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History

Henry Clay is Dead: The End of Compromise in  
Antebellum America

Joseph Cook

As a member of the Congress's Great Triumvirate, which also included Daniel Webster and John C. Calhoun, Henry Clay established a reputation as "The Great Compromiser" for his repeated success at mediating between competing interests and maintaining national union throughout his five troublesome decades of public service. Abraham Lincoln called him the "beau ideal of a statesman,"<sup>1</sup> and this sentiment was shared by many throughout not only the United States, but also abroad in Europe and in Latin America where he was a fervent supporter of independence movements. His final great act on the national stage was the Compromise of 1850, aimed at sorting out the sectional troubles that resulted from the Mexican War – a war that Clay had vigorously opposed. He worked hard to reach that compromise solution, but being aged and in ill health, he was forced to relinquish some of his leadership responsibilities to a younger generation – namely Stephen Douglas. Clay died in 1852, and the following several years only accelerated the nation's course toward disunion and civil war. In historical retrospection, this could spark curiosity concerning the effect that an immortal Henry Clay may have had on the great national emergency. Such speculation may be academically meaningless, but it is useful to examine several issues related to his exit from the national stage: the conditions of the nation at the time of Clay's death, the level of success he found in his final years in terms of orchestrating compromises, the nation's reaction to his death, and the ways in which he was remembered at the time of the secession crisis of 1860.

Henry Clay and Andrew Jackson cast their tremendous shadows over half-a-century of American politics. They were bitter political

rivals – the fathers of rival parties, the Whigs and Democrats, respectively – and their personal disdain for each other was palpable. “This great Republic has been convulsed to its centre by the great divisions which have sprung from their respective opinions, policy, and personal destinies,” Congressman Charles Faulkner proclaimed.<sup>2</sup> Yet these two titans of the antebellum era were equally committed to the preservation of the American union. The movement toward division of the nation was led by one of the other members of the Great Triumvirate: John C. Calhoun, an erstwhile ally of Clay in the Congress who had heated clashes with the fiery President Jackson. The Nullification Crisis of 1832 prompted the bizarre political spectacle of Andrew Jackson and Henry Clay working together, passing the Force Bill and a new tariff to alleviate the troubles and save the country. In this age of political titans, the preservation of the republic trumped party politics – even among bitter rivals like Clay and Jackson.

An illustrative event of the importance of national preservation occurred during the presidency of Jackson’s protégé, James K. Polk, who defeated Clay in the perennial presidential loser’s bitterest electoral failure. On February 4, 1848, Clay paid a visit to President Polk in the Executive Mansion. The President “hadn’t anticipated a courtesy call from the man who had raged against just about every political initiative of the Jackson-Polk party for two decades.”<sup>3</sup> They talked of each other’s families, and joked of supporting each other if either ran for the presidency again (producing “a hearty laugh”).

The touching episode reflected an underlying reality of American politics: However intensely the battles are fought and however copiously the animosities flow, all parties are expected to accept the political outcomes in good grace and refrain from the kinds of personal enmities that could undermine the delicate balance of democracy.<sup>4</sup>

For two men who worked for the improvement and prestige of the American nation – divergent as their visions for the country may have been – the era they knew was clearly coming to an end. Mr. Polk’s War, which Clay had vigorously opposed, was destined to exacerbate the sectional debates within the nation and bring a new generation of leaders to the forefront. As historian Robert Merry wrote, “These were the two surviving lions of the old politics, and of course senior lions like to mingle with other lions.”<sup>5</sup> This was a slightly bizarre statement by Merry, as both Calhoun and Triumvirate-member Daniel Webster were still alive in 1848. However, Merry was correct in writing,

The old era of politics was fading now, and these gentlemen of the old era were fading with it. Looking back on all the battles and battle scars of their political rivalry, they shared a commonality of nostalgia that could never be appreciated by the younger lions of either party vying for dominance of the nation.<sup>6</sup>

This next generation of lions – men like William Seward, Stephen Douglas, and William Yancey – inherited the partisan animosity of their political predecessors but without the national spirit and willingness to compromise. Seward, the New York leader of free soil Whigs, spoke of an “irrepressible conflict” between North and South, and “admitted to plotting that ... slavery zealotry might goad Southern Democrats and thus the Slavepower-dominated Democratic Party to demand outrageously much for slavery. Then Whigs could whip up greater anti-southern – and anti-Democratic Party – hatreds in the North.”<sup>7</sup> Yancey became a leader of the fire-eaters, pushing for secession if the Slave Power was ever threatened. Douglas searched for the political middle-ground but ultimately only muddled himself in ambiguity and confusion. Historian David M.

