

Buchanan's Campaign In Lancaster County

By GERARD BRADY

INTRODUCTION

The year 1856 — a year of turmoil in the United States. The question of whether slavery was to be extended into the western territories of the United States was reaching its boiling point. In Kansas a fierce battle was raging over the issue: Should Kansas enter the Union free or slave? A battle which frequently led to bloodshed.

The eyes of the East were centered on Kansas. The interest of the people was aroused to a fever pitch by the charges and countercharges that both sides made. There were many heated arguments. There was talk of secession — even war.

This was a presidential year. A decision had to be made. Who was to lead the nation in the crucial four years to come? What course should the nation take? Should there be compromise or a showdown? The people had to make a choice. Indeed, a difficult decision.

Let us turn our attention to one little section in the United States, for by a detailed examination of feeling in one section we can easily gain some perspective as to how the people in all the United States felt in this crucial year. Let us go to Pennsylvania, to the Lancaster County of 1856. Lancaster County is of especially great interest in the campaign of 1856 for it was there that the Democratic candidate, James Buchanan, made his home. Let us see how the common people, the people who made up the constituency of James Buchanan, felt, thought, and finally acted.

Lancaster County lies in the southeastern part of Pennsylvania approximately seventy miles west of Philadelphia. Its land is rich in agricultural value. Throughout the county there are many small, clean, prosperous communities.

Wheatland, the home of James Buchanan, is located about a mile from Lancaster City. It is a beautiful estate with a stately mansion.

It is through the fame that Buchanan had achieved as Congressman, Senator, Secretary of State under President Polk, Ambassador to Russia and England that we find Lancaster in the political limelight.

Buchanan had been a great factor in American politics for many years.

In 1848, and again in 1852, he had been one of the major contenders for the Democratic nomination for President.

The year 1856 finds Buchanan, now sixty-five years old, as Ambassador to Great Britain. Nevertheless his candidacy is actively supported by friends in the United States.

Quite early it became apparent that the leading candidates for the Democratic nomination, President Pierce and Senator Douglas, although favorably supported by the South, could not gain sufficient votes in the North to make a Democratic victory possible.

The Kansas and Nebraska Act had made many enemies for the Democratic Party in the North. This act sponsored by Stephen A. Douglas, Democratic Senator from Illinois, and one of the leaders in the Senate and supported by President Franklin Pierce, had upset the compromise of 1850. It had been the hope of the North that through this compromise the slavery question in the territories would be settled forever. No slavery was to be permitted north of 36° 30' north latitude in the territory. Now by permitting popular decision as to slavery in Kansas by the Kansas-Nebraska Act, the 1850 compromise was revoked and additional territory was opened to slavery.

Northern support was necessary for a Democratic victory. Douglas and Pierce had alienated many northern votes. Another candidate had to be found.

Buchanan fit the bill. He had been in England during the Kansas and Nebraska controversy. He came from Pennsylvania, the decisive state in the election — one the Democrats needed desperately for success. "He was the outstanding Democratic figure in Pennsylvania."¹ His forty years of public service had made him well known throughout the United States. He was not as acceptable to the South as Pierce or Douglas, yet "he had never uttered a word that could pain the most sensitive southern heart ("Richmond Esquire")."² "Governor Wise of Virginia and Senator Slidell of Louisiana early gave their support to Buchanan. These two wise politicians knew that Buchanan was the best possible choice — a northerner with safe southern views.

A Buchanan for President movement had begun.

EARLY MOVEMENTS IN THE CAUSE OF JAMES BUCHANAN

Lancaster awoke early in the political campaign of 1856. The "Lancaster Intelligencer and Lancastrian," the Democratic paper gave its support to Buchanan as it had done in '48 and '52. With great glee she reported how one paper after another throughout the United States swung its support to Mr. Buchanan. On January 8 there appeared on her masthead:

For President

JAMES BUCHANAN

(subject to the decision of the Democratic National Convention)³

¹ Auchampaugh, "Buchanan a Political Portrait," p. 12.

² Minnigerode, "Presidential Years," p. 321.

³ "Intelligencer and Lancastrian," January 8, 1856.

At Shober Hotel on January 2 at 11 a. m. the opening gun was fired in the local Democratic campaign. It was here that delegates⁴ from all over the county assembled to select the county's delegation for the Democratic State Convention. The first order of business was to appoint officers. James Patterson, Esq., of Little Britain, became President.⁵ James Buchanan was unanimously endorsed for president. "The utmost harmony and good feeling prevailed . . . there being but one heart and one voice in favor of the distinguished statesman whom we are all proud to acknowledge as our neighbor and friend."⁶ The delegates selected to the State Convention were James L. Reynolds, Dr. James Cushman, Benjamin Eby, James S. M. Mahon, Dr. Samuel Parker and Abraham Peters.⁷

The growth of the Buchanan for President movement as described in the "Intell.":

- January 15, "Members of Congress think 'old Buck' is in ascendancy."
- February 5, Victory of Democrats in the municipal election.
- February 26, "Buchanan movement spontaneous."
- March 4, Jubilant over the fact that the Honorable Isaac E. Hiester, a former Know Nothing, now is a Democrat.
- March 11, Buchanan endorsed by Pennsylvania Democratic State Convention. Electors at large include James Patterson of Lancaster, of the Ninth District, District Delegate at large James L. Reynolds of Lancaster.
- March 25, "Everyday strengthens the conviction that Mr. Buchanan will be the nominee of the National Convention. Public sentiment in every direction — North, East, South, and West — is rapidly concentrating upon him as the man for the coming time."

On March 25, we also note the awakening of the opposition. The "Intelligencer and Lancastrian" reports of the meeting of seventy to eighty Fillmore-Donelson men at Lechler Hotel on East King Street. The amusement was great at the name of Andrew Jackson Donelson, their candidate for vice-president. Andrew Jackson had been one of the leading Democrats and now one named in his honor was an opposition candidate for the American Party.

⁴ Ibid. January 2, 1856. S. W. Ward, M. Steinman, Jacob Krantz, Dr. Henry Carpenter, James Peoples, Geo. Sanderson; S. E. Ward, Philip Leonard, Henry Wilchelm, William M'Gormly, Michael M'Gonigle, W. F. S. Warren; N. W. Ward, Jacob Frey, John W. Jackson, Junius W. Kauffman, John Michael, John Donoart; N. E. Ward, Jacob Stormfelt, Henry E. Wentz, J. L. Reynolds, John Hamilton, John Rose; Conestoga, Adam Kendig, S. S. Welsh, John Kolp, Henry Hammer, Frederick Sourbeer; Earl, Jacob Stambaugh, Levi Hull, Peter Ranck, John Hull, Samuel Hull; East Hempfield, Henry Hoffman, J. D. Keller, B. F. Lutz, Henry Myers, Dr. Samuel Parker; Lancaster Township, J. Brenner, J. Ditlow.

⁵ Ibid, January 2, 1856. Vice Presidents were: James Patterson, Esq., Little Britain; Dr. Levi Hull, Warwick; James Laird, Elizabethtown; Joseph Charles, Washington Boro; John Michael, City; Wm. M. Cullough, Providence; John Forney, West Earl.

⁶ Ibid, January 8, 1856.

⁷ Ibid, January 8, 1856.



James Buchanan

During this same week a meeting was held by a new group on the political scene — the Republicans. During the meeting Thaddeus Stevens "moved the appointment of a committee of five to report the names of delegates to be elected by the convention to represent this county at the State Convention"⁸ to be held at Harrisburg on the 26th.

The "Intell.," however, had little that was kind to say about this gathering. It reports: "Thaddeus Stevens was present and appeared to be the controlling spirit in this Abolition, Know Nothing, Whig Assembly. Both meetings (referring to the Fillmore-Donelson and Republican meeting) were miserable failures. The Democracy could outnumber them three to one, with two hours' notice."⁹

On April 1, the "Intelligencer and Lancastrian" reports the appointment of a committee of correspondence to advance the cause of Buchanan. Members on this committee included Abraham Peters of Millersville, Dr. Levi Hull of Litiz,¹⁰ Henry C. Wentz of Lancaster, Henry Haines of Maytown and William T. McPhail of Strasburg.

Throughout the month of April things were pretty quiet in Lancaster County. Only the arrival of Mr. Buchanan from England caused any excitement. On April 23 a meeting was held at Fulton Hall to plan for this great event.

The arrival of Buchanan was indeed a gala affair. The "Intell." calls it an "outpouring of the people."¹¹ Dr. Muhlenberg, Mr. Buchanan and Mr. Rich addressed the gathering.¹² Even the "Lancaster Examiner" said, "The arrival of Mr. Buchanan has excited a great deal of joy among his honest adherents," but had to add of course, "but the strongest manifestations are confined to the office hunters who are looking to the probability of his election."¹³

After Mr. Buchanan's triumphant return to Lancaster the "Intell." writes, "Mr. Buchanan is now at his beloved home at Wheatland in the enjoyment of excellent health and fine spirits. We never saw him look better. He is visited daily by troops of friends all anxious to have the pleasure of once more taking him by the hand."¹⁴

Many distinguished people came to visit Buchanan at this time. Most likely their discussion was about the ensuing political campaign, and the deals that had to be made. The Honorable Howell Cobb, Member of Congress from Georgia and J. Glancy Jones of Pennsylvania came. Also Judge Black of the Supreme Court, J. C. Breckinridge of Kentucky, his running mates and ex-Governor David R. Porter came to pay their respects. Political leaders from

⁸ "Lancaster Examiner and Herald," March 26, 1856.

⁹ "Intelligencer and Lancastrian," March 25, 1856.

