enlist bulk of Whigs + more moder. Dems Also a "Southern Rights party." C.U. nomin Cobb for gov; S.R. Chas J. McDonald, twice gov. Cobb derided it of secession, but accept it of revolt. (292-3) Cobb won by overwhelming majority. People voted against disunion, & for Comp. (1850) other S. people did likewise.

But by 1854 his unionist Dem activ stranded him. Never recovered popul w/ Ga Dem. But revival of sectionism after 1854 forced him to follow fortunes of people. But in 1850 crisis was great unionist statesman of the South.

St. George L. Sioussiat, "Tennessee, The Compromise of 1850, and the Nashville Convention."
MVHR, II (Dec 1915) 313-347.

Dem state conv. Apr 1849 platform decl that fed govt possessed no rightful control over instit of slavery such as to impair rights of sl-holders; that all tens were common property of states; enactment by Congr of laws preventing citiz from emigrating with their property constit violat. of st-rts; no diffc. in choosing between "the only alternatives that will then remain of abject submission to aggression and outrage on the one hand, or on the other by the adoption at all hazards and to the last extremity of such measures as will vindicate our constitutional rights"; concluded by decl if Wilmot Proviso passed, or law abol sl or sl-trade in D.C., "we are ready heart and soul with a united front" to join Virginia & other S States in proper measures "whether through a Southern convention or otherwise."

Main reliance of Dems. was Wilmot Proviso. They successful. Helped by unpop agitator in Ky, admin position on Proviso. Cave Johnson to Buchanan Aug 12, 1849: "Cass's doctrine of the non-interference by Congress with slavery is the universal doctrine here, but I have found none unwilling to subscribe to yours - the Missouri Compromise."

Afts election, Miss. called for S-convention at Nashville. Nashv. Whig Oct 16, 1849: "we trust the Southern states will be fully represented as well for embodying in definite form the real sentiment of the South as for adopting such measures as may be best calculated to bring about unity and concert of action, and in defense of her rights and interests upon this vitally interesting and exciting question."

Cave Johnson to Buchanan, Jan 20, 1850. on note card.

Connection of Calhoun w/ movement in Miss is well establ. Mount by which S. rights expanded from Congr. meetings in Washington to Nashv. convention already told. But practical beginnings came in Miss. Conv. in Miss May 7 called another for October. This group met, passed resols on ten question, called pan-South meeting. Dema + Whigs united for call, but Dems took the lead. Success of Dems in Miss. elections regarded as popular approval, encourage other S partisans. Action in Miss. followed by most S. states, with great diversity in manner of choosing delegs.

Whig newspapers, w/ exception of Enquirer in Memphis + Trenton Banner, soon unanimous in oppos. to meeting. Republ. Banner and Nashville Whig, paper of John Bell, strong anti-S. course. Accused of looking N. for pol. support; Dems decl that Tenn Whig support purchased by aptmt of former gov. Neil S. Brown, as minister to Russia. Bell retorted that S. disunionists proposed a S. republ w/ capital at Asheville. Dems defended mtg as S. protest vs. N. aggression; if anti-S. laws passed, conv might lead to repeal. Such laws might be repeal "federal ratio" of 3/5; 3) abel of sl in D.C.; navy yards, + other possess of U.S.; 4) interference w/ interstate slave trade; 5) Wilmot proviso. Real fear of Whigs, said Dems, was not dissol of Union, but dissol of Whig Party by successful settlement of slave question, upon which existence of Whigs depended. Whig oppos. to conv. was only to oppose settlement. Tenn mtg in Nashville had many whigs; despite avowal of A.J. Donelson (Jackson's nephew) they passed anti-conv. resae. Whig new gleefully reported that Conv. rejected in common. in which it would meet. But that was partisan politics. - Simil meetings in other counties. Dems usually favor, Whigs usually oppose.

In Feb 1850 John Bell present compr. measure, focus ntn on Texas rather than Calif. Divide Tex. S. of 34°, west of Trinity River, admit as new slave state. Next Tex cede (for \$5-6 million) ten W. of Colorado River, N. to 42°, together w/ all unappr ten N. of 34° to U.S. This ten divided. Part W. of Colo. S. of 34°, admit as slave state when enough people; remainder, except that east of Rio Grande + S. of 34°, added to Ten of N. Mex. governed in a "manner suit able to the condition of the people of the country," w/o resol on slavery. Tex surrender 2 1/2 degrees of slave ten to be free; would solve Tex N. Mex boundary. Slavery never at home in N. Mex anyway. Pres. plan for admiss. of Calif should be adopted. Incl no reference to fug. slave bill, abel of slavery, + slave trade in D.C. These questions solved when the new acquisitions adjusted.