Potter could not resist the urge to compare this cast of characters to a literary or staged drama. Webster was “the kind of senator that Richard Wagner might have created at the height of his powers” and was “Jove-like;” Calhoun was “the most majestic champion of error since Milton’s Satan in *Paradise Lost*; and Clay, the old Conciliator, who had already saved the Union twice and now [in 1850] came out of retirement to save it ... once again before he died.”<sup>8</sup> These three were the “relics of a golden age, who still towered like giants above the creatures of a later time.”<sup>9</sup> Among those of the later time, “there was an able supporting cast – Seward, [John] Bell, Douglas, [Thomas Hart] Benton, [Lewis] Cass, [Jefferson] Davis, [Salmon] Chase – who would have been stars on any other stage.”<sup>10</sup> The failure of Clay and Webster to sew up the incomplete national fabric – begun by the Founders – left the issue in this next generation’s hands, with the disciples of Calhoun’s error and their radical adversaries in the North setting the drama on a course toward national tragedy.

Clay personally mistrusted several of these younger men – dubious about their commitment to the integrity of the nation. Some of this was personal; since 1839, he had felt betrayed by William Henry Seward (and fellow New York Whig leader, Thurlow Weed), who Clay believed had abandoned the principles of the party and been personally deceptive after Seward supported Winfield Scott and William Henry Harrison for the presidential nomination over Clay. This came after Clay had received assurances from a friend in New York that “The Governor [Seward] & Thurlow Weed ... are not only friendly to your election, but warmly & zealously so – but they deem it inexpedient to make public declarations of their preference.”<sup>11</sup> Despite himself being a master of backroom politics – as a legislative leader must be – Clay had a deep mistrust for men such as Seward who professed support privately but publicly did not follow

through on the promise. He also feared the effect of the abolitionist movement growing in the Northern states. “Show that the agitation of the [slavery] question in the free States, will first destroy all harmony, and finally lead to disunion,” he advised Calvin Colton in 1843. “That the consequences of disunion – perpetual war – the extinction of the African race – ultimate military despotism.”<sup>12</sup>

Clay worried about the abolitionist belief – expressed by Seward in the Congress – that “there is a higher law than the Constitution.”<sup>13</sup> Considering the influence that Seward wielded in the 1850s, the power he was later perceived as possessing within the Lincoln administration, and his differing methods from those of Henry Clay, an examination of this speech is valuable – as it echoed throughout the 1850s in the paranoid minds of secessionist Southerners. Seward, opposing Clay’s final grand act on the national stage – the Compromise of 1850 – proclaimed that, “I am opposed to any such compromise, in any and all forms ... because, while admitting the purity and the patriotism of all from whom it is my misfortune to differ, I think all legislative compromises radically wrong and essentially vicious.”<sup>14</sup> To Clay, this statement must have stung as strongly as Seward’s perceived betrayal in the Whig convention of 1839. The time of loyal opposition like that Clay embodied during the administration of President Polk was clearly fading into the past. The sections were dividing along a deepening chasm. Webster spoke four days before Mr. Seward, delivering his most famous address, in which he spoke “not as a Massachusetts man, nor as a northern man, but as an American, and a member of the Senate of the United States.”<sup>15</sup> Unfortunately, the rest of that speech is largely forgotten by historical memory. Webster, echoing Clay, promoted the power and compromising ability of the Congress, stating, “It is fortunate that there is a Senate of the United States; a body not yet moved from its propriety ... and a body to which the country looks with

confidence, for wise, moderate, patriotic, and healing counsels ... in the midst of strong agitations.”<sup>16</sup> He lamented, “The imprisoned winds are let loose. The East, the West, the North, and the stormy South, all combine to throw the whole ocean into commotion.”<sup>17</sup> Webster attributed more of the storm to the South than to abolitionist agitators in the North, but like his fellow aging titan Clay, he feared for the future of the union due to the growing antagonism toward compromise.