¹⁰ Lititz was continually spelled Litiz in the papers; the latter spelling was used for over a century.

¹¹ "Intelligencer and Lancastrian," April 29, 1856.

¹² For a detailed description of the Buchanan reception see Worner, William F., Lancaster County Historical Society Papers v. 36, pp. 59-83.

¹³ "Lancaster Examiner and Herald," April 30, 1856.

¹⁴ "Intelligencer and Lancastrian," April 26, 1856.

Montgomery County and Bradford County also visited the "Sage of Wheatland."

Mr. Buchanan made very few public appearances. He kept behind the doors of his estate letting leaders come to him. He refused many invitations to appear at public functions, claiming that he would rather meet the people informally than formally. Also, the wonderful reception had been enough and besides the farmers are very busy at this season and he would not like to take them from their work.¹⁵

Shortly after Buchanan returned to Wheatland a delegation came to notify him of the actions of the State Convention. Mr. Buchanan thanked the delegation and said, "When the proceedings of your convention reached me in a foreign land they excited emotions of gratitude which I might in vain attempt to express. This was not because the Democracy of my much beloved State had by their spontaneous movement placed me in nomination for the Presidency—an honor which I have not sought—but because this nomination constituted of itself the highest evidence that after a long course in public service, my public conduct had been approved by those to whom I am indebted, under Providence, for all the offices and honors I have ever enjoyed. In success and in defeat—in sunshine and in storm—they have ever been the same kind friends to me and I value their continued good opinion far above the highest official honors of my country."¹⁶

Mr. Buchanan had the Democratic Party of the State behind him, but yet there was much division among the Democrats as to who the candidate should be. The "Lancaster Examiner and Herald" reports: "The ill feeling between the friends of Pierce and Buchanan is growing and is frequently displayed."¹⁷

By the general concensus of opinion Buchanan himself was not too anxious to get the nomination. "In 1848 Buchanan was anxious to secure the nomination but not in 1856."¹⁸ Horton quotes Buchanan as saying, "Why should I, after forty years spent in the turmoil and excitement of public life, wish to leave my quiet home and assume the responsibilities and cares incident to the Presidency?"¹⁹

Yet it was not too difficult to persuade Buchanan that he should remain in public life. It seems as though Buchanan loved the activity of politics. He certainly has more ties among the politician than among the home folks whom he had seen seldom in the past twenty years. He seems lonely in the quiet of Wheatland. He is happy in active public life. He likes the honors that are being conferred on him. Yes, it seems that he was not too unhappy that the road was leading to the White House.

It did not take much persuasion for Buchanan to say, "They tell me that the use of my name will still agitated waters, restore public harmony, by vanquishing sectionalism and remove all apprehension of disunion. For these

¹⁵ Ibid, May 13, 1856, passim.

¹⁶ "Lancaster Examiner and Herald," May 14, 1856.

¹⁷ Ibid, May 14, 1856.

¹⁸ Minnigerode, op. cit., p. 321.

¹⁹ Horton. "Life and Public Services of James Buchanan." pp. 426-427.

objects I would surrender my ease and comfort, but cheerfully lay down my life. Considerations like these have imposed upon me the duty of yielding to the wishes of those who must know what the public good requires." 20 "Duty had reinforced ambition." 21

When the convention turned to him Buchanan accepted.

CONVENTION

The Democrats of Lancaster were enthusiastic supporters of their "favorite son." Great was the hope he would be nominated.

In May while on his way to Washington he had been received enthusiastically by the people of Columbia "not as a politician but as an American Statesman whom the people delighted to honor." 22

In the "Intelligencer and Lancastrian" of May 27 there appeared a poem by Bon of Ephrata:

BUCHANAN

He's the man of the age and his glory and station
He owes not to battle or thunder of cannon;
But the years of head-toil in the cause of his nation
With fame we have encircled the name of Buchanan.

Mid the great of Old England he stood unabashed,
Determined and faithful, pacific and bland;
And the glory and might of his intellect flashed
The splendor of fame on his own native land.

In the quiet of Wheatland rests like a sage
The ablest compatriot of Webster and Clay;
An injustice to them darkens history's page,
Be true to the great who are living today.

In the quiet of Wheatland he rests like a sage
In repose 'neath the shadow of oak and of elm;
With his vigor of youth and his wisdom of age
His country hath need of his hand at the helm.

He's the man of the age, and his glory and station
He owes not to battle or thunder of cannon;
But the years of head-toil in the cause of the nation
With fame have encircled the name of Buchanan.

The Democrats met at Cincinnati during the first week of June to select their candidate. Buchanan, Pierce and Douglas were the main contenders. The first ballot stood:

Buchanan	135½	Douglas	33
Pierce	122	Cass	5

20 Ibid.

21 Auchampaugh, *op. cit.*, p. 6.

22 "Intelligencer and Lancastrian," May 20, 1856.

The contest was a heated one. Slowly the strength of Pierce declined while that of Douglas was strengthened. The fourteenth ballot stood:

Buchanan	152½	Douglas	63
Pierce	79	Cass	5½

A stop-Buchanan movement had to be formed. Pierce swung his support to Douglas to stop Buchanan. Douglas was to stay in the battle at all cost until either he won or a dark horse would be nominated.²³

The fifteenth ballot stood:

Buchanan	168	Douglas	121
Pierce	0	Cass	5½

Douglas, however, swung his support to Buchanan on the seventeenth ballot, and Buchanan was nominated by a unanimous vote.

The people of Lancaster followed the balloting and received the news of the nomination with "the most unbounded enthusiasm. The long agony is over. James Buchanan, Pennsylvania's favorite son, has been nominated as the choice of the American Democracy for the fifteenth president of the United States. The voice of the people has been heard."²⁴

A large crowd had assembled at the telegraph office at 11 o'clock in the morning when the news came. Immediately Henry M. Reigart, the postmaster, and Dr. William B. Fahnestock drove to Wheatland to inform Mr. Buchanan of the nomination. They found Mr. Buchanan sitting under the trees, unconcerned, smoking a cigar. He had already heard the news from one Bill Duncan, a student at Franklin and Marshall College.

As soon as the flag had been run up by the telegraph office to announce Mr. Buchanan's nomination a group of college runners, who had waited for this sign at Old Main on College Hill, made off to Wheatland. Duncan was the first to arrive there beating the coach from town by several minutes.²⁵ Mr. Buchanan took his guest in the house to celebrate.

"No sooner had the news been received . . . whole town in commotion. Gentlemen in broadcloths and loafers in rags were jubilant with joy. Ladies forgot about bonnets."²⁶ There was much talk about a possible Mrs. Buchanan for the White House. Would she be English or American?

At 1 o'clock the guns thundered from College Hill, and at 2 o'clock a procession was formed to congratulate Buchanan at Wheatland. Mr. Buchanan thanked the people and three deafening huzzas were given at the end.

A letter by Simon Sagnicht in the "Lancaster Examiner and Herald" gives an excellent description of the affair in the eyes of the opposition.

"Happening to be in your city when the telegraph announced the nomination of Mr. Buchanan, I was not a little gratified to see the good, honest, home feeling with which it was received. When I first heard it I was sitting . . . alone at Youart's imbibing a mint julep through a rye straw, but no

²³ Nichols, "The Disruption of American Democracy," p. 17.

²⁴ "Intelligencer and Lancasterian," June 10, 1856.

²⁵ Worner, op. cit. Bill Duncan was later to enter politics and be elected to Congress.

²⁶ "Lancaster Examiner and Herald," June 11, 1856.

sooner had my ears caught the sound of distant music, than off I started full run, and soon found myself at the railroad depot. . .

"In due course of time and without let of hindrance, the 'cortege' reached the front of the mansion, where the marshal in a few apt remarks told the purpose of their errand.

"Mr. Buchanan replied briefly and cordially, but with a knowing wink which seemed to say, 'Boys, you're a scaly looking set and the honor done by your visit is a rather doubtful one.' Still he put on a good face . . . and welcomed them in his usual courteous and gentlemanly manner . . . The door opened and the thirsty individuals in the crowd went in to get something for their stomach's sake. . . .

"(Afterwards). A noisy bursting busy body of a fellow . . . gained the platform alongside Mr. Buchanan and informed the crowd that he was going to make a speech. Silence having been restored . . . the full-faced individual commenced his speech, which ran somewhat in this way:

"'Fellow citizens, You see before you one, who in days long since was an old-line Whig—then a deluded Know Nothing—but now a pure, unsophisticated, modest, unassuming Democrat.' (Immense cheering). Band struck up . . . drowned voice and caused him to leave in disgust.

"After this there was little of note occurred and very soon the whole party left greatly to the relief of Mr. Buchanan and his friends."²⁷

The "Saturday Express," a temperance paper opposed to the Democrats, attacked Buchanan vehemently for this outpouring of alcoholic beverages.

"The scene witnessed at Wheatland . . . was one of the most disgraceful within the memory of those who were present. [Buchanan] converted his beautiful country mansion into one of the vilest grogshops that blights the county of Lancaster."²⁸

Meanwhile the Republicans held their convention at Philadelphia and nominated Colonel Fremont, the "Pathfinder" of California. Thaddeus Stevens had preferred the nomination of McLean since he felt that Fremont could not be able to carry Pennsylvania and therefore lose the election.²⁹ Nevertheless the Republicans of Lancaster received the nomination and platform with jubilation. The "Saturday Express" says that although McLean is their first choice, Fremont will also be supported.³⁰ The "Examiner and Herald" writes on the Republican platform, "It is all we desired. We confess to have entertained but feeble hopes of the accomplishments of the design for which the convention was called—but the results passed the most sanguine expectations we had ventured to indulge."³¹

A Fulton Republican Association was formed.