Charleston [S.C.] Courier: "I learn that Mr. Bell's propositions for a compromise are preferred to those of Mr. Clay by the Southern members. From the best sources, I am informed that Mr. Bell's project was a subject of consultation and that it is as favorable to the South as any measure that is likely to pass."

the South would prefer the Missouri Compromise line to any other project that has been named, but it cannot pass. The whole question, it is said, will be settled in a fortnight, or not for three months. The Texans will give their hearty assent to Mr. Bell's plan." - from Wash. Correspondent, Courier.

Webster gave moral support to Bell's proposal for new sl. states - which so. greeted abels. Toombs to Hinton Stephens; Mar 22, 1850: "the settlement will probably be in the main on the basis of Bell's proposition as backed by Webster. We will take that with a clause putting the rights of property of American citizens under American laws and I think we have some chance to get it." But Comm. of 13, May 8, majority decl vs. Bell's proposals, maintaining that division of Texas should originate w/ people of that state.

Hopkins L. Turney was Tenn's other Senator. Ident self w/ pro-south movement. Not great capacity but worked w/ radicals. Chmn of mty to estab in Washington a pro-S. newspaper. Expressed confidence of Dems in convention. Bell had said: "I must say, that in the State of which I am a public servant here, I have given no countenance - no encouragement at least - to some of the extreme measures proposed in the South. I have not countenanced the assembling of the Southern Convention among my friends in Tennessee. I have, on the other hand, rather encouraged the reposing of a liberal confidence in the North for the settling, not only of this, but of all the other great questions of national and domestic policy upon an equitable and liberal basis, as the best mode of repressing any hostile sentiments on the part of the North against the institutions of the South, or of the South against the North, on any ground whatever. If, therefore, any good should result from the proposed Southern Convention - and I trust that good may result from it; if it is held - I shall not be entitled to any credit for it; and if, on the other hand, evil should spring from it, though I may be a sufferer with every other citizen of the Union, I shall not be responsible for it."

Andrew Ewing, Dem Repr. from Nashville - whig stronghold - "In my opinion a majority of the people of Nashville deem the convention unwise and inopportune; but it is equally true that they deeply sympathize in the feeling of hazard and alarm that has driven their southern brethren to the adoption of this ulterior remedy; and under no circumstances would they treat with rudeness and indecency a reputable body of their fellow-citizens, who had assembled at our city for the discussion of such grave and solemn interests."

But each party advoc. compromise of Clay's Committee of 13.

Convention delegs began arriving in Nashv. late May and early June. Use Union ofc as registr. at. 175 delegs help hotel business, enlarge town, increase newspaper subscriptions. Met in McKendree church; at adjournment S.C. deleg presented new carpet to replace the old injured by delegs. In chair was Judge Sharkey. Miss + S.C. delegs most able. Va most ultra. Dignity + solemnity impressed people of Nashville. Came Johnson an observer. It to Buchanan June 6, 1850, on note card.

Monday aft June 3 mty called by Aaron V. Brown of Tenn. Judge W.L. Sharkey pres. Vote by deleg, w/ each state one vote. Then heard resols from states - most were aggressive. By June 8, Resols Comm ready to report; long series of resols based on those of Judge Campbell of Ala; address prepared by Robt B. Rhett. These resols adopted June 10; then address adopted, tho not unanimous except by States. Judge Sharkey opposed but withdrew his vote - did not change it to affirmative.

sentin in Tenn almost univ in favor; even whigs approved "forbearance and moderation". Tenn delegs reject Sen. compr bill, accept Mo Compr line they knew to be impractical - followed ultra-southern group in Wash. Nicholson said Conv. was pioneer in grad mount to protect S. rts.

Second Nashv Conv met Nov 11, in hostile atmosphere. Most vivid incident: speech by aged Cherris urging immed. secession. Only S.C. + Tenn delegs were to any extent composed of some men of June session. Conference from other states, such as Sharkey, withdrew. Tenn but 14 reprs, mostly patriots around Nashv.

Breach in Tenn dem pty betw Brown + Nicholson, lost in 1851-2. When Dems returned, it was under Andrew Johnson.

S. movement in Tenn. largely a party matter, in which whigs opposed. John Bell, jealous of H. Clay, tried to support Taylor vs. Clay's compr. plans. Death of Taylor left him w/o position, so he agreed with Senate. Among Dems, division between Unionism of Jackson and distinct pro-southernism. In First Nashville Conv, Dems carried along by wave of South; had resolved to accept no settlement but Mo Compr line, then forced to accept Compr which made no mention of it. In Second Nashv, factional fight betw Aaron V. Brown and A.D.P. Nicholson ruined unity. Nashv Conv really important; death of Genl Taylor of great signif.