In regard to the “stormy South” and its leaders who threatened secession, Clay was deeply troubled. Like Webster, Clay feared that the younger generation of legislators was losing sight of the national responsibilities of the Congress’s duties. “I am not surprised at your mortification by having imputed to you the epithet old politician,”<sup>18</sup> he wrote to Nathan Sargent. “If I had yielded to similar feelings, I should a thousand times have abandoned politics for ever. But we must recollect that it is our *Country* that we have to serve, and that it is our duty to serve it, altho’ treated unjustly.”<sup>19</sup> This liberal sense of American nationalism was being crushed by the sectional and ethnic concerns of the 1850s, though.

Such fiery elements were already growing in numbers, power, and influence by the time Webster and Clay exited the national stage. To Clay and his Kentucky ally John J. Crittenden, both sides were guilty of driving the nation toward disunion and war. Clay and Crittenden were “quick to deplore abolitionists and Republican free soilers as dangerous to domestic peace ... [and] equally critical of southern fire-eaters.”<sup>20</sup> As far as the two aged Kentucky statesmen were concerned, the antagonistic efforts of the two sides ignored the fact that California and the other territories would likely not be settled for decades, and thus were making “a present evil out of an apprehension of a future one never likely to occur.”<sup>21</sup> Both proponents of gradual, compensated emancipation, these two Border

State leaders deplored the enthusiasm of the younger generation. Their own vision – which inspired the young Whig Abraham Lincoln – had “the three main features – gradual – compensation – and the vote of the people,’ all of which abolitionists abhorred.”<sup>22</sup> Lincoln, the Clay disciple, referred to abolitionists as “fiends,” and stated, “I can express all my views on the slavery question by quotations from Henry Clay.”<sup>23</sup> To those who ultimately formed the conservative wing of the Republican Party, after the collapse of the Whigs, Henry Clay continued to be an idol in his unionist and gradualist ideologies. Accordingly, Lincoln once proclaimed, “If ... there be any man in the republican party who is impatient of ... the constitutional obligations bound around it, he is misplaced, and ought to find a place somewhere else.”<sup>24</sup> Extremes were the enemy to Clay and his ilk, because they closed the minds of men to the value of compromise for the sake of the nation.

The Compromise of 1850 demonstrated the decreased effectiveness of compromise on the national stage over the slavery question, and also made clear the growing resistance to it as a legislative method. Clay was unable to push it through himself, even with his silvery tongue and rejuvenated personal charm. He was forced to turn to a member of that younger generation he mistrusted, Stephen Douglas of Illinois, to finally push the compromise through by individual measures – with purely sectional lines of support. Another Westerner, the Little Giant Douglas could logically have been seen as a fine potential replacement for the old giant. Yet Douglas’s measures failed to assuage sectional furor from the very start – beginning with Clay’s proposals in 1850 and culminating with the disastrous Kansas-Nebraska Act in 1854.

The Compromise of 1850 created no lasting sense of national relief. Its most controversial measure was the new Fugitive Slave Law. A concession to the Slave Power of the South, the law put the



onus of maintaining slavery in the face of runaways on the Northern population. This accelerated and bolstered the agitation of the abolitionists, and actively engaged non-abolitionist Northerners in the moral debate over slavery for the first time in a direct manner. Ulysses S. Grant recalled the effect of this in his memoirs. “This was a degradation which the North would not permit any longer than until they could get the power to expunge such laws from the statute books,” he wrote.<sup>25</sup> “Prior to the time of these encroachments the great majority of the people of the North had no particular quarrel with slavery, so long as they were not forced to have it themselves. But they were not willing to play the role of police for the South in the protection of this particular institution.”<sup>26</sup>

Clay seemed to believe that the Northern public would perform their civic duty in his broad sense of nationalism, recognizing the threat to the republic and the union, but the Fugitive Slave Act did as much to drive a wedge between the sections as any issue. It confirmed the wickedness of Henry Clay in the minds of abolitionists, who had railed against Clay for decades as one of the leaders of the American Colonization Society (hereafter, ACS). William Lloyd Garrison’s *The Liberator* waged a decades-long campaign against the ACS, celebrating that “Ten times the number of slaves colonize themselves in Canada every year, at a much less expense than is incurred by the Colonization Society.”<sup>27</sup> In opposition to the Fugitive Slave Act, *The Liberator* condemned the “tyranny of a heartless and God-defying government,” and urged the protection, employment, and provision for the fugitive slave population.<sup>28</sup> The epitome of that heartless government was the contemptible compromiser, Henry Clay. The *Liberator* ultimately did not waste much ink on eulogizing the man who held the union together by surrendering elements of their philosophy to the South. However, other abolitionist newspapers, notably Horace Greeley’s *New York Daily Tribune*, painted