The official delegation from Cincinnati came to Lancaster on June 21 to notify Buchanan formally of his nomination. Governor Brown of Mississippi,

²⁷ Ibid, June 11, 1856.

²⁸ "Intelligencer and Lancastrian," May 20, 1856.

²⁹ Rhodes, "History of the United States," vol. 2, p. 138.

³⁰ "Saturday Express," June 14, 1856.

³¹ "Lancaster Examiner and Herald," June 14, 1856.



Wheatland, Home of James Buchanan.

Governor Manning of South Carolina, Preston of Kentucky and Colonel Richardson were among the delegates. Colonel Richardson spoke at some length to the assembled crowd. He said, "The responsibility of deciding whether our government shall go on as our Fathers planned it, or whether you will strike down a portion of the Union and thereby destroy our happy country, rests in my judgment upon the people in the coming contest."³²

Buchanan replied, "In accepting the nomination I need scarcely say that I accept in the same spirit the resolutions constituting the platform of principles erected by the convention. To this platform I intend to confine myself throughout the canvass, believing that I have no right as the candidate of the Democratic party . . . to present new views and different issues before the people."³³

The campaign was underway. A poem was composed in honor of Buchanan's homecoming by one J. F. of Manor Township, and appeared in the "Intelligencer and Lancastrian" on June 17.

WELCOME HOME TO BUCHANAN

Come Pennsylvania's favorite son,
Whose worthy praise we sing,
Come gladly to thy native home
Where shouts of welcome ring.

Here thou hast served thy country long,
Worked for the good of all,
Defending right, opposing wrong,
True to thy duty call.

Let others sound the warrior's name
To Earth's remotest bounds,
Buchanan shares a nobler fame
By peaceful laurels crowned.

Unlike the hero stained with blood
Thine is a holier aim;
Long, long thou hast defending stood
Our common rights maintained.

Of all the statesmen in our land
None is more truly great,
Who better knows how to command
Or guide the ship of State.

No braver one his country serves,
Thus honored everywhere;
None, none of all so well deserves
The Presidential Chair.

At home, abroad, wherever tried
Thy duty thou hast done;
Thou art the Nation's truest guide
Columbia's favorite son.

³² Ibid.

³³ "Intelligencer and Lancastrian" June 24, 1856

Then welcome home thou noble sage
Whom high and low adore;
Here live thy fame from age to age
On this thy native shore.

Thy talents we appreciate
With little more comment
We humbly beg to designate
Thee for our President.

BUCHANAN IN THE CAMPAIGN

The campaign of 1856 was now in full swing. Before we, however, attempt to describe and analyze it, a brief look at Buchanan himself would be of great value.

Buchanan was to stay at home. Here he would receive visitors and correspond with political leaders. Throughout the campaign he only made a few short trips. In July he went to Wabank, and in August to Bedford Springs for two weeks. He also visited his brother, the Rev. Edward Y. Buchanan at Germantown in September. The "Examiner" had this to say, about Buchanan's trip to Wabank, "A place of some celebrity as a fashionable resort for gentlemen of leisure, on the banks of the Conestoga River, a short distance from Lancaster City. He will go to another place of leisure at the headwaters of Salt River come November 4th."³⁴ Buchanan declined all invitations for local rallies. If he had accepted one he felt he would have have to accept all. "Buchanan's character was not attacked by the Republicans, but they did use the Ostend Manifesto, and he was falsely accused of stating that he would yet call the roll of his slaves under the shadow of Bunker Hill Monument."³⁵

Locally, even the Republicans had to admit that Buchanan's personal life was beyond attack. The "Examiner and Herald" says on June 25: "Mr. Buchanan has sunk his individuality in the platform. He says that being the representative of the Democratic Party and not simply James Buchanan he must square his conduct according to the platform of that party, and insert no plank nor take one from it. He thus expressly placed himself before the people as a platform candidate—he has ceased to be simply James Buchanan and has become the embodiment of the Cincinnati platform, thereby absolving the voters of this county and elsewhere from all obligations to support him on merely personal considerations."

The "Saturday Express" chimes in,³⁶ "There was a time when we supposed and even hoped, that if James Buchanan should ever succeed in securing a nomination for the Presidency we could cheerfully cast our votes in his favor. There was a time when we believed him to be a genuine Democrat of the Jefferson school, a friend of humanity and an uncompromising defender of the Constitutional rights of the American people. True, we know that he

³⁴ "Lancaster Examiner and Herald," July 16, 1856.

³⁵ Rhodes, op. cit., vol. 2, p. 221.

³⁶ "Saturday Express," June 14, 1856.

had not been the most consistent in his political career — but we knew the man as one of our most respected fellow citizens, a gentleman of unblemished personal integrity and unusual agreeable manners in his social intercourse with all classes. . . .

“But we have presented to us not simply James Buchanan as of old. He tells us that now he is tongue-tied, having been placed upon a platform of which he most heartily and cordially approves. Its principles we never endorsed, much less could we do so now. We never printed a line in these columns nor uttered a word any place against Mr. Buchanan, until after the publication of his Slidell letter in which he planted himself squarely upon the Kansas infamy of Pierce and Douglas.”

Thus it was not personalities that were to be the battle ground of this campaign but rather issues. The issue of extending slavery into Kansas as the Republican put it, or leaving the choice to the people concerned as the Democrat put it, was in the forefront.

Yet in a campaign as heated as the campaign of 1856 there was bound to be some mudslinging at the leading candidates, but there was remarkably little.

Fremont was falsely charged of being a Catholic and owning slaves. He was scored for his inexperience in public life.

Buchanan, too, did not escape some personal insults.

The following song appeared in the “Saturday Express” on June 28:

UNCLE JAMES
Tune, “*Uncle Ned*”

There was an old gentleman whose name was James,
He was born long ago, long ago;
He may, to be sure have had some other names
Which I don't happen to know.

Chorus:

Then lay down the fiddle and the bow,
Take up the shovel and the hoe,
And we'll dig a big hole for old Uncle James
And bury him deep and low.

In the federal ranks long time he stood
And once he was heard to shout
That “if he had a drop of Democratic blood
He'd be glad to let it out.”

Chorus:

Then lay down . . . etc.

To Ostend once went this old man,
And this honest scheme did reveal,
We'll buy Spain's daughter Cuba if we can,
And what we can't buy we'll steal.

Chorus:

Then lay down . . . etc.

When he'd grown old, his party thought
They'd take Uncle James by the nose,
And put him up in a fight they fought
With Slavery's host of foes.

Chorus:

Then lay down . . . etc.

But poor Uncle James was too old to fight
And too old to run away,
So Uncle James woke one morning bright
And found he had lost the day.

Chorus:

Then lay down . . . etc.

There was the "drop of blood" charge against Mr. Buchanan. In his 1828 campaign for Congress he was accused of saying that if he had a drop of Democratic blood in his veins he would let it out.

On July 8 there appeared in the "Intelligencer and Lancastrian" the following certificate:

CERTIFICATE

Several of the Undersigned have known Mr. Buchanan ever since he first came to Lancaster . . . We are all convinced that if at a public meeting at the Court House or anywhere else in this city, he had ever used such an expression or anything like it . . . that he thanked his God, he had not a drop of Democratic blood in his veins and if he did he would let it out, some of us would have heard it and all of us would have heard of it.

Signed,

William Jenkins, William B. Fordney, Reah Frazer, F. A. Muhlenberg, John Mathiot, William Norris, John Christ, George Musser, William Frick, Samuel Dale, Joseph Ogilby, John F. Steinman, E. C. Reigart, Adam Reigart, Benjamin Champneys, Jas. Humes, Geo. H. King, William Cooper, John N. Lane, John Reynolds, John R. Montgomery, Henry Rogers, Jacob Demuth, Christian Bachman, John Bomberger, John Ross, James Evans, John Miller, Henry Kieffer, George Messenkop.

Buchanan was also attacked for his alleged non-favorable attitude to the War of 1812. The "Intell." answers this charge, "Mr. Buchanan actually volunteered his services and marched as a private soldier at his own expense, to the defense of Baltimore in 1814. Here at home this refutation not necessary but to outsiders, yes." The following letter was presented for evidence:

"I was a member of the Lancaster troop. So was Mr. Buchanan, who volunteered and served as a private. I was acquainted with Mr. Buchanan and have a perfect recollection of the vigilant and exemplary manner in which he performed his duty . . . We bore our own expense . . . Neither asked nor received a cent of pay from the government.

Respectfully yours,

Robert Majil." ³⁷

Another charge made against Mr. Buchanan was that he was cold and selfish. His followers, however, pointed to the fact that during the Pitts-

³⁷ "Intelligencer and Lancastrian." January 22, 1856.



Driveway and Porch from Which Buchanan Addressed Rallies and Visiting Delegations in the Campaign of 1856.



Side Door leading to Buchanan's Study; Through This Door Leading Politicians Entered in 1856.

burgh fire on April 10, 1845, Mr. Buchanan, then Secretary of State, sent a donation of \$500 to the victims on April 14. There were no telegrams at that time, so his action was certainly a speedy one.