adoring portraits of the great departed statesman. “Mr. Clay was an aspirant, but a noble one,” the paper stated, in the midst of a full page of coverage. Perhaps forgotten by other abolitionists, the *Tribune* paid tribute to Clay’s efforts as a young Kentucky legislator to insert gradual emancipation into his state’s constitution, “a suggestion which was over-ruled by their short-sighted egotism” and by “slaveholding selfishness.”<sup>29</sup>

When Clay passed from the world at the end of June in 1852, the news was shockingly placed secondary in many papers due to the near-simultaneous nominations of Franklin Pierce and Winfield Scott for the presidency. Pierce’s administration eventually was marked by the utter failure of Douglas’s efforts to fill the shoes of the Great Compromiser, stumbling for political middle ground by taking the question out of Congress’s hands and placing it entirely in the hands of the people. But the Whigs’ nomination of Winfield Scott at the same moment that their aged standard-bearer was departing the world led many to assess the future of the party. The *National Era* of Washington, DC expressed hope for the abolitionist cause: “While a superficial observer would see ... in the multitudinous assemblages who hurrah for Pierce or Scott... the ruin of the Anti-Slavery cause, those who look deeper into things perceive a deeper, powerful, and gigantic sentiment against slavery pervading the country.”<sup>30</sup> Again the *Tribune* was a strong exception to this trend, committing only a short paragraph to announce, “Gen. Scott’s Letter accepting the Whig nomination for President will be found in our columns ... As any allusion to the points that we specially approve therein would probably excite hostility on the part of others, we will simply say that, as a whole, we *like* it.”<sup>31</sup> Then, in a sarcastic shot at Clay and any others who criticized the activism of the abolitionist press, the short paragraph concluded, “There can’t be any treason in *that*.”<sup>32</sup>

Others saw no subtlety in the nomination of Scott, who was well-known to be supported by Seward – which would very likely have met the disapproval of Clay due to Seward’s opposition to national compromise. One element of Scott’s letter of acceptance would have satisfied Mr. Clay:

Convinced that harmony or good will between the different quarters of our broad country is essential to the present and future interests of the Republic, and with a devotion to those interests that can know no South and no North, I should neither countenance nor tolerate any sedition, disorder, faction, or resistance to the laws, or to the Union.<sup>33</sup>

The Democratic *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* reported on Clay’s death, stating, “Every heart seems to feel that a great man has gone from among us.”<sup>34</sup> But on the same page, it also traced the deceitfulness of William Henry Seward, and mocked Scott’s acceptance letter as “another ‘hasty plate of soup’ production.”<sup>35</sup> The *Covington Journal* of Kentucky, meanwhile, expressed the belief that “Mr. Seward, it seems, wouldn’t accept a cabinet appointment from President Scott, and most certainly he couldn’t get it if he would.”<sup>36</sup>

There was great anxiety among the Democratic press and the moderate Whig press concerning the influence Seward would hold in a Scott presidency – something that would have alarmed Clay. The *Fayetteville Observer*, a Democratic newspaper in Tennessee, foretold that the nomination of General Scott, supported by Seward, would serve to “denationalize the Whig party, and to select a sectional [nominee].”<sup>37</sup> It then warned its readers, “Mr. Seward, when Gen. Scott is nominated, will be inaugurated, emphatically, into the position of ruler and controller of the Whig party of the nation.”<sup>38</sup> Hitting a theme that would echo in the South among fire-eaters, it reminded all, “The Wm. H. Seward spoken of ... is the veritable, the identical originator and propagator of the ‘higher law doctrine’

which is so justly condemned and despised by every lover of the country.”<sup>39</sup> The deceased Clay could have been counted among those lovers of the country. Connecting the issue of Seward’s influence to the late statesman, the paper then explained, “As soon as the compromise measures passed, all the papers under Mr. Seward’s control raised up the name of Gen. Scott ... as their candidate for the presidency,” set upon “abolitionizing of the Whig party” by elevating Seward as Scott’s unspoken puppet-master.<sup>40</sup>

Clay’s Whig Party was indeed doomed to division and collapse. Many Whig papers and eulogizers, though, ignored the troubled state and uncertain future of the party and produced flowery tributes to their fallen leader whose policies were soon to be discarded as the party shifted and ultimately evaporated. The *New York Times* published a number of these tributes, ranging from the report of an “English Judgment of Henry Clay” – which proclaimed him “among the first class of American worthies ... to be regretted by the world” – to the various eulogies coming from all over the country, including by Clay’s former vice-presidential candidate, Theodore Frelinghuysen of New Jersey.<sup>41</sup> According to the *Times*, “The heavy blow, long suspended, has fallen at last. Henry Clay, the renowned and the peerless, has gone to his rest.”<sup>42</sup> In its full-page tribute, the *Times* reported that Clay was simply “too great to be President.”<sup>43</sup> Clay’s death was mourned by all throughout the nation – with the exception of some radical abolitionists and extreme southern fire-eaters – “From every quarter of the Union, from all parties and from all classes.”<sup>44</sup> One of the most intriguing pieces of coverage the *Times* provided concerning Clay’s death was its printing of Seward’s remarks on the Senate floor on the matter. He obliquely criticized Clay in the undertones of his florid praise, mentioning that “History will confirm ... that Conservatism was the interest of the nation and the responsibility of its Rulers, during the period in

which he flourished.”<sup>45</sup> Unspoken in this was Seward’s belief that Clay’s conservatism and compromising were things of the past. He proceeded to encourage others who knew Clay longer to speak in his place. Finally, he declined to discuss Clay’s legislative achievements at any length, but instead mentioned his belief, “His personal qualities may be discussed without apprehension.”<sup>46</sup> William Henry Seward was leading the Whig Party in a new direction, and he was not going to use up his time on the floor praising the old methods and the old giant.

Some Whigs would not let the legacy of Clay die, even while the party changed and collapsed. Frelinghuysen elaborated on all the areas of life in which Henry Clay was a great man, and then turned to his reputation: “It has been sometimes said, that Mr. Clay was not popular. This must depend upon the interpretation of the term. There is a popularity, which, like the gourd, comes up in a night, and departs in a night, and no man can tell us what has become of it ... Mr. C. had none of this.”<sup>47</sup> Turning to what Clay *did* have, he continued, “And there is a popularity ... [that] grows on, the more healthfully, because of trials ... This popularity has another element. It lives beyond the grave – the sepulcher cannot impair the securities of a good name.”<sup>48</sup> According to the New Jersey Whig, Clay would be dearly missed by the nation in any time of trouble.<sup>49</sup> Out west, an idolizer of Clay delivered Illinois’s official eulogy for the fallen Whig leader. Unabashedly, Abraham Lincoln extolled Clay’s personal traits and his professional accomplishments and efforts. “Alas! Who can realize that Henry Clay is dead! Who can realize that never again that majestic form shall rise in the council-chambers of his country to beat back the storms of anarchy which may threaten!”<sup>50</sup> Reflecting Clay’s sense of liberal nationalism, Lincoln continued, “Henry Clay belonged to his country – to the world, mere party cannot claim men like him. His career has been national – his fame

has filled the earth – his memory will endure to `the last syllable of recorded time.' Henry Clay is dead!"<sup>51</sup>

When the great national chasm came, with South Carolina seceding from the Union in December of 1860, it was natural to turn thoughts back to the compromising efforts of Henry Clay. His former Kentucky colleague, John Crittenden, failed in the role of compromiser during the secession crisis. Lincoln was president, still keeping the words and example of Henry Clay in his mind. William Seward, who had opposed Clay's methods, ironically stood at Lincoln's right hand. The Central Campaign Club of New York held a reception that drew attention due to the fact, "It is remarkable that there should have been but two receptions, until tonight, in this room. One was to Daniel Webster, the other to Henry Clay, and a third is now to Abraham Lincoln."<sup>52</sup> Meanwhile, Seward toured the North, where

Some compared it with receptions the Whigs used to give Henry Clay in his tours through the Northern States. There is one difference to be remembered in considering the significance of these ovations to the great statesman. There was no striking contrast in Mr. Clay's case. It was never unpopular to honor him.<sup>53</sup>

Mr. Seward personally would have likely disagreed with this *New York Times* report, which continued, "It was never unpopular and almost a disgrace to be a 'Clay man.' But how recent the time when to be a 'Seward man' required the highest moral courage."<sup>54</sup> For decades, one of these two great statesmen guided the Whig party toward compromise as a loose national organization; yet the second man had used the most recent decade to bolt from the Whigs for a new party, after helping to damage the national nature of the old structure.