A far more serious charge — one widely used against him was, that he had once said that ten cents a day was “sufficient for any laborer.” They called him “ten-cent Jimmy.” In Lebanon County an omnibus bearing the name of “James Buchanan” ran between Lebanon and the camp meeting ground. The fare was ten cents. People began to comment about the appropriateness of the name and the price. Immediately the fare was changed to 12½ cents. The “Examiner and Herald” comments, “Our Buchanan friends are aghast . . . whenever ten cents is mentioned. The coin should be abolished.”³⁸

As an answer to the charge the “Intell.” published the following quotation from a Buchanan speech in the Senate, “That country is most prosperous where labor commands the greatest reward.”³⁹

Another serious charge was the statement that Buchanan was inconsistent. He had voted to abolish slavery in the District of Columbia. This according to the Republicans proved he had once been an Abolitionist. He is also reported to have said on March 10, 1836, that he was “opposed to slavery in the abstract,” yet now he is willing to see slavery extended over the territory of the United States!

“In 1819 he served on a committee which reported a resolution against the admission of any more slave states into the Union. Mr. Buchanan, in 1819, went a great deal further than we go, or than the Fremont Party goes. If we are ‘black’ Republicans for holding such a doctrine, what color was Mr. Buchanan?”⁴⁰

“On August 25, 1847, Buchanan opposes slavery and extension in a letter to Berks County Democrats. Now he is crated in by the Cincinnati platform. How easy it is for distinguished politicians to revise the judgment and reverse their opinion when the Presidency looms before them.”⁴¹

In the editorial on September 10 the “Examiner and Herald” commented, “Mr. Buchanan is all things to all men . . . [he is] inconsistent . . . North can find things favorable to it, South to it . . . he has kept himself in that soft state which enables the dominant party to mould him into any form it pleases:

Anti-Democrats

A peace advocate
Tariff
Bank
Missouri Compromise
Anti-slavery

Democrats

A Filibuster
Anti-tariff
Anti-bank
Kansas Nebraska
For slavery.”

³⁸ “Lancaster Examiner and Herald,” July 1, 1856.

³⁹ “Intelligencer and Lancastrian,” July 1, 1856.

⁴⁰ “Lancaster Examiner and Herald,” July 2, 1856.

⁴¹ “Saturday Express,” July 5, 1856.

This was indeed a serious charge, one which the "Intell." answered by a countercharge of inconsistency at the "Examiner" in its support of state candidates in the past twelve months.⁴²

Mr. Buchanan was also charged by the temperance faction of converting "Wheatland into an unlicensed tavern, where all might partake of liquor."⁴³

Yet these are all of relative minor importance in the campaign. If it would have been on the basis of personalities Buchanan would have won overwhelmingly in his home county. He was, of course, not too well known due to his continuous absence, but he was still the favorite son. It was the issues involved which was to cause him to lose his own home county—a county never too much on the side of the Democratic party. This was a time for issues not for personalities. The "Intelligencer and Lancastrian" sums it up when it writes on June 17, "Under the mistaken belief that Mr. Buchanan would be defeated for the nomination they [the opponents] loudly proclaimed their admiration for this distinguished statesman . . . Now, however, their tune has suddenly changed."

THE TURMOIL

Pennsylvania was the focal point of the election campaign of 1856. It was of great interest especially because a state election was to be held on October 14. This election was of great importance to all parties, since it would give a good indication of the way the wind was blowing. Buchanan was almost sure of 112 electoral votes, mostly from the South. Fremont could count on 114. Buchanan had to carry Pennsylvania (27 votes) and ten more from Indiana, Illinois, or New Jersey and California combined, to insure his election. "In Slidell's opinion; it [Pennsylvania] is the greatest battle of the campaign and if any amount of labor and money will secure it, they should be expended."⁴⁴ This is exactly what was done. Even State Democratic Chairman Forney admitted, "We spent a great deal of money, although not one cent selfishly or corruptly."⁴⁵

In 1856 a political campaign was a major source of recreation and social contacts for the people. Frequent meetings were held, mostly on Saturday nights, with hickory pole raising ceremonies frequently held in the afternoon.

Speeches galore would be given, frequently two hours in length. Lancaster County had its full share of these rallies and was also blessed by a very lively newspaper campaign.

The Lancaster newspapers were of great importance. Slidell warns Buchanan to keep close watch on the "Lancaster Intelligencer," "any indiscretion on the part of whose editors [in this case George and A. Sanderson] would be attributed to him."⁴⁶

⁴² "Intelligencer and Lancastrian," August 12, 1856.

⁴³ "Saturday Express," August 23, 1856.

⁴⁴ Sears, "Slidell and Buchanan," pp. 726-27.

⁴⁵ Minnigerode, op. cit., p. 331

⁴⁶ Sears, op. cit., p. 725.

It would be an impossible and most probably an unnecessary task to describe each of the pole raisings and rallies. Most of them were similar. It will be our object, however, to give a flavor of the political campaign of this period and those rallies, speeches, and editorial comments vital to this campaign in particular.

In Lancaster a very active "Wheatland Club" was formed with Samuel Welchens as its president. This club held frequent meetings. On June 26, Samuel H. Reynolds addressed the club in a "happy and eloquent manner."⁴⁷ A request was issued "that every man in this city who is opposed to the fanatical doctrines of the Abolitionists, alias Black Republicans, should at once become a member of this club."⁴⁸ Headquarters were on the third floor of the City Hall.⁴⁹ The Fremont Club made its headquarters on the fourth floor of the Fulton Hall.^{49a}

The "Intell." on July 1, 1856, sarcastically reported that the Fremont Club included the following members:

- "Chairman Eichelberger — Old time free soiler.
- Secretary Zuriel Swope — Belonged to every faction existing in the past ten years.
- J. B. Livingston — A wooly head.
- J. Cadwell — A Yankee Know Nothing Black Republican.
- A. H. Hood — Ditto, ditto, except for the Yankee.
- J. M. W. Geist — Ditto, ditto and Maine Law to boot.
- J. K. Alexander — Just a protige of Thaddeus Stevens."

In this same issue appeared a very interesting letter.

"Free Soil Free Speech, Free Territory, and Freemont — that is what the Black Republicans talk about so lustily in this immediate locality. In the eastern end of the county, we understand they have added a plank or two to their platform, and had it Free Soil, Free Speech, Free Territory, Freemont. Free Darkies and young Mulattoes, a very natural result we think of the doctrines inculcated by these fanatics.

Signed
From One Who Knows."

Much of this early campaign was fought over the former Whigs. Both Democrats and Republicans wooed their support. Editorials were written on how Henry Clay, the great Whig, would vote if he were alive.

The "Intelligencer and Lancastrian" points out that Henry Clay had said, "But if it [the Whig Party] is to be merged into a contemptible Abolition party and if Abolitionism is to be engrafted on the Whig creed, from that moment I renounce the party and cease to be a Whig."⁵⁰

To this the "Examiner and Herald" replies, "In his last great speech in the Senate . . . he said, 'No earthly power will ever make me vote to

⁴⁷ "Intelligencer and Lancastrian," July 1, 1856.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ "Lancaster Examiner and Herald," July 9, 1856.

^{49a} Ibid.

⁵⁰ "Intelligencer and Lancastrian," July 8, 1856.

spread slavery over territory where it does not now exist'." ⁵¹ And of Buchanan himself Clay is reported to have said, "I should prefer General Cass. He has quite as much ability, as much firmness and, I think much more honesty and sincerity than Mr. Buchanan." ⁵²

Both parties claimed large attendances of Whigs at their meetings.

On July 7 the Whig county committee unanimously supports the Republican ticket, yet which way the average Whig vote will go is still an open question.

The "Intelligencer and Lancastrian" charged the Republicans with a sectional ticket — both candidates coming from the North. The "Examiner and Herald" replied that this is not the first time such a ticket had been nominated. In 1824 the Democrats nominated two southerners, in 1828 it was Jackson and Calhoun, in 1836 the Whigs had two Northern candidates. ⁵³

The "Examiner and Herald" attacks the "Intell." with the failure to print the Fremont platform, and on July 16 challenged the Democratic organ to print some of the arguments of the "Examiner." In return for which the "Examiner" will print the arguments of the "Intell." Not more than two columns, however, should be used for this purpose weekly.

On July 22 the "Intell." in refusing the challenge replies, "The 'Examiner' with its usual adroitness in order to evade the direct issue of union or disunion proposes to the 'Intell.' [here the above proposal is given.] This is very cool on the part of the 'Examiner,' and a rather shrewd attempt to get out of an unpleasant position in which its own folly has placed it. The editor has been driven to the wall and pinned there, and he now essays to divert public attention from his own misdeeds by getting up a discussion which would result in nothing at all. We doubt whether the readers who are mostly whitemen would want to see the 'Examiner' . . . every week; it would be too strong a dose for their stomachs and could not fail in producing nausea.

"He has attempted to sell the old line Whigs of Lancaster County to Thaddeus Stevens and his co-workers . . . The 'Examiner' has found out . . . that there are hundreds of old line Constitutional Whigs in the county who rebel at his dictation and who never can be induced to join the piebald woolly head crew, and fight under the black and hateful banner of Abolition and Disunion."

To the Democrats Union or Disunion was the main issue. "Democrats talked union not issues." ⁵⁴ "The Constitution is at stake in the present contest." ⁵⁵ Buchanan himself wrote, "The South would secede if Fremont were elected." ⁵⁶ And indeed there were rumblings and threats from the South.

⁵¹ "Lancaster Examiner and Herald," July 9, 1856.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Rhodes, op. cit., p. 228.

⁵⁵ "Intelligencer and Lancastrian," June 24, 1856.

⁵⁶ Rhodes, op. cit., p. 220.



BUCHANAN CLUB BADGES.