Most importantly, the new Republican leaders – Lincoln and Seward – former Whigs with drastically different opinions of Henry Clay, could take inspiration for the coming struggle from Clay’s unionism. Seward’s early commitment to forcing the seceded states was lukewarm at best, but Lincoln was resolute. Writing of secession in the 1840s, Clay had proclaimed, “For my own part, I utterly deny the existence of any such right, and I think an attempt to exercise it ought to be resisted to the last extremity; for it is in fact a question of Union or no Union.”<sup>55</sup> The *New York Times* proclaimed that Clay would personally be “for lopping off the hydra head of secession by the strong arm of the offended law.” His stance was recounted as such:

There can be but one possible answer. The power, the authority, and the dignity of the Government ought to be maintained, and resistance put down at every hazard ... My belief is that if it should be applied to South Carolina, in the event of her secession, she would be speedily reduced to obedience, and that the Union, instead of being weakened, would acquire additional strength.<sup>57</sup>

This was Lincoln’s position in the secession crisis – that swift and stern action against the seceded states would restore the union, and that all efforts should be exhausted for that cause. Taking inspiration from Clay’s speeches concerning the Compromise of 1850, Lincoln’s inaugural address alluded to the national “mystic chords of memory” and “the better angels of our nature.”<sup>58</sup> Critically important in the strategy of preserving the integrity of the nation, “Kentucky, which holds the ashes of Henry Clay, stands by the Union!”<sup>59</sup> Henry Clay was dead, but as Frelinghuysen and Lincoln had predicted in their eulogies, his guidance was missed and his shadow was felt in the great national disaster.

Notes

<sup>1</sup>David S. Heidler and Jeanne T. Heidler, *Henry Clay: the Essential American* (New York: Random House, 2010), 431.

<sup>2</sup>Heidler and Heidler, xiii.

<sup>3</sup>Robert W. Merry, *A Country of Vast Designs: James K. Polk, the Mexican War and the Conquest of the American Continent* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2009), 419.

<sup>4</sup>Merry, 419.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., 419.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., 419-420.

<sup>7</sup>Bruce Levine, *Half Slave and Half Free: the Roots of the Civil War* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1992), 15; William W. Freehling, *The Road to Disunion: Secessionists at Bay, 1776-1854* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 555. When the secession crisis broke out, Seward devised bizarre compromise solutions including calls for a war against some foreign power to unite the sections, but his record throughout the 1850s was one of abject rejection of compromise. Seward's efforts to reunite the nation are detailed in Walter Stahr, *Seward: Lincoln's Indispensable Man* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2012).

<sup>8</sup>David M. Potter, *The Impending Crisis, 1848-1861* (New York: Harper, 1976), 98.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid.

<sup>11</sup>Robert Seager, ed., *The Whig Leader, January 1, 1837-December 31, 1843*, vol. 9 of *The Papers of Henry Clay* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1988), 287.

<sup>12</sup>Seager, ed., *The Whig Leader*, 852.

<sup>13</sup>*Congressional Globe*, 31st Cong., 1st sess., 1850, 260-269. Located within the Appendix of the 31st Congress, 1st Session.

<sup>14</sup>*Congressional Globe*, 31st Cong., 1st sess.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid.

<sup>17</sup>*Congressional Globe*, 31st Cong., 1st Sess. 269. Located within the Appendix of the 31st Congress, 1st Session. Any thoughts of the Congress being a place "not yet moved from its propriety" or where the country could look "with confidence, for wise, moderate, patriotic, and healing counsels," was shattered in the 1850s when Southern Congressman Preston Brooks physically assaulted and almost killed abolitionist Senator Charles Sumner.

<sup>18</sup>Seager, ed., *The Whig Leader*, 853. Sargent was a Whig who served as Sergeant-at-Arms of the House of Representatives during the 1840s.

<sup>19</sup>Seager, ed., *The Whig Leader*, 853.

<sup>20</sup>Douglas R. Egerton, *Year of Meteors: Stephen Douglas, Abraham Lincoln, and the Election that Brought on the Civil War* (New York: Bloomsbury Press, 2010), 85.

<sup>21</sup>Egerton, 85.

<sup>22</sup>Allen C. Guelzo, "Lincoln and the Abolitionists," *Wilson Quarterly* 24, no. 4 (Autumn 2000), 63.

<sup>23</sup>Guelzo, 65.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid.

<sup>25</sup>Ulysses S. Grant, *Personal Memoirs* (New York: Penguin, 1999), 634.



- <sup>26</sup> Grant, 634.
- <sup>27</sup> “Colonization Society,” *The Liberator*, March 31, 1843.
- <sup>28</sup> “To the Friends of the Fugitive,” *The Liberator*, November 8, 1850.
- <sup>29</sup> “Death of Henry Clay,” *New York Daily Tribune*, June 30, 1852, p. 4.
- <sup>30</sup> “Letter from New York,” *The National Era*, July 1, 1852.
- <sup>31</sup> *New York Daily Tribune*, June 30, 1852, p. 5 c.1.
- <sup>32</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>33</sup> “Gen. Scott’s Letter of Acceptance,” *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, June 30, 1852, p. 2, c. 3.
- <sup>34</sup> “Mr. Clay’s Last Moments,” *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, June 30, 1852, p. 2, c. 4. The first two columns were dedicated to advocating for Franklin Pierce’s candidacy.
- <sup>35</sup> Gen. Scott’s Letter of Acceptance,” *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, June 30, 1852, p. 2, c. 3.
- <sup>36</sup> “Letter from Mr. Seward,” *Covington Journal*, July 10, 1852.
- <sup>37</sup> “To the Whigs of Lincoln County,” *Fayetteville Observer*, July 1, 1852, p. 2, c. 1-4.
- <sup>38</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>39</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>40</sup> “To the Whigs of Lincoln County,” *Fayetteville Observer*, July 1, 1852, p. 2, c. 1-4. The same charge of Seward pulling the strings was later made during the presidency of Abraham Lincoln.
- <sup>41</sup> “English Judgment of Henry Clay,” *New York Times*, July 26, 1852.
- <sup>42</sup> “Death of Henry Clay: Sketch of His Life and Public Career,” *New York Times*, June 30, 1852.
- <sup>43</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>44</sup> “The Death of Henry Clay,” *New York Times*, July 1, 1852; “Henry Clay: Eulogy Delivered by Hon. Theodore Frelinghuysen, at Newark, on the 13th of July,” *New York Times*, July 15, 1852.
- <sup>45</sup> “Henry Clay – Living and Dead: Mr. Seward’s Remarks,” *New York Times*, July 2, 1852.
- <sup>46</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>47</sup> “Henry Clay: Eulogy Delivered by Hon. Theodore Frelinghuysen, at Newark, on the 13th of July,” *New York Times*, July 15, 1852.
- <sup>48</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>49</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>50</sup> Abraham Lincoln, “Eulogy on Henry Clay,” Abraham Lincoln Online, <http://www.abrahamlincolnonline.org/lincoln/speeches/clay.htm> (accessed November 7, 2013).
- <sup>51</sup> Abraham Lincoln, “Eulogy on Henry Clay,” Abraham Lincoln Online, <http://www.abrahamlincolnonline.org/lincoln/speeches/clay.htm> (accessed November 7, 2013). For deep meanings of Lincoln’s eulogy for Clay, see Mark E. Neely, “American Nationalism in the Image of Henry Clay: Abraham Lincoln’s Eulogy on Henry Clay in Context.” *The Registry of the Kentucky Historical Society* 106, no. 3/4 (Summer/Autumn 2008): 537-570.
- <sup>52</sup> “Mr. Lincoln’s Address to the Republican Committees,” *New York Times*, February 20, 1861.

<sup>53</sup> “Gov. Seward’s Tour,” *New York Times*, Sept. 4, 1860.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>55</sup> “What Henry Clay Thought of Secession,” *New York Times*, December 26, 1860.

<sup>56</sup> “What Shall Be Done with a Seceding State? Henry Clay’s Opinion,” *New York Times*, November 15, 1860.

<sup>57</sup> “What Shall Be Done with a Seceding State? Henry Clay’s Opinion,” *New York Times*, November 15, 1860.

<sup>58</sup> Egerton, *Year of Meteors*, 321-322.

<sup>59</sup> “Light from Kentucky!” *New York Times*, January 26, 1861. The first two columns were dedicated to advocating for Franklin Pierce’s candidacy.

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