Courtesy of Wheatland Foundation
and Franklin and Marshall College Library

The "gravest danger to the Democrats was the Republican use of 'Bleeding Kansas'." ⁵⁷ And the Republicans played this issue up for every vote it might get, while the Democrats belittled it with all their might. They said it was "exaggerated by correspondents [who] made the facts subservient to their feelings. Of all the correspondents those in Kansas seem to be most given over to lying." ⁵⁸ "It is a mistake, and a serious mistake, to suppose that recent difficulties in and about Lawrence were occasioned by any considerable number of bonafide Kansas settlers from free states." ⁵⁹ "They were instigated by northern abolition presidential operators." ⁶⁰

Activity in the county developed, too, during the month of July.

A Buchanan Club was formed in Elizabethtown. On July 29 the "Intelligencer and Lancastrian" reported that twenty-six new names were added, including three old line Whigs. "The ball is rolling on."

A Salisbury and Sadsbury Union Club sprung into activity. Sixty people signed the constitution. The president was Colonel Joseph B. Baker.

On July 24 the Mt. Joy Buchanan Club was addressed by Henry Shaffner, and Dr. N. Watson. Its president, L. Ricksucker, reports ninety-one names were signed to the Constitution. ⁶¹

Churchtown, too, formed a Buchanan Club at the public house of Mrs. Ann Albright. Officers elected included: President, David Williams; Vice-President, James Landis; Recording Secretary, Dr. Levy Ringwald; Corresponding Secretary, Thomas Edwards. ⁶²

Earl too went into motion. W. Seeger Darrow addressed the club at the public house of John Styer of New Holland. Peter Ream is president of this club and John H. Hull is its secretary. ⁶³

In Lancaster a meeting was held, too, on the 27th of July. A ninety foot hickory pole was raised with great enthusiasm at the corner of Vine and Queen streets. ⁶⁴

The evening meeting at 7:30, too, was well attended. It was addressed by Colonel Reah Frazer, George W. McElroy and W. F. S. Warren. Colonel William S. Amweg spoke in German. ⁶⁵

A Wheatland Glee Club was formed with J. T. M. Gonigle as its president. ⁶⁶

The Manor Buchanan Club had Colonel Joseph Schoch as its president. ⁶⁷

The Elizabethtown Buchanan Club elected John Gross to the presidency. ⁶⁸

⁵⁷ Nichols, op. cit., p. 43.

⁵⁸ "Intelligencer and Lancastrian," May 27, 1856.

⁵⁹ "Intelligencer and Lancastrian," June 10, 1856.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ "Intelligencer and Lancastrian," July 29, 1856.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Ibid, July 22, 1856.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

A Buchanan Club of Safe Harbor was formed at the public house of John Daily on July 15. The president was John Kolp, who addressed the meeting in a spirited manner.⁶⁹

The Republicans, too, formed many Fremont Clubs. Sadsbury elected George Whitson to the presidency of its club. Secretary Ellwood Griest, Vice-Presidents Frederick Bush and J. P. Scarlett; Corresponding Secretary James Coates and Treasurer Ambrose Posonall.⁷⁰

Mt. Joy entered the field with Benjamin Greider, president; Jacob Cassel secretary.⁷¹

By July 30 between six and eight Fremont clubs had been formed. The "Examiner" would like to see twenty more.⁷²

Both papers enjoyed building up their own meetings and tearing down that of the other, according to the "Intell." speakers at the Democratic meeting talk eloquently. Describing the same meeting the "Examiner" without fail will report a poor speaker who made more converts to the Republican cause than anything else. The same thing, of course, was done conversely, too.

Thus on July 29 the "Intell." reports the Fremont Club meeting as attended by only twenty people. Mr. Cadwell spoke. "The meeting amply proved that Black Republicanism is no go in Lancaster City or County notwithstanding the lying reports to the contrary circulated for effect."⁷³

Yet according to the "Intell." the Wheatland Club was crowded. Mr. George McElroy spoke, interrupted by frequent applause. William E. McMaster of New York, who had come to paint a portrait of Buchanan, made a few appropriate remarks. "One hundred new members bringing the total membership to five hundred members."⁷⁴

Of course in the opposition papers the Buchanan Clubs were of little size and consequence. A letter was sent to the "Saturday Express" by one Clio, describing the Buchanan Club meeting at Marietta and published on August 2.

According to Clio, fifteen people were assembled including several government dependents. A lively struggle developed between the Buchanan and the Cass men.

On August 4 the Mount Joy Buchanan Club held a pole raising. According to the "Intelligencer" "the crowd was large and enthusiastic."⁷⁵

The "Saturday Express" reports of the same meeting: "Mr. Warren spoke. He was for the Union, a crisis had approached, a black, threatening crisis and but for the staunch, unflinching Democracy the country would be severed, and its dissection baptized in blood. A certain great commander said in order to encourage his soldiers before the battle of the Pyramids,

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ "Lancaster Examiner and Herald," July 16, 1856.

⁷¹ Ibid, July 23, 1856.

⁷² Ibid, July 30, 1856.

⁷³ "Intelligencer and Lancastrian," July 29, 1856.

⁷⁴ Ibid, July 22, 1856.

⁷⁵ Ibid, August 5, 1856.

'Remember the eyes of forty centuries . . . is looking down upon you!' So the eyes of the conservative men of the States are looking down upon Pennsylvania . . .

"Mr. Warren is indeed a pleasant and eloquent speaker; he seems to mean everything he said and we admire a man who is earnest though he may think different from ourselves. It however could not have been very flattering to him to have such a slim audience." ⁷⁶

On August 20 a meeting of the Fremont Club was held at the Fulton House.

The "Examiner" reports a large, attentive audience listened to John H. Martindale of Rochester, and Theodore Pomeroy of Auburn, N. Y.⁷⁷

The "Saturday Express," however, complains that "while Mr. Martindale was speaking some Buchanan men around the door concocted an insult to the speaker, which met with deserved rebuke from the audience. These 'ten cent' men gave a poor fellow who was under the influence of 'Wheatland Grog' a few pennies to lay at the feet of the speaker, which he did, the act being met with a volley of hisses. We are informed that they gave him ten cents — but the poor fellow being a little dry put six of them in his pocket for the next 'eye opener' and threw only four of them on the platform." ⁷⁸

The "Intelligencer and Lancastrian" had this to report of the same meeting: "The Black Republican meeting . . . was presided over by the erudite and luminous Know Nothing Attorney-General of the State whose published opinions are as clear as mud." ⁷⁹ He gave a faint shriek for freedom, getting a fainter response. Compliments on the personality of Buchanan, however, brought forth thunders of applause, leading strangers to suppose it was an out-and-out Buchanan meeting. After the cheer concluded, the meeting was addressed by two strolling, wooden nutmeg adventurers from far away down East, who were doubtless well paid for coming up here . . . "These two men called Martindale and Pomeroy who sport the prefix 'honorable' to their euphonious names, failed to make any show of arguments, but had plenty of misrepresentations in their speeches. It was an appeal to the passions — not to reason.

"The meeting, as far as a demonstration for Fremont is concerned, was a failure. Being court week there were a great many people in town and if Fremont had any strength in Lancaster County it should have been exhibited on that occasion." ⁸⁰

By September ⁸¹ the campaign was reaching full fury. The "Examiner" attacked the people who were neglecting business, family, and friends for politics. "The number of patriots who are devoting their undivided time and attention to the welfare of their country is increasing at an alarming rate in this city. It is not our desire to condemn the active participation in political

⁷⁶ "Saturday Express," August 9, 1856.

⁷⁷ "Lancaster Examiner and Herald," August 27, 1856.

⁷⁸ "Saturday Express," August 29, 1856.

⁷⁹ "Intelligencer and Lancastrian," August 26, 1856.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Other meetings in August were held:

events, which is the duty of every man. We only condemn that servile subordination to party which compels a man to neglect his business, family, and friends to become a corner loafing and pot house politician." ⁸²

BUCHANAN MEETINGS

Marietta — Pres. John Hook.
Columbia — W. F. S. Warren and George McElroy spoke.
Earl — General Adam Diller spoke.
Elizabethtown — Col. Raukin spoke.
Conestoga — Buchanan Club formed.
Wheatland Club of Lancaster — Naturalization Committee appointed.
H. B. Swarr spoke, Wheatland Glee Club sang. Mr. J. Augustus Beck was instructed to sculpture a bust of Buchanan.
Paradise Township.
Strasburg — M. Mulgrew spoke.
Conestoga Township — C. J. Rhodes and John Kolp spoke.
Little Britain and Colerain — Samuel H. Reynolds and George Sanderson spoke, sixty members in only two weeks. Dr. J. P. Andrews is president.
Washington Boro — J. B. Amwake spoke.
Columbia — H. M. North spoke.
Old Bart — Michael Scott spoke.
Christiana.
Bart Township — pole raising at Nine Points, August 16.
Fruitville — pole raising August 21.
Upper Leacock — formed August 16.
Maytown — August 16, Dr. Nathaniel Watson presiding.
Eden.
Wheatland Club met on August 16 — hall crowded to suffocation.
Elizabethtown pole raising — John Gross presented hickory pole, talks by J. B. Swarr and Jacob Myers.
North East Ward raised 100-foot pole, August 23. Dr. Welchens presided. Samuel H. Reynolds, Jacob B. Amwake, Jacob Myers, George W. McElroy, Col. Wm. S. Amweg spoke.
Wheatland Glee Club sang and Hepting's Band played.
1500-2000 people assembled.
Oak Hill.

FILLMORE MEETINGS

Lancaster Fillmore Club.
Elizabethtown.

FREMONT MEETINGS

Sadsbury, August 7.
Elizabethtown.
Old Bart.
Drumore.
Salisbury.
Strasburg.
Fulton.
Little Britain.
Paradise.
Millerstown.
Bird-in-Hand.
Marietta. Penn Township. Mt. Nebo.

⁸² "Lancaster Examiner and Herald," August 27, 1856.

The fusion movement of the Fremont-Fillmore faction into a Union ticket was feverishly attempted by the Republicans. The "Intell." belittling this movement commented that they "would just as soon lick them all at once."⁸³ Nevertheless, such a fusion would be a severe blow to Democratic hopes.

On Saturday, August 23, a District Union Convention was held for all "regardless of politics opposed to the Washington Administration and the Cincinnati Platform supported by Buchanan."⁸⁴ At this convention one delegate for each district, plus one delegate for each hundred votes in the district were selected for the County Convention.

The "Intell." trying to stop this fusion commented on the August 23 meeting, "The Know Nothings carried the day." Nine of the sixteen delegates were former Know Nothing men.⁸⁵

The County Fusion Convention had a full attendance of delegates and a large body of spectators.⁸⁶ A fusion ticket was named, yet not all Fillmore men were willing to support this fusion ticket. A special Fillmore convention for those not favorable to the Union ticket was held on September 10 at the Keystone House.

The Pennsylvania Germans, too, were not neglected during the campaign. One reason Buchanan had been nominated was for the fact "he was good for the Germans,"⁸⁷ who were one of the major factors in the Democratic chances of carrying Pennsylvania. "The Pennsylvania Dutch, by whom the eastern counties were largely peopled, were set in their own ways of political thinking; they distrusted change. They loved the Union and considered its preservation more important than freedom of the Negro."⁸⁸

A special newspaper was published for their consumption, "The Lancaster Demokrat,"⁸⁹ and at many meetings one of the speakers addressed the audience in German.

Many meetings were held throughout September. "The Presidential Election is the all-absorbing topic of discussion now before the people. Scarcely anything is thought of or talked about. The merchant in his store, the mechanic in his workshop, the professional man in his office, the laboring man at his daily employment — all have their preference in Buchanan, Fillmore, or Fremont."⁹⁰

In order to see what trends might be developing, polls were taken. On August 27 the "Examiner" reported the results of a poll taken at Roundview, near White Oak tavern:

Fremont	16	Fillmore	1
Buchanan	4	Doubtful	2 ⁹¹

⁸³ "Intelligencer and Lancastrian," August 12, 1856.

⁸⁴ "Lancaster Examiner and Herald," August 12, 1856.

⁸⁵ "Intelligencer and Lancastrian," August 23, 1856.

⁸⁶ "Lancaster Examiner and Herald," September 3, 1856.

⁸⁷ Nichols, op. cit., p. 12.

⁸⁸ Rhodes, op. cit., p. 227.

⁸⁹ "Intelligencer and Lancastrian," September 2, 1856.

⁹⁰ Ibid. September 30, 1856.

⁹¹ "Lancaster Examiner and Herald," August 27, 1856

	Buchanan	Fillmore	Fremont
August 25	100	25	4
August 26	78	9	2
August 27	115	27	8
August 28	97	30	2
August 29	108	22	6
August 30	118	26	3

On September 17, the "Examiner and Herald" reports a poll taken in southern Lancaster County, "Only Buchanan men were asked, some of whom had not even been naturalized yet. The Fremont men did not even know that a poll was being conducted."

The Republicans held many meetings during the month of September. Perhaps the most interesting was the meeting held at Safe Harbor on September 17.

"Buchaneers and Fremonters both held meetings in the afternoon. Buchaneers challenged for a joint meeting to argue issue . . . Challenge accepted (by Fremonters). Mr. James G. Blaine, formerly of Pennsylvania now of the State of Maine,⁹³ then stepped forward and said he stood ready to defend J. C. Fremont and the Republican Party. [His speech was the] most powerful and eloquent speech ever delivered in this place. He was perfectly at home on the subject, driving conviction to every mind that heard him. I was told this day he made more than twenty converts to the cause.

"Col. Ranking [and] Captain Powers of Philadelphia replied to Mr. Blaine, pouring forth a perfect torrent of abuse and low black guardianism. Their own party was ashamed of them and said it was very unfortunate they were sent here.

"Messrs. Blaine and George Eichelberger, of your city, addressed a very large meeting at Conestoga Center in the evening."⁹⁴

The Democrats, too, held many meetings. The news of the unexpectedly large victory of the Republicans in Maine spurred them to a great effort.

On September 15 the Democratic candidate for Vice-President, John C. Breckinridge, came to visit Buchanan, and had dinner at Wheatland before going on to Pittsburgh. A considerable group of people assembled to see him off.

Of course, there was the usual criticism of the meetings of the opposition. Thus, according to the "Examiner," at Neffsville only fifteen attended a Buchanan meeting, which had a disgusting speaker.⁹⁵

There was a disgraceful exhibition of Buchanan men at West Earl when unable to raise a Buchanan Pole, according to a letter received by the

⁹² "Intelligencer and Lancastrian," September 2, 1856.

⁹³ James G. Blaine later became one of the leading members of Congress, and in 1884 was the presidential candidate of the Republican Party opposing Grover Cleveland.

⁹⁴ "Intelligencer and Lancastrian," September 30, 1856.

⁹⁵ "Lancaster Examiner and Herald," September 27, 1856.

“Examiner” from a Democrat (but no office seeker). When the Fremont men would not help, they were ordered out and threatened with a whipping by a whiskey-soaked member.⁹⁶

The “Saturday Express” had this to say about raising poles in general. “Raising poles seems to be so generally the fashion among ardent party men just now that we hardly know whether it is worthwhile to offer an objection, but really it strikes us as about the most unprofitable mode of electioneering. Who on earth is to be covered by a pole — whether long or short — a pine or hickory?”⁹⁷

The Democrats on the other hand were not much kinder in their description of the meetings of the opposition.

Jack Soutcher contributes the following description of a Fremont meeting in New Providence to the “Intell.”:

Only eighty-seven voters appeared, of these

For Buchanan 39

For Fremont 25

For Fillmore 23

“Gusty Atlee spoke who not only disgraced himself but injured the Fremont cause. His speech was the most non-sensical, childish affair that any intelligent man’s ears were ever pained with. Quite a number said that they were ashamed of such talk.

“He said that a man was shot in Kansas and some person spit tobacco juice in his eye after he was dead, and then invoked the North to rise . . . and rebuke such conduct by voting for Fremont.

“He [Gusty Atlee] was followed by Hamlet’s ghost, alias Steven’s tooth-picker, O. J. Dickey. Dickey imitated his master by trying to be witty, but it was no go. A few boys giggled at the ugly faces he made and the constant shaking of his little fist, but the men would not laugh.”⁹⁸

“On Saturday, September 6, the Democrats held a meeting in Lancaster to select candidates for the county convention.

N. W. Ward met at Trout’s, West Orange Street.

S. W. Ward at Fitzpatrick’s, South Queen Street.

N. E. Ward at Miller’s, East Chestnut Street.

S. E. Ward at Watking’s, Vine and South Queen streets.⁹⁹

On September 13 a public discussion was held at Mount Holly School House in Eden Township.

Robert Montgomery and Henry H. Breneman spoke in favor of Buchanan.

Dr. W. H. Boone and James Collins, Esq., spoke in favor of Fremont.¹⁰⁰

On September 27, the Democrats raised a pole at James and Charlotte streets.

Some of the great speakers, who spoke in Lancaster during the week for the Democracy, were Hon. Howell Cobb, Congressman from Georgia; Dr. W.

⁹⁶ Ibid. September 10, 1856.

⁹⁷ “Saturday Express,” September 6, 1856.

⁹⁸ “Intelligencer and Lancasterian,” September 30, 1856.

⁹⁹ Ibid. September 2, 1856.

¹⁰⁰ “Lancaster Examiner and Herald,” September 10, 1856.

F. Shetwood, of Indiana; Dr. E. B. Olds, of Ohio; Governor Curry, of Oregon; General Joseph Lane, of Oregon; and Hon. William Allen, former Senator of Ohio.¹⁰¹

The speech by Congressman Cobb was especially well liked. The "Intell." reports he kept his vast audience "enchained" for two hours in spite of the inclement weather.¹⁰²

The Republicans, too, had some able speakers. Locally, A. Herr Smith and O. J. Dickey spoke at numerous rallies, G. R. Barr making the German language address. Outsiders included Reilly of Kansas, and Caleb B. Smith of Ohio.

The campaign had been fought hot and heavy. Soon the showdown would come.

THE SHOWDOWN

The October state election was approaching fast. Both parties worked feverishly in preparation. Although only state officers would be chosen, the October election would indicate pretty clearly the winner of the Presidential race.

The Republicans held their last great rally on October 1.

During the day a tremendous procession was held. The "Examiner" claimed "10,000 voters in the field."¹⁰³ There were units parading from every hamlet in the county. The procession had the "enthusiasm of Tippecanoe and Tyler too." "The windows were crowded with women waving handkerchiefs. Buchaneers watched with tribulation and alarm. Defeat seemed obvious to them."¹⁰⁴

A. Herr Smith¹⁰⁵ called the meeting to order and an address was delivered by Governor Hamlin of Maine.¹⁰⁶ This was indeed appropriate, for Maine had just given Fremont an unexpectedly large vote in its September election.

The Hon. Anson Burlingame also spoke. David Wilmot was scheduled to speak but sickness prevented his coming.

At the evening meeting Anson Burlingame spoke again and was followed by Thaddeus Stevens. Stevens said in his lengthy speech, "There is a wrong impression about one of the candidates. There is no such person running as James Buchanan. He is dead of lockjaw."¹⁰⁷

The "Intelligencer" describes the meeting as follows: "The great high priest of the Abolition Party, Anson Burlingame, the man who proclaimed

¹⁰¹ "Intelligencer and Lancastrian," September 23, 1856.

¹⁰² Ibid. September 30, 1856.

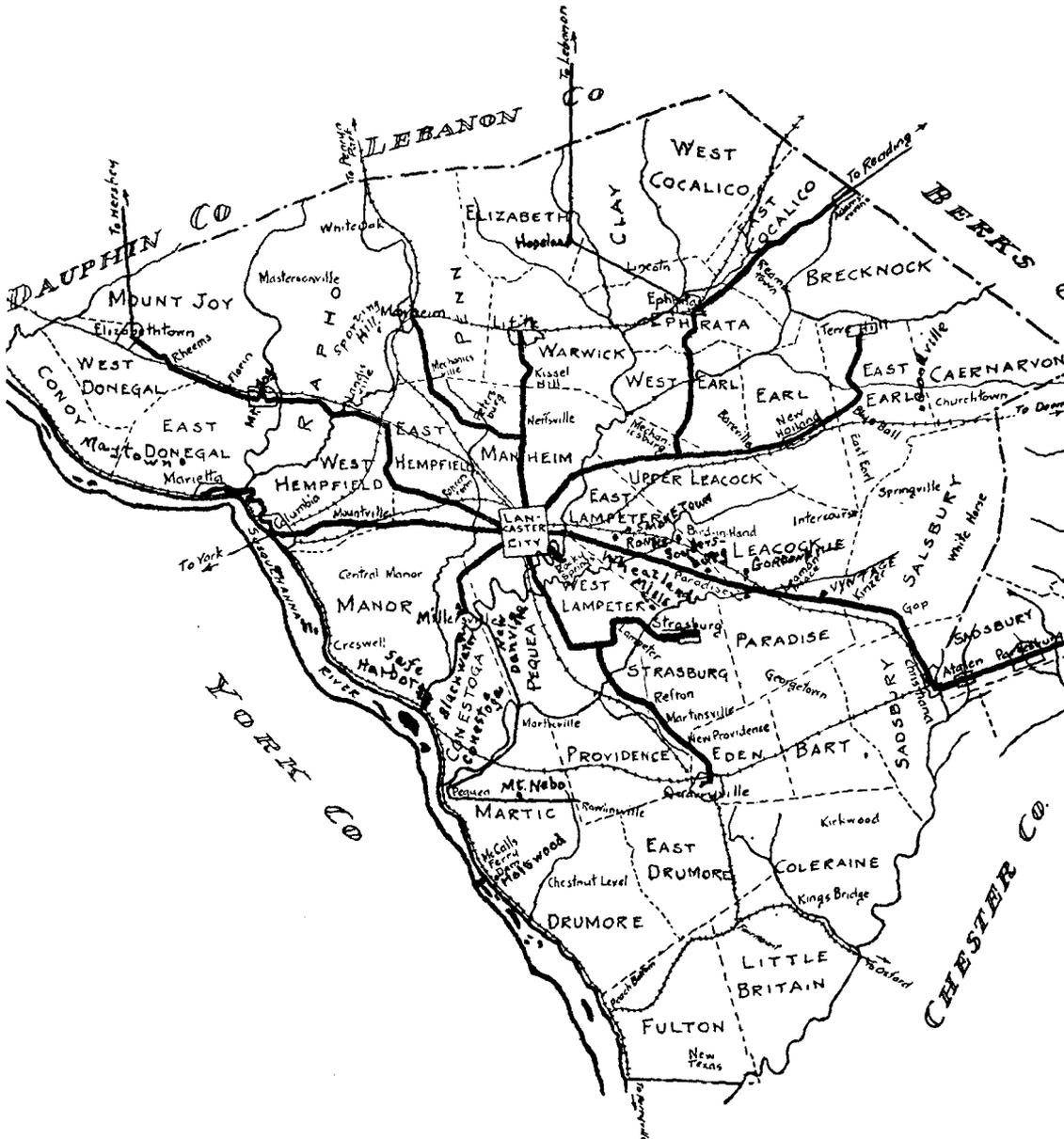
¹⁰³ "Lancaster Examiner and Herald," October 8, 1856.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ In 1898 Miss Eliza E. Smith presented the three-story brick mansion at 125 North Duke Street to Lancaster City for a library, to be known as the A. Herr Smith Memorial Library, in memory of her brother. Samuel H. Reynolds, previously mentioned, formerly resided there.

¹⁰⁶ Hannibal Hamlin later became Abraham Lincoln's vice-president from 1861-1865.

¹⁰⁷ "Lancaster Examiner and Herald."



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MOUNT JOY

ELIZABETH

WEST COCALICO

BRECKNOCK

WEST DONEGAL

EAST DONEGAL

WEST HEMPFIELD

EAST HEMPFIELD

MANHEIM

WARWICK

WEST EARL

EARL

EAST CAERNARVON

To York

Central Manor

MANOR

LANCASTER CITY

EAST LAMPETER

WEST LAMPETER

UPPER LEACOCK

EAST LEACOCK

WEST LEACOCK

STRASBURG

PARADISE

EDEN

BART

MARTIC

DRUMORE

LITTLE BRITAIN

FULTON

Springville

White Horse

SALSBUKY

Shoosbury

Eden

Kirkwood

Coleraine

Kings Bridge

New Texas

CHESTER CO

YORK CO

CO

To Reading

To Reading

To Downing

To York

To Oxford

Elizabeth

White Oak

Marysville

Clumbia

Mountville

Creswell

Safe Harbor

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that 'The times demand an anti-slavery Constitution, an anti-slavery Bible and an anti-slavery God,' was here on Wednesday last and gave several shrieks for Freedom and Free Niggers. To say that in his harangue in the afternoon and evening he used any arguments would be an insult to the intelligence of those who listened to him. His whole effort from beginning to end was an appeal to the passions and prejudices, not the judgment of his audience. We had the old stale slang about the 'clanking of chains' and the 'lash of slave holders' . . . Piteous appeals were made for 'bleeding Kansas.' We should have no objection if the Freemonters would get this infidel Yankee orator back again in Lancaster and keep him here until after the election. We are satisfied his presence and speeches would add hundreds of votes to our state ticket and to Mr. Buchanan . . .

"Finally after a great flourish of trumpets and blowing of noses during which Bert Shaeffer burst his boots and George Markley cried 'Amen,' the great Mr. Stevens took the stand.

"Thus far we have written in a spirit of pleasantry and good will and are willing to give testimony to the courteous and manly bearing of Messrs. Hamlin and Burlingame. Whatever they may be politically, socially they are gentlemen. But truth and propriety alike demand that we notice the speech of Stevens as it deserves. With a 'lump thump, thump lump,'¹⁰⁸ the old heathen took the stand. From first to last it was couched in language which no man but Stevens could conceive. How any man claiming to be respectful could endorse it passes our comprehension. The whole vocabulary of billingsgate's slang was exhausted ere the black-hearted maligner of James Buchanan took his seat. If in the lowest sink of moral depravity there be one man found more vile and degraded than his fellows, that man can justly claim to be the peer of Thaddeus Stevens, a living and moving man of political infamy and moral corruption. He stinks in the nostrils of every decent man. Let the unclean thing alone."¹⁰⁹

The Democrats held their last rally on October 8. The "Intelligencer" claimed the attendance of "30,000 Union-loving patriots."¹¹⁰

A procession two miles long was formed. The Wheatland Club, with Dr. Welchens at its head, marched with five hundred members. Officers at the meeting were:

General Isaac Winters, president. Vice-presidents included, C. Hager, George Sanderson, Benjamin Champneys, Benjamin Eshleman, Samuel C. Stanbaugh, Dr. Isaac Bowman, Dr. Samuel West, Ephraim Shoer, Joseph S. Keemer, General G. M. Steinman, James H. Barnes, Dr. F. A. Muhlenberg, David Landis, James H. Hopkins, Henry Haines, John Vogan, Christian Hershey.¹¹¹

The sons of both Webster and Clay spoke and met with James Buchanan. Howell Cobb of Georgia also addressed the gathering.¹¹²

¹⁰⁸ Thaddeus Stevens was a cripple.

¹⁰⁹ "Intelligencer and Lancastrian," October 14, 1856.

¹¹⁰ Ibid. October 14, 1856.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² Ibid.

Final appeals were now made to the voters. The "Examiner" warned against faulty naturalization papers or Certificates of Intention substituted for naturalization papers. The "Intell." warned Democrats to look for faultily printed ballots.

TO THE POLLS FREEMEN

LET THE BALLOT BOX SPEAK TODAY

"Up guards and at them. Brave hearts, the battle field is before you! The enemy's banners are waving insultingly in your sight."¹¹³

In the state election the Democrats carried Pennsylvania! "All hail her noble Democracy, Pennsylvania has spoken in thunder tones."¹¹⁴

The Democrats elected fifteen of the twenty members to Congress.¹¹⁵

Lancaster County itself was won by the Republicans, yet its increase in Democratic votes was the greatest of all the counties in Pennsylvania. In 1855 the Democrats had 5,099 votes, in 1856, 8,029 in Lancaster County; an increase of 2,930 votes.¹¹⁶

The Republicans by no means gave up the fight. The "Examiner" points out that in each national election since 1840 the opposite party of the one victorious in the State election carried the electoral vote of the State. They hoped for an increase of 50,000 Fremont voters, 2,500 alone in Lancaster County.¹¹⁷ The hope was that many Democrats who naturally voted the Democratic state ticket would turn to Fremont.¹¹⁸ Secretly they hoped for a lull in Democratic interest and an increase in the Republican voters who would turn out.

The Wheatland Club went to congratulate Buchanan on the October victory, and on October 25 a torchlight procession was held.

The Republicans, too, held a final rally at the Fulton Hall, and a torchlight parade on October 22.

Even though the "Intell." warned "Stand to your guns, Democrats, an unscrupulous enemy is still in the field—beaten it is true and demoralized but still treacherous and indignant as ever, and in their desperation will resort to any foul means to retrieve what they lost,"¹¹⁹ interest in the campaign was speedily slackening off.

On October 22, the "Examiner" had reported, "While listening to the usual chat of passers-by in any of our frequented streets, the words stocks, bonds, notes, discounts, bargains, mortgages or money wanted, would be sure to strike the ear oftener than any other word in Webster's Dictionary. But those times have passed away for awhile to return undoubtedly after the Presidential election. Money is no longer thought of, politics is in the

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ Ibid. October 21, 1856.

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ "Lancaster Examiner and Herald," October 22, 1856.

¹¹⁸ Ibid. October 29, 1856.

¹¹⁹ "Intelligencer and Lancastrian," October 21, 1856.

ascendant and the words Kansas, Buchanan, Platform, Jessie, coalition, Fillmore, Fremont, slavery extension, progress, Old Fogg, Catholic, Naturalization are familiar household words. As the period of election draws near, the excitement increases. Men hardly know whether they stand on their heads or heels."

By October 29, the picture had changed, "Politics during the past week have been rather dry and unimportant. The mass of the people seem to have grown tired of them. Apart from one or two meetings and a 'torchlight' procession on Saturday night, there was nothing to indicate that we were on the eve of a Presidential election.

"The Campfires were lit too early and blazed too brightly to last long. The boys had shouted too loud and too lustily for the strength of their lungs, and hence were compelled to seek repose and quiet."¹²⁰

Nevertheless, the parties worked feverishly for any last minute votes. A special Naturalization Court was held on November 3, one day before the election. That evening Democratic State Chairman, John W. Forney, addressed a final rally.

Forney had been very active in the campaign. He had written a good many pamphlets which were widely distributed throughout the state. In these pamphlets he had pledged Buchanan to the full, complete and practical recognition of the rights of the people of Kansas to decide their own affairs."¹²¹ "Country folks prized [these pamphlets], often their only outside contact with the world."¹²²

An interesting sidelight developed in the campaign at this time. This being the harvest season many farmers named outstanding crops after their favorite. Thus a 1,080 grain ear of corn grown by Joseph S. Keener, Esq., of Elizabeth Township was called "Buck and Breck."¹²³

The "Examiner" reports on October 29 that "Mr. Levi Groff left an anti-Buchanan turnip seven pounds strong at the office."

Last minute claims, counter claims, and instructions were given.

The Democrats report jubilantly that Judge McLean, the chief rival of Fremont at the Republican convention, had come out for Buchanan.¹²⁴

Kansas according to the "Intell." "had quit bleeding."¹²⁵

The Wheatland Club was given a valuable present. Mr. John Griffen of Phoenix Iron Works presented [it] "with one of his newly-invented wrought iron cannons, which have already attracted so much attention and such favorable notice not only in this country but in Europe, the splendid gun . . . will be used in celebrating the glorious victory which the Democracy and Union-loving men of the Nation will achieve . . . by the election of Mr. Buchanan to the Presidency."¹²⁶

¹²⁰ "Lancaster Examiner and Herald," October 29, 1856.

¹²¹ Minnigerode, op. cit., p. 332.

¹²² Nichols, op. cit., p. 43.

¹²³ "Intelligencer and Lancastrian," October 28, 1856.

¹²⁴ Ibid. November 4, 1856.

¹²⁵ Ibid. October 28, 1856.

¹²⁶ Ibid. November 4, 1856.

The workers were asked to remember that the Democrats, "through James Buchanan's influence, gave [them the] ten-hour day."¹²⁷

The Fillmore men were asked not to desert their leaders for Black Republicans.¹²⁸

The Democrats restated their platform of "universal education, equal rights, free suffrage, the Constitution, the Union of the states, the people of Kansas making their own laws, white men governing Americans. Opposed to Negro suffrage, Amalgamation, Black Republican political clergymen, rifle companies, bloody fights in Kansas, Negro equality, and Negro riots in general."¹²⁹

Warnings were given by the Democrats for incorrectly printed ballots and last-minute falsehoods circulated too late to refute.¹³⁰

The Republicans appealed to Fillmore men to vote the Union-Fillmore rather than straight-out Fillmore, thereby making their vote count against Buchanan.¹³¹

The last words given to the voters by the "Intell." were: "Remember people of Lancaster County, that we have a citizen of our own great county and state before us as a candidate for the Presidency of the United States. The question is, will we assist to raise him up or will we unnaturally strike him down? We have never had a President from Pennsylvania and we want one now.

"Push on, then, the column! Close up for the grand charge today. On — on for a son of Pennsylvania, for a Lancaster County man. On to the Polls For Buchanan and Victory!"¹³²

Election day came.

A new newspaper had appeared on the scene on November 3, 1856. The "Daily Evening Express." It described the election as follows:

"The election today appears to be passing off in a quiet and orderly manner — altogether quiet creditable to our city. Up to the time we go to press all has been unusually quiet at the different polls. All parties were active and no effort was spared to get out a full vote. The day has been dull, at times drizzly, but on the whole favorable for bringing out the voters especially in the county, where the state of the weather would stop the outdoor work of the season. From the few districts in the county we have heard from, a considerable increase on the October vote was looked for. In the city, at the time we go to press, it looks as if the increase would not be so great."¹³³

In Philadelphia, election day brought great excitement. "Luckily the weather was bad or blood might have been shed. No one slept in Philadelphia."¹³⁴ When the vote was counted we find that:

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ Ibid.

¹²⁹ Ibid.

¹³⁰ Ibid.

¹³¹ "Lancaster Examiner and Herald," October 28, 1856.

¹³² "Intelligencer and Lancastrian," November 4, 1856.

¹³³ "Daily Evening Express."

¹³⁴ Rhodes, op. cit., vol. 2, p. 232.

Buchanan had won the election 174 to 114, with 8 votes for Fillmore.

He had carried Pennsylvania by less than 3,000 in a vote of 423,000.¹³⁵

He had lost Lancaster County by 1 492 in a vote of 19,931.

Yet carried Lancaster City by 1,196 in a vote of 2,122.¹³⁶

Why didn't Buchanan carry Lancaster County? It is, indeed, amazing that the Presidential candidate was unsuccessful in his own home county.

The answer is a difficult one, yet a few conclusions can be drawn from the available evidence. Looking into the past Lancaster County had never inclined toward the Democrats. The voters favored the opposition — a difficult prejudice to overcome — even, or perhaps especially, by a native son. Nevertheless Buchanan pulled the greatest vote a Democratic candidate had ever pulled — indeed by 2,200 votes.¹³⁷ A typical district may be Lancaster Township, the district in which Wheatland itself is located. This district usually went against the Democrats by 50 to 70 votes. In the October election the Democrats had lost it by 30 votes. On November 4, only four votes separated Buchanan and the Union ticket.¹³⁸ A tribute, indeed, to the personality of Buchanan. If the people had voted on preference as to personality rather than issue, Buchanan would have been victorious. It was on the issues that the campaign was waged. It was the issues that counted. It was according to the issues that the people finally acted.

TABLE I

Official returns from Lancaster County as they appeared in the "Intelligencer and Lancastrian."

	BUCHANAN	UNION	FILLMORE
North East Ward, City	408	225	59
North West Ward	663	303	160
South East Ward	432	147	63
South West Ward	390	122	51
	—	—	—
Total	1893	697	332
	BUCHANAN	UNION	FILLMORE
Drumore	253	230	17
Elizabethtown	224	292	1
New Holland	194	347	7
Elizabeth	56	118	0
Strasburg	120	58	28
Manheim	194	292	0

¹³⁵ Ibid.

¹³⁶ "Intelligencer and Lancastrian," November 11, 1856.

¹³⁷ "Intelligencer and Lancastrian," November 11, 1856.

¹³⁸ Ibid.

	BUCHANAN	UNION	FILLMORE
Salisbury	263	467	6
Reamstown	177	197	0
Maytown	121	137	1
Churchtown	167	179	0
Martic	143	172	18
Bart	143	76	34
Colerain	194	111	15
Fulton	133	203	1
Litiz	213	325	2
Marietta	221	237	25
Columbia	422	130	194
Sadsbury	108	178	5
Leacock	133	228	24
Brecknock	132	138	0
Mount Joy	248	451	11
Petersburg	84	187	0
West Lampeter	40	211	11
Conestoga	155	295	2
Washington Boro	162	126	23
Ephrata	175	248	6
Bainbridge	119	185	13
Neffsville	194	244	5
Millerstown	98	229	3
West Earl	99	235	0
West Hempfield	170	375	11
Strasburg Township	80	207	34
Indiantown	85	203	0
West Cocalico	206	181	0
Blue Ball	130	276	0
Paradise	187	182	27
Rohrerstown	81	141	1
Lancaster Township	48	52	1
East Lampeter	99	225	75
Little Britain	127	191	7
Upper Leacock	128	204	5
Penn	157	170	0
Adamstown	40	48	0
Clay	58	191	0
Pequea	38	113	0
Providence	109	122	29
Eden	110	114	3